

Developing Worksites

Developing quality worksites is a key component in overall program success. To ensure your program's growth and vitality, worksites and staff must be developed and sustained. Below you will find information to help you enact a plan for worksite recruitment and staff development.

Worksite Engagement:

In order to recruit and develop successful worksites, you must have a targeted engagement strategy. This strategy should include:

- marketing materials;
- strategic partnerships; and
- staff dedicated to recruiting sites.

Business relationships take effort, require a high-level of customer service and will evolve over time. A strong business engagement strategy is critical and should involve key champions, such as:

- District support including wards and block captains
- Employer champions
- Community organizations

Worksites should have multi-level platforms for engagement. This will increase their level of participation and keep them involved year round. For help setting up platforms or referring worksites to other WorkReady opportunities, please contact your program officer. Year round opportunities to consider include but are not limited to:

- Industry pipeline programs
- Career day worksite visits
- Career workshop presentations
- Teacher externships on site

Having a menu of opportunities will give worksites options, provide them with multiple ways to participate and allow them an opportunity to stay connected throughout the year. Participation in these opportunities also strengthens their relationship with young people and allows them to see firsthand how school can connect to work.

Developing Your Recruitment Strategy:

Be Prepared

- Understand your labor market
- Know your local businesses and their market trends
- Identify neighborhood partners
- Know what you can offer to worksites
 - Know your program and all of the services that you can provide
 - Present easy access for your employers
 - Simplify the process for engagement

Developing Worksites (continued)

- Know your young people
 - Understand your young person and their career interests
 - Strategically match youth interests with appropriate employers for best results
- Identify your resources
 - Know your champions— employers who are already engaged in the community
 - Use existing structures and employers to promote your program

Make a Plan

- Clearly state your purpose, goals and objectives
- Define your customer base
 - Target employers likely to be receptive to the message
- Qualify the market
 - Focus on employers in active markets and high growth areas of business
 - Encourage involvement with partners who are involved with youth and the community
- Create the key message
 - Use proven messages that emphasize value when articulating the benefits of your program to potential workplace partners. Here are a few examples of messages that work:
 - Reduces training and recruitment costs by directly connecting to the future workforce.
 - Increases productivity: quality work by young people in the workplace contributes to the bottom line.
 - Builds employee morale and leadership skills through mentoring and coaching young people or volunteering in classrooms.
 - Helps create a vibrant community, leading to prosperous local economies.
 - Generates positive exposure, raising the profile of the firm's commitment to youth, education and the community.
 - Develop a clear and consistent message and stick to it!
- Outline your strategies
 - Create a balance of recruitment activities
 - General awareness: media, events, newsletters
 - Target marketing: mailings, phone calls, emails
 - Direct recruiting: presentations at meetings, associations, industry events
- Create detailed calendar
 - Maintain a consistent and active promotion of your message

Developing Worksites (continued)

Market and Sell

- Focus on customer service
 - You must ensure that all needs of employers will be addressed with a high level of commitment
 - Network in multiple circles
 - Diversify promotion to include many circles of partners for increased engagement
- Prepare your presentation
 - Your presentation must be tailored to address the needs of prospective partners
 - The message always should be clear and consistent
- Ask for the commitment
 - Understand your partner's motivation and value their participation

Flawless Follow Up

- Become the primary resource
 - Partners should see you as a resource for information and problem solving
- Support on-going participation
 - Ensure that needs and expectations are constantly met
- Deliver
 - Partners need to know that you are trustworthy and dependable
- Measure results
 - Developing methods to measure results increases success and engages partners to give feedback
- Stay in continuous contact
 - To ensure satisfaction and develop long-lasting relationships

Staff Development

To ensure partner engagement success, staff needs to be developed and trained to maintain and grow relationships in changing economies and over long periods of time. Partner engagement and staff development are an investment that work together to produce successful results.

Areas of staff development include:

- Creating a professional development plan that includes:
 - Exposure and knowledge of the field of workforce development
 - Workforce Development Trends (Global, National, Regional and Local)
 - Economic Development Information
 - Pipeline Initiatives
 - 21st Century Skills
 - Industry-specific career ladder information
 - On- going training in:
 - Communicating with primary (employers) and secondary (youth) clients
 - Engaging employers in career exploration

Developing Worksites (continued)

- Creating relationships and networking with partners
- Developing and maintaining relationships with employers
- Database management
- Knowledge of workforce preparation (i.e. matching youth to appropriate jobs and including employers in the preparation process)
- Evaluating and adjusting programs based on outcome measurement and data
- Written and verbal communication skills
- Setting individual staff goals and requirements that involve developing strategies to:
 - Engage worksites
 - Develop relationships through networking events, face-to-face meetings and warm introductions
 - Research and define the market
 - Promote long-term partnerships with employers
 - Communicate with employers and partners
 - Understand employer engagement as it is connected to a broader system
 - Provide a service-oriented approach with employers and partners
 - Set milestones for deliverable goals