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**How To Connect with Your Local Schools**

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** Grades 6-12, Colleges and Universities

**SYNOPSIS:** To encourage employers and businesses in aging-related fields to visit local schools and discuss career opportunities, fostering interest among students and addressing future workforce needs.

**REQUIRED PLANNING TIME:** Varies based on event size and activity

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:**

1. **Preparation/Organizing Your Event**
   1. **Identify schools.** Partner with schools offering health sciences, family and consumer sciences, or career development programs.
   2. **Develop resources**. Create a presentation and handouts exploring all careers available in your organization, industry growth, skills and qualifications. Share information about job-shadowing, tuition reimbursement, scholarships, or other training opportunities.
   3. **Establish partnerships**. Reach out to local school districts, career counselors, and educators to identify appropriate classes or events. Coordinate with workforce development organizations for funding or logistical support.
2. **Outreach and Scheduling**
   1. **Determine participants.** Recruit employees from your organization to participate. Offer incentives, such as recognition or networking opportunities for engaging with schools.
   2. **Schedule visits.** Coordinate with schools to align with career fairs, facility open house, or classroom schedules. Ensure presentations target appropriate age groups (e.g., middle school, high school).
   3. **Promote your partnership.** Share before, during and after your event on social media, websites, and other local media.
3. **Implementation**
   1. **Provide hands-on learning activities**. Students prefer applied learning versus seated, lecture-style presentations.
   2. **Explore real world scenarios.** Include day-in-the-life experiences of professionals in your organization.
   3. **Discuss how students can get involved.** Share about employment, volunteerism, and internship opportunities.
4. **Follow-Up and Evaluation**
   1. **Thank your partners.** Send a thank you to all partners involved.
   2. **Determine evaluation metrics and collect feedback.** Use survey results from students and teachers, and gather insights from participating employees to measure the presentation's impact and make adjustments, as needed. Examples of metrics include number of schools and students reached, employee participation, and students’ interest in aging-related careers.
   3. **Share results.** Highlight successful visits in newsletters or social media to encourage more participation, share student feedback with employers to reinforce the program's value.
   4. **Build on momentum.** Create a sustainable program by maintaining the relationship with the school district and expanding outreach to include more partners (e.g., colleges, universities, workforce training centers).

**SAMPLE RESOURCES:** *(the below are examples of resources that could be included but will vary depending on the event/activity)*

**Sample planning checklist:**

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| **Preparing for Your Event** |
| * Create your presentation and other hand-outs. Make copies for participants. * Design and gather materials for hands-on activities. * Secure a space large enough to host your event. * Secure transportation or coordinate with school district staff (as applicable) * Identify and invite presenters * Create event signage (e.g., welcome banners, directional and parking signage) * Recruit additional support staff to assist with event * Ensure permission has been granted by school leaders, parents/guardians, or others * Create and distribute communication tools (e.g., promotional flyers, permission forms) * Develop a plan for providing snacks and beverages for participants and presenters (as appropriate) * Create plan for assessing event * Ensure that the host building is clean and has accessible entrances and bathrooms * Share about your event with your organization, the event partners, and public-facing media outlets |
| **Day of Your Event** |
| * Set-up event (e.g. signage, event supplies and equipment, registration table, technology, room layout, decorate) * Welcome guests and direct attendees as they arrive. Ensure all speakers have arrived. * Monitor event flow, keep track of time, ensure schedule is followed. * Assist speakers to ensure they have everything they need (e.g. tech assistance, water). * Maintain communication with team members, vendors, and attendees. * Solve problems and address any issues that arise (e.g. tech issues, attendee concerns). * Monitor clean-up by ensuring the venue is cleared properly and all materials are packed/put away. * Thank attendees, presenters, special guests and partners. |
| **Post-Event** |
| * Send thank-you notes to guests, vendors, and speakers. * Gather event participation or other evaluation data * Create a sustainability plan. Capture feedback on how to improve the event in the future. |