

Partnering With Employers

A GUIDE TO BUILDING POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS
BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS FOR SUCCESS

*Chancellor's Office Statewide Advisory Committee
for Work-Based Learning and Employment Services*

www.calworkplace.org

BUILDING POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS

California Community Colleges provide a gateway to success via degree, transfer and certification programs. Much of this success can be attributed to the strong partnerships that departments and campuses have created with business and industry. This guide is designed to offer ideas and motivation to enhance or build employer partnerships for faculty, staff and leaders throughout the state.

Partnering with industry makes good sense. It enriches the quality of education by adding current and relevant information and an awareness of state-of-the-art technologies and trends. It creates work-based learning opportunities such as internships and job shadowing. It provides classroom speakers and attractive jobs for students. It makes available access to a variety of needed resources.

The Chancellor's Committee for Work-Based Learning and Employment Services developed a "best practices" sampling based on input from school and employer partnerships throughout the state. Critical success factors were gleaned from these samples, and are enclosed herein, to aid you in defining how you want your employer partnerships to function.

We hope you find the guide helpful and welcome your suggestions and comments. Please send us your examples at www.calworkplace.org or call Helen Beaird at (213) 744-9066, Helen_J_Beaird@laccd.cc.ca.us or call Chuck Robbins at (707) 527-4498, robbins@wco.com.

Respectfully,

Chancellor's Office Statewide Advisory Committee for Work-Based Learning and Employment Services

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Success Stories

School - Employer Events

California State University, Fullerton

- Professor for a Day

Hosted by the Business School Dean. For two days, 200 business professionals connect with various business classes and faculty. Alumni are key participants and executives are matched depending on their areas of expertise. Quality printed programs and strong organization of the event contribute to its success. Participants are surveyed.

DeVry Career Expo - Employee Recruitment

Fifteen companies meet directly with job ready students for entry-level management positions.

Western Association of Colleges and Employers (WACE) - Professional Exchange Program

Thirty career counselors and related staff go to employer sites for half day, hands-on experiences.

CSU Fullerton - Honors Networking Program for Industry Leaders

Companies define marketing projects for top MBA and undergraduate students. For \$100 per year, students develop marketing pieces for internal and external corporate use. The program is touted via flyers and a calendar of year-round events, which also promotes participating employers. Employers have direct access to students and faculty; professor contact information is on the material sent to the organizations. Previous participating employers are on the marketing pieces sent to companies, too. This program creates high visibility for companies on campus and assists them in management recruitment.

Santa Monica College Job Center

- Recruiter Workshop

A half day workshop assists recruiters in how to efficiently access college resources and candidates.

Mount San Antonio College

- Transfer and Career Awareness Week

A well-planned, well-marketed, week-long event integrates career and college pathways.

Chapman University

- Student Employment Services

Employers use an easy access, one page form, via phone, Internet, e-mail or fax, to post jobs.

Fullerton Community College

- Job Placement Services

Employers have the opportunity to gain exposure on campus by becoming Community Resource Representatives.

Companies and other agencies are scheduled to provide job information, employment guidance, resume writing and interviewing assistance, and access to resources.

Success Stories

School - Employer Partnerships

Contra Costa College & Kaiser Permanente

Jointly manage a Radiology Technologist program which has graduated over 150 students since 1991. Graduates are licensed and work for Kaiser or other employers. Kaiser's top management and Human Resources department strongly support the effort and evaluate the program annually.

Los Angeles City College & Washington Mutual

Run a Banking Career Awareness Program. Introduces welfare recipients to the industry via a thirty hour course, followed by an interview with Washington Mutual and a fifteen week paid internship. Full or part-time employment may result based on performance.

Los Angeles Mission College & the Entertainment Industry

Created a diverse partnership which included Touchstone Interactive, Disney, DreamWorks, Tekworks, Tetramedia and other large and small businesses, independent producers, directors and artists. The partnership advises on state-of-the-art equipment, software and work skills needed to meet employer demands in this rapidly evolving field.

San Jose City College, Mission College & Intel

This program incorporates a "virtual reality" into the instruction through a fun and competitive software game that brings business fundamentals to life. It is aligned to Intel's business model. It's leveraged and coordinated with "like" resources and successes of all partners.

Los Angeles Trade Tech College & the Fashion Industry

Partners included the West Coast Textile and Clothing Corporation, Edison International, Textile Association of Los Angeles and many others. Together, they offer innovative seminars using industry-sponsored computer equipment. This is the largest apparel design and merchandising program in the western United States, and serves as the leader of the industry panel on Apparel Education for the California Trade and Commerce Association.

Los Angeles Harbor College & General Motors

Developed a marketing internship program in which students plan, organize and manage a one day promotion of real General Motors products. Students write a marketing proposal and plan, then verbally present their ideas to GM regional and dealership management. Students compile a final summary report for the entire class.

California Community Colleges & the Federal Aviation Administration

Curriculums have been developed and are in use at colleges and trade schools for the purpose of recruiting and hiring graduates, and training current FAA employees. Training is for such occupations as Airway Transportation Systems Specialists and Air Traffic Controllers. Following graduation, program participants may advance their education and careers at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City in areas such as automation, environmental navigation and radar. Completion of these courses results in professional certification(s).

CSU Dominguez Hills & Sears

Sears sponsors a link on the campus website, "The Pulse," where companies can post a monthly questionnaire. This serves to market the company, recruit potential employees and engage students. Prizes are offered to students completing the questionnaire, and winners are recognized in the school newspaper.

Los Angeles Harbor College & Los Angeles World's Airport Police Bureau

An intensive, six-week security officer program includes industry-specific skills designed with input from two LAX captains, an LAPD commander and other professionals. Use of airport facilities after hours provides "real world" training experience. Topics range from fire suppression to traffic control to mediation.

TEN CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS: PROVEN PARTNERSHIP BUILDING STRATEGIES

We studied these practices and interviewed many partners to find those key fundamentals that led to successful partnerships. These are distilled into the following ten groups:

1. **Leads / Targeting**
2. **Create value proposition**
3. **Professional / Efficient communications**
4. **Solve recruiting challenges**
5. **Execute / Exceed expectations**
6. **Generate visibility**
7. **Offer effective tools / Processes**
8. **Aggressive Marketing / Outreach**
9. **Customer service mentality**
10. **Just "Do It" Attitude**

Leads / Targeting

Educators were looking for and open to new partnerships.

- 1 Identified new leads by spending time in business and industry.
- 2 Were ready and quick to take advantage of possible new partnerships that simply presented themselves.
- 3 Worked their personal networks assertively, asking family, friends and colleagues for help.
- 4 Sought out companies with strong employment needs, community image challenges, etc.
- 5 Qualified leads to establish if there would be value for both the company and the school.
- 6 Conducted mass outreaches via flyers and mailers, to generate interested leads.

Creating the Value Proposition

Educators were better prepared to ensure a successful partnership by really getting to know the company.

- 1 Took the time to understand the needs, issues, priorities, goals, personalities, corporate culture and organizational structure.
- 2 Studied the company's key qualitative and quantitative measures to see where the mutually beneficial relationship could be established.
- 3 Considered the hiring needs and challenges facing their partner.
- 4 Understood the corporate image, the customer image and the community image they wished to project and assisted them in doing so.
- 5 Researched the company's philanthropic needs and linked them to the college.
- 6 Explored corporate philosophy to determine if the company wanted to provide economic development, workforce development or educational leadership via the campus.
- 7 Determined who the key company decision makers were to invite into partnerships.
- 8 Answered the question - How can the college add more benefit than cost for this partner?

Professional Communication

- 1 Communicated clearly and concisely with no academic jargon.
- 2 Used industry terminology and the language of business ("bottom line", "ROI", etc.)
- 3 Initiated and responded to communication with an appropriate sense of urgency and responsiveness.
- 4 Learned about the company to target the messages to the needs of that business.
- 5 Planned employer events well in advance to give companies maximum notice.
- 6 Produced an annual calendar of events that allowed employer and community partners to plan in accordance with one another.

Solving Human Resource Needs Efficiently

- 1 Conducted well-organized, well-planned Career and/or Job Fairs; ensured the students were prepared.
- 2 Provided efficient student-job matching systems that were easy to use and guaranteed high student traffic and involvement.
- 3 Offered "turn key" services to employers such as office or meeting space, interviewing recruitments, newsletters, professional career centers and postings featuring:
- 4 Offered a menu of alternatives and resources
- 5 Self Service component
- 6 Brief training on how to use the college resources, if necessary

Executing Quality Activities

- 1 Planned events well, with collaboration from partners.
- 2 Designed and printed written materials professionally.
- 3 Staffed sufficiently for events; staff was well-trained and thoroughly prepared to conduct their assignments.
- 4 Managed expectations from the onset to ensure expectations were met or exceeded.
- 5 Assembled sufficient resources to follow-through on all initiatives.
- 6 Ensured meeting logistics were professionally executed (venue, food, audio/visual, etc.)

Maximizing Partner Visibility

- 1 Colleges were generous and creative about ensuring companies got a lot of “credit” in the eyes of students and staff on campus.
- 2 Promoted companies on campus with flyers, banners, signs, web systems or sites
- 3 Newsletters / Newspapers and Bulletin Boards.

Tools / Processes that Work

- 1 Built a strong foundation with faculty and administration prior to launching a new business partnership through activities such as:
 - *Job Shadowing with business people.*
 - *Participating in pairing activities with business partners.*
- 2 Developed consultant services with students as consultants, creating authentic solutions with a market driven reality.
- 3 Ran a fax/ e-mail / Internet matching system especially tied to graduation, interests and majors.
- 4 Allowed companies to tie directly into college communication tools or surveys for feedback and promotion. Provided opportunities for students to be rewarded for their responses.

Be a Marketer / Conduct Aggressive Outreach

- 1 Implemented the basics of sound marketing with all their partner contacts, such as:
- 2 Solving the employer's problems or challenges.
- 3 Using professional and creative materials and brochures.
- 4 Developing eye-catching messages, slogans and logos.
- 5 Initiated contact by aggressively selling the college versus expecting the employers to come to them.
- 6 Contacted potential business partners continuously.
- 7 Recruited partners through business organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, trade and professional associations and service clubs.
- 8 Asked existing partners to market the school to potential new partners.

Raving Fan Customer Service

- 1 Treated partners like highly valued customers.
- 2 Responded effectively to the needs and communication of the partners.
- 3 Utilized modern communication systems such as voicemail, pagers and e-mail; used them correctly adhering to business standards of communication.
- 4 Solved problems and created solutions rather than giving excuses.
- 5 Developed a “commercial standard” like Nordstroms, to define customer service norms.
- 6 Underpromised and overdelivered - never made promises that couldn't be kept.

Getting Started - “Just Do IT” Attitude

- 1 Had a “Can Do” attitude and fostered it among all educators working with the partners.
- 2 Started networking through immediate contacts and built from these.
- 3 Focused on the precept, “Know thy target partner.”
- 4 Built a good relationship through active and careful listening and shared understanding.
- 5 Made professional contacts.
- 6 Managed their time and that of their partners efficiently.
- 7 Found out how and made the partners into winners.



A Call to Action

There has never been a better time to engage the private sector in education. A reservoir of goodwill and enlightened, self-interested employers are eager to establish win-win relationships. They rely on the graduates we produce to run their organizations and want to be actively involved in this endeavor.

We hope that you and your colleagues will champion this movement within your departments and campuses, and continue the rich tradition of success established in the California Community College system.

Please share your best practices and success stories with us. Send them to www.calworkplace.org or call Helen Beaird at (213) 744-9066, Helen_J_Beaird@laccd.cc.ca.us or call Chuck Robbins at (707) 527-4498, robbins@wco.com.