

Employer Guest Speaker Tip Sheet

Thanks for agreeing to present as a guest speaker. As you think about how to best prepare for your presentation, keep the following success factors in mind.

Before the Presentation

- Provide the Teacher/Faculty with website link(s) about your company, industry and profession to help learners⁶ prepare for your presentation.
- Build talking points that will engage the learners. Find out what they're currently focused on in the classroom so you can link to the curriculum.
- Ask for presentation tips and for help to address any concerns you may have.
- Review where to park and enter the school. If you have special requirements for the presentation, such as a projector or computer set-up, let the Connector know.
- Bring your business cards; the learners may ask for them. If you're handing out materials, ask for an estimate of the number you'll need.
- If you're "visiting" the classroom electronically, via Skype, Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams or some other technology, arrange for a test run prior to the presentation to work out any kinks.

Suggested Talking Points:

- Describe your career journey.
- Talk about obstacles you overcame.
- Discuss need for perseverance, hard work and getting along well with others.
- Manage expectations about the world of work.

Tips to Share:

- Avoid job hopping.
- Build your network (talk about how to do that).
- Be a continuous learner and stay abreast of industry changes.

During the Presentation

- Introduce yourself, your company and job title. Let the learners know what to expect from your presentation.
- Try not to read from prepared notes and if you're using insider lingo, define those industry terms and acronyms.
- Use visual aids such as a product, tool or any materials from your company that will help the learners understand what you do.
- Describe a typical day at your company and help learners understand as much as they can about the culture of the workplace and the world of work.
- Share the educational and career path you took to your current position.
- If possible, share mistakes you've made and how you have addressed problems.
- If possible, make your presentation interactive with role playing, mock projects, hands-on activities, etc. Ask questions of the learners, making it a two-way dialogue.

Engagement Tips

- Don't talk for longer than 3-4 minutes straight, without pausing for some sort of interaction (a question, a comment, etc.)
- Share a "fun fact" about yourself – something you enjoy doing outside of work today, or something you liked to do when you were their age.
- Use humor, if you're comfortable.

⁶ Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

- Ask for non-verbal audience feedback to keep the audience engaged and check for understanding, for example ask for thumbs up or down, or have them use a 1-5 finger rating scale.
- Repeat things more than you think you have to.
- Use stories as examples.
- Utilize visuals where you can, whether that's physical objects or photos. Simply including logos or clipart keeps learners more engaged.
- Utilize "wait time!" If you ask the group a question, they will almost definitely sit silently at first. Don't be afraid to wait 30-60 seconds for someone to raise their hand, or you can cold call students to share.
- Don't be afraid to make it conversational by peppering your presentation with questions for the listeners. Examples of probing questions could include:
 - o *What do you already know about this job?*
 - o *Does anyone here know someone who works in _____? What do they like/dislike about it?*
 - o *What skills do you think are important for the job?*
 - o *Has anyone here experienced _____too? What was it like?*

After the Presentation

- Provide feedback to the Connector to improve future guest speaker presentations.
- Consider how you might use this presentation to promote your company's visibility.

Go Deeper

- Talk to the Connector about being a guest trainer, helping with curriculum, or hosting learners for Job Shadows, Jobs or Internships.