



## Best Practices For Developing a Successful Worksite Experience

To create the best possible experience for the young people and for your organization, make sure your worksite:

- Complies with all safety, quality and child labor laws
  - All worksites must adhere to compliance laws and regulations, and will be monitored accordingly
- Always has at least two adult employees/supervisors present
- Assigns an employee mentor to each young person
- Trains employee mentors
- Identifies the specific skill set requirements desired for the youth and matches them to positions accordingly
- Hires at least 2 youth per site
  - This increases youth participation and encourages a team approach
- Provides an opening day orientation for the young people and their mentors
- Focuses on 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills development for young people
  - These skills are necessary for the development of young people so that they may face the demands in a global economy- please see 21<sup>st</sup> Century form on the next page for complete listing of focus areas
- Provides engaging work for the young people
- Provides ongoing feedback and performance assessment of the young people at least twice during the experience
  - Youth performance will be assessed on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and will be tied to their development in the basic knowledge and applied skills areas
- Encourages the young people to meet other employees in the organization and develop a referral network
- Focuses on the overall learning and career exposure experience of the young people, reinforcing how school is connected to work

## Incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills are key to improving our nation's competitiveness in a knowledge-driven, global economy. As more of our economic competitors move to foster 21st Century Skills development within their educational systems, the United States faces a critical challenge to keep pace in preparing our students to meet the demands of the global community and educate tomorrow's workforce. Throughout this experience, please be cognizant of the importance of these skills in each young person's development.

### Basic Knowledge / Skills

English Language (spoken)  
Reading Comprehension  
Writing in English (grammar, spelling, etc)  
Mathematics & Science

Government / Economics  
Humanities / Arts  
Foreign Languages  
History / Geography

### Applied Skills

**Critical Thinking / Problem Solving**—Exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking; use knowledge, facts, and data to solve workplace problems; apply math and science concepts to problem solving.

**Oral Communications**—Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively; have public speaking skills.

**Written Communications**—Write memos, letters and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

**Teamwork / Collaboration**—Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers; be able to work with diverse teams; negotiate and manage conflicts.

**Diversity**—Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints.

**Information Technology Application**—Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task; apply computing skills to problem solving.

**Leadership**—Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals; use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

**Creativity / Innovation**—Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work; communicate new ideas to others; integrate knowledge across different disciplines.

**Lifelong Learning / Self-Direction**—Be able to continuously acquire new knowledge and skills; monitor one's own learning needs; be able to learn from one's mistakes.

**Professionalism / Work Ethic**—Demonstrate personal accountability, effective work habits, (e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time and workload management).

**Ethics / Social Responsibility**—Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior; act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind.

## Designing an Orientation

Conducting an orientation is an integral component of a successful experience. A well-planned orientation offers young people a thorough overview of the complete experience, outlining roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, duties and expectations. The goal is to be clear, direct and accessible. Below is a sample agenda for a successful orientation:

### Introduction and Welcome

#### Company Overview

- Provide documents, brochures and/or other materials that explain the organization's mission statement, core business, or other relevant information.
- Discuss the organizational structure and explain where the young person's job fits within the organization. Provide an organizational chart.
- Explain the history of the company.
- Share the company's long-term strategic goals.

#### Youth Work Experience/Internship Overview

- *Supervision:* Make sure the young person understands who their immediate supervisor is, and provide his or her contact information.
- *Position Description and Job Requirements:* Review the position description and explain the duties and responsibilities to the young person.
- *Performance Assessment:* Explain the performance appraisal process to the young person.

#### Company Policies and Procedures

- *Working Hours:* Explain working hours, lunch and break times. Review the call-out procedure, and stress the responsibility for obtaining prior approval from the supervisor for overtime and non-emergency absences from work.
- *Organizational Culture:* Review the company culture; including parties, celebrations, social activities, holiday activities, dress code, telephone etiquette, elevator etiquette, office refreshments (coffee, tea, etc.), confidentiality issues, policies and procedures, etc.

#### Introduction of Supervisors and Mentors

- Explain roles and responsibilities.
- Review time sheet policies.

#### Tour of the Facility

- Point out which departments occupy each wing/floor.
- Introduce the young person to other staff.
- Show the young person the location of restrooms, water fountains, office storage, equipment, and supplies.
- Explain company policies on use of office and computer equipment.
  - Specifically address all internet policies at the worksite

#### Question & Answer

- Ask the young person if they have any questions regarding the presentation
- Be open and accessible
- Answer all questions directly and thoroughly

## Mentor's Role

A mentor is a caring adult who devotes time to a young person. Although mentors can fill any number of different roles, all mentors have the same goal in common: to help young people achieve their potential and discover their strengths. Mentors should understand they are not meant to replace a parent, guardian or teacher. A mentor is not a disciplinarian or decision maker for a child. Instead, a mentor echoes the positive values and cultural heritage parents and guardians are teaching. A mentor is part of a team of caring adults.

By exposing a young person to new experiences, a mentor encourages positive choices, promotes high self-esteem, supports academic achievement, and introduces the young person to new ideas.

*When asked, young people invariably say that they want a mentor to help in three key areas:*

**Advice**

**Access**

**Advocacy**

**Advice:** As a mentor, you bring a wide range of life experiences to the relationship. Because of this, you can be a great source of advice and information. From time to time, your mentee may need a second opinion, or a different perspective that you can provide. Help your mentee gain a new perspective by sharing your experiences. What did you do in a similar situation? How did it work out? Be willing to share, but check to make sure your mentee is interested first!

Remember that you and your mentee are different people. Your mentee will have his/her own values, which may be very different from yours and may lead them to very different ideas about what to do. Your role is to offer insight, advice and suggestions. It is your mentee's role to evaluate the options, consider what you have said, and then make the best decision.

**Access:** One of the most valuable things you can do for your mentee is to help open doors. That's what access is all about—helping your mentee find and get involved in new situations. You can help your mentee find people, opportunities and information that he/she might not have found on his/her own. You can take your mentee to new places, introduce them to new people and help him/her learn about resources that will help reach his/her goals. Improved access to resources is one of the most valuable benefits you can give to your mentee!

**Advocacy:** Have you ever had someone stand up for you when you needed it? Or speak on your behalf? That's what advocacy is all about. If your mentee needs a job reference or a college recommendation, you can be a big help!

But remember, in order to be an effective advocate, you have to really get to know your mentee. You will have to create opportunities to get to know your mentee as a person. The more you learn about your mentee, the stronger an advocate you can be!

## Supervising Youth in the Workplace

As the supervisor of a young person, you use all the skills necessary in any effective supervisory relationship:

- Providing leadership
- Motivating
- Delegating
- Communicating
- Developing and training
- Evaluating

Your young person will look to you as his/her point of contact for everything he or she does this summer. We suggest that you meet with your young person regularly to provide feedback on his/her performance. During these meetings, he/she will be able to:

- Report on the status of a project
- Ask questions
- Learn how his or her work is contributing to the organization
- Participate in an evaluation of his or her strengths
- Discuss areas needing growth and development
- Find out what kind of work lies ahead

At the same time, you will have an opportunity to coach your young person and reinforce positive attitudes and performance.

Encourage your young person to work on his or her portfolio or project in the workplace. In addition to providing your intern with a sense of accomplishment, this will also give you a basis to discuss their professional growth.

Suggestions for documents to include in the portfolio:

- Job descriptions
- Company newsletters
- Performance appraisals
- References
- Press releases
- Certificates

Suggestions for documents to include in the project:

- Learning plan activities
- Surveys
- Assessment

## The First Meeting: *A Planning Worksheet for Worksite Supervisors*

This worksheet walks you through some steps to plan a first meeting with your young person.

### **Gather Basic Background Information**

My young person's name is \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

### **Think Through the First Meeting**

Typically, first meetings allow you to get to know a little bit about each other, attach a face to a name, and gain a bit of comfort. To do so, you need to think about what setting would feel comfortable for both of you, and plan out some conversation starters.

1. What are some things that I could tell my young person about myself that would help us to get to know each other? What about my life story may be interesting and relevant to this young person? (e.g. Think of someone that opened the door for you and retell the story to the young person).

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2. What are some questions I could ask my young person to get to know him/her a little without prying? (Write some possible open ended questions below. Note: these are questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no." Make sure you get a clear answer from the intern.)

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3. What do I want out of the mentor/youth relationship—what are my hopes?

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4. How can I find out what my young person hopes to get out of the experience—what questions might I ask?

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## The First Meeting *(continued)*

### **First Meeting Checklist for Worksite Supervisors**

- Tell them about your company
- Explain to them how they fit into the big picture
- Show them where the restrooms are
- Go over expectations (both yours and theirs)
- Show them where the lunchroom is
- Ask them if they have any questions
- Let them know how they should address you (using your first name or Mr./Ms.)

### **A Few Tips**

#### Do...

- Be open minded and positive
- Have fun
- Be honest and sincere
- Remain consistent in following program rules
- Remember that good communication includes listening
- Model professional speech and behavior

#### Don't...

- Jump to conclusions
- Be judgmental
- Forget how important you are to your young person
- Try to impose your beliefs or values on a young person
- Allow rudeness or foul language

## Goal Setting

Goal setting is an important part of the youth experience. This is something that you should do during the first week of the program and then revisit the goal throughout. Check in with the young person and ask him/her what steps have been taken to meet the goal and what challenges they have encountered.

Set a **SMART** goal (Specific, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Realistic, Time-Limited)

Goal:

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Is this goal...

**S**pecific:    \_\_\_ yes                    \_\_\_ no, it's too general.

**M**easurable: (*How?*)

**A**ction-Oriented: (*What are the action steps?*)

1)

2)

3)

**R**ealistic: (*Why or why not?*)

**T**ime-limited: (*What is the timeframe?*)

## Giving Feedback

You can use this as a guide to help you give feedback regarding such issues as dress code, punctuality, and other work-related issues. You may also want to encourage the young person to give feedback. You can share this tool with him/her as well.

**Step 1: Identify the behavior about which you want to give feedback.**

*I would like to give feedback on:*

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**Step 2: Describe the focus of your feedback on behavior.**

*I have observed/noticed that:*

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**Step 3: Describe the effect of the behavior.**

*When you do \_\_\_\_\_, I:*

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**Step 4: Describe the change in behavior that you are recommending.**

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*Points to remember about giving feedback:*

- It is important to share feedback with the young person so that they learn from the experience.
- It is always best to lead with positives.
- Remember to listen and to be empathetic.
- Get feedback on your feedback. Ask how he or she feels about the experience—what worked and what you could have done better.
- Above all, the goal of the experience is for the young person to learn and come away with skills at the end of the summer.

## Top Concerns of Young People In the Workplace

### ***Be prepared!***

It's finally time to start working! Too bad no one knew the young person was coming. Don't forget to mark the start date on your calendar. Making a young person feel welcomed on the first day sets the tone for the rest of the summer.

### ***Where do I go?***

Remember that youth need a place to call their own. A chair, desk, phone, and computer are good places to start. It's not much fun being shuffled from the desk of one absent employee to another.

### ***Give us real work!***

It can't be said too many times that young people want to work and learn. This is an opportunity for a young person to experience something completely new. Guide them in the right direction and provide them with meaningful tasks.

### ***Please explain.***

When you assign work, make sure you give a detailed explanation. While the work may seem easy to you, it may not be so obvious to someone who's never done it before.

### ***We like feedback.***

Remember that your young person is here to learn. They may not have the business skills and experiences that you take for granted. If your young person makes an oversight, just pull him or her aside and explain how the situation should be handled in the future.

### ***Can you spare a minute?***

The best mentor in the world is not effective if he or she can't spend the necessary time mentoring. Youth may not always speak up if they feel like they're not getting enough attention, so the burden of making sure they're ok is on the mentor.

### ***We want to be included too!***

Is there a staff meeting that your young person can attend? Headed to lunch with a couple of people in the office? Try to include your young person in the daily life of your workplace.

## Suggested Activities for Youth

The foundation of a successful program is developing activities to keep your young person engaged and active. These are suggested activities/projects that your young person can do independently or with you:

### Create a Company Newsletter or Website

- Have your young person create a company or departmental newsletter
- The newsletter/website may include:
  - Announcements
  - Recent achievements
  - Profiles of staff

### Rotate to Different Departments

- Expose your young person to multiple facets of your organization
- Help your young person get involved in projects with various departments
- Schedule your young person to spend a day shadowing a member of a department they are interested in

### Review Company Marketing Campaign

- Ask your young person think about how your marketing campaign can appeal to the youth audience
- Have your young person create a proposal with suggestions for improvement

### Coordinate a Meeting

- Allow your young person to coordinate a meeting
- Have your young person
  - Create the agenda
  - Send out the meeting request
  - Prepare the materials
  - Take ownership of one part of the agenda

### Reflect on the Youth Experience

- As the program nears completion, have your young person develop a presentation on the experience
- Encourage your young person to:
  - Utilize multimedia and technological skills learned throughout the experience
  - Reflect on what he or she has learned during the summer
  - Think about his or her favorite projects
- Arrange for your young person to deliver the presentation to you and other members of your department

## Suggested Activities for Youth *in selected industries*

### Healthcare

The healthcare industry provides various opportunities for youth to explore different fields. Last summer, young person in the healthcare industry worked in:

- *Public Relations*- Assisted in photo shoots, developed correspondence, wrote articles for newsletter
- *Pediatric Intensive Care Unit*- Assisted in administrative activities for unit (filing, phones, faxing)
- *Center For Injury Prevention and Trauma*- Assisted in study-related activities (scheduling, interviewing, etc.)
- *Day Surgery/Nursing/Anesthesiology*- Assisted with intake activities, pre/post operative observation
- *Biomedical Engineering*- Assisted with medical supply inspections and delivery of materials to departments
- *Welcome Center*- Assisted families with directions and orientation to hospital facilities
- *HR-Benefits/Compensation*- Assisted with preparations for bi-weekly employee orientation
- *Poison Control*- Assisted with development of marketing materials, phone referrals, database development
- *Nursing Education*- Assisted in development and review of various curricula

### Finance/Banking

Banking institutions have a wide array of positions young people can fill. Last summer, youth in the finance industry:

- Updated database records
- Served as greeters
- Managed registration at corporate events
- Observed press conferences
- Archived and reorganized files
- Contacted vendors to update invoice information
- Assisted with mailings
- Reviewed grant applications for completeness

### General Business

With the confidentiality issues surrounding many fields, it may seem challenging to think of activities for young people to work on. Last year, one law firm had youth work in the Information Technology department, on activities such as:

- Auditing printers throughout the office
- Updating databases
- Assisting with administrative tasks
- Shadowing IT staff