

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS FOR SPEAKERS AND FIELD TRIPS

A Guide for Teachers

- I. Recruiting Career-Related Speakers
 - a. Why have speakers?
 - i. Show students that “real” people have many kinds of occupations
 - ii. Few people start out (from high school) and work steadily on a straight path toward a career.
 - iii. Encourage students to find a career that interests them, and to start moving (and gaining education or training required) towards that goal, but be open to possibilities.
 - iv. Give the students a reason to stay in school and graduate, help them envision their life beyond high school.
 - b. What kinds of speakers should you invite?
 - i. Recruit public service personnel (firefighters, police, political appointees, CalTrans workers, etc.)
 - ii. Contact major companies’ public relations department, ask for suggestions of who to approach
 1. “Bad guys” often interested in counteracting negative public images (refineries, biotech firms)
 2. Financial institutions – response to their CRA (Community Reinvestment Act) requirements
 3. Medical centers – see this as a community outreach services
 - iii. All employees of the State of California are permitted 2 hours release time per week to work in a school. Many major companies also allow release time for school volunteer work, as well.
 - iv. Look around you! You have resources in your parents and staff.
 - v. Put out the word that you’re looking for speakers. Let them know that they don’t need to be professional speakers, but that you just want them to “chat” with the students.
 - c. What kind of speaker are you looking for? Someone who...
 - i. Can broaden the student’s career horizons/expectations
 - ii. Can give a positive image of opportunities available in the community
 - iii. Likes children, and likes their job, but not necessarily the “perfect employee”.
 - iv. Can explain what they do (in plain English) in general, as well as on a day-to-day basis
 - v. Can explain what skills and training they need for their job.
 1. Do they primarily use their math skills, English? Manual training?
 2. Where did they get those skills?
 3. What led them to be at this job?
 - d. Other things to remember when recruiting a speaker
 - i. Unusual jobs are more interesting, but there will be fewer opportunities in the future, so any field/occupation will do.
 - ii. Wherever possible, recruit speakers with the same ethnicity as the majority of the students, to make it easier for the students to “identify” with them.
 - iii. Request that the speaker wear the same type of clothes that they wear to work

- e. Other sources of speakers
 - i. Rotary Club, Lions Club, Toastmasters, etc.
 - ii. Local Chamber of Commerce (contact the Education Liaison)
 - iii. Business organizations: e.g. If you are studying building, contact the local carpenter's union. If you are studying health, contact the local chapter of the AMA or American Nurses Association.

II. I've Recruited a Speaker: Now What?

- a. Make sure the speaker has clear directions to your school site.
- b. Speak with them before their visit about what they will discuss with the students.
- c. Notify the office staff ahead of time that your speaker is coming, so that they are expected!
- d. Have them meet you (or an assigned student) at the school office, so that they can get signed in, and be escorted to the classroom.
- e. Remember: many people think of school as an intimidating environment! Do everything that you can to put them at ease and feel like an honored guest.

III. After the Event

- a. Send a thank you note within two days of the guest's visit. NO EXCEPTIONS!!
- b. Better yet, have the students write thank you notes.
- c. Send a note to the guest's superior commending the company on their contribution of time to your site.
- d. Put the guest speaker on your mailing list, and include them in future solicitations.
- e. Do not be afraid to recruit them for additional resources: many people are just waiting to be asked to contribute time and other resources. This person already has a connection with your site. Utilize it!

IV. Field Trips

- a. Using the same ideas and sources as you would to recruit speakers, look for places that would welcome the students to their employer site.
- b. Try to think of (and solicit) sites that have multiple types of jobs being done (e.g. medical center, factory, public works departments, etc.)
- c. Ask for a tour guide who can point out the different types of jobs being done.
- d. Often sites will have "freebees" to give to the students. Make sure that the tour guide knows ahead of time how many students to expect.
- e. After getting the company/organization to commit to the tour, ask if they have funds to assist with offsetting the cost of transportation.
- f. The same rules regarding thank you notes apply! Remember: you may be recruiting an entire company. Make them feel good about the partnership and they'll want to expand it!

Q: What's the #1 Reason Why People Volunteer?

A. They Are Asked.

(It's that simple!)