

# **INTRODUCTION TO JOB SHADOWING**

Whether you are a participating employer, educator, or volunteer host, participating in job shadowing is easy and fun. Job shadowing immerses each student in the world of work, where they can get first-hand information about job skills and careers. By bringing students into the workplace to see a marketing professional or a health care technician at work, very real and tangible options come alive for them. Job shadowing provides exciting reasons why students should stay in school. It creates a critical link between education and success.

Job Shadowing is a popular work based learning activity because it provides students with opportunities to gather information on a wide variety of career possibilities before deciding where they want to focus their attention. Job shadows involve student visits to a variety of work places during which time students observe and ask questions of individual workers. Job shadows are designed so students play an active role in learning. Classroom exercises conducted prior to and following the job shadow experience are designed to help students connect their experience to their course work and relate the visits directly to career pathways, related skill requirements, and post-secondary educational options.

## **GOALS OF THE SHADOWING PROGRAM**

- Demonstrate the connections between academics and careers and helps students learn by making their class work more relevant.
- Builds community partnerships between schools and businesses that enhance the educational experience of all students.
- Introduces students to the requirements of professions and industries to help them prepare to join the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Encourages an ongoing relationship between young people and caring adults.

# **BENEFITS OF THE JOB SHADOWING PROGRAM**

Shadowing can provide experiences that are as unique as every person who participates. For the student who has never understood the point of school, a shadowing experience can show how education can be translated into rewarding and financially secure future. For the teacher looking for new ways to motivate students, it can provide a fun and unusually hands-on experience that demonstrates the link between schoolwork and real life, answering the question, “Why do I have to learn this?” For those in the work place, being a host site can help forge personally satisfying connections with young people that could ultimately contribute to building a more prepared and focused workforce of tomorrow.

## **Workplace Benefits**

- Showcases your place of work by increasing visibility in your community
- Prepares our future work force
- Informs students about careers in your industry or line of work
- Enables employees to easily participate in a community activity
- Strengthens and promotes involvement in education

## **Volunteer Benefits**

- Introduce the world of work to a young person in just a few short hours
- Become a positive adult role model
- Showcases the volunteer's skills and education
- Impact a young person's life in a fun way

## **Teacher Benefits**

- Invites teachers to see the modern applications of a basic education
- Provides up-to-date job examples to share with other students
- Enables teachers to see new technologies being used
- Showcases their students in the community
- Enables students to understand the relevance of what is being taught

## **Student Benefits**

- Provides an up-close look at workplaces and careers
- Demonstrates the link between education and future success
- Creates a new connection to the world of work
- Provides important information to make smart career choices
- Prepares a personal action plan to get the education and skills needed to pursue career interests

Job Shadow Day is composed of several components, built around a work place visit that can last as little as one hour or several days.

## **STUDENT PREPARATION**

Job Shadow Day is a natural partnership between the classroom and the workplace. Before the visit, the students participate in activities that prepare them for the visit. During the experience, workplace hosts should conduct activities with students that demonstrate job skills and educational requirements. After the site visit, the students participate in post activities to reinforce and share what they learned.

## **ROLE OF THE WORK SITE HOST**

- ❑ Shows a desire to work with students and introduces them to the positive aspects of work
- ❑ Has ability to communicate openly and in a nonjudgmental fashion with students
- ❑ Wants to invest in a student's current and future career path
- ❑ Has ability to work with persons of different educational, economic, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds
- ❑ Is capable of linking learning to work place skills
- ❑ Is willing to spend approximately one hour reviewing materials and planning in preparation for the day
- ❑ Is willing to dedicate part of the workday to the student and remain fully available to that student during the visit
- ❑ Gives visiting students explanations of workplace safety and security policies and procedures
- ❑ Helps students understand skills needed for the job
- ❑ Demonstrates and explains effective work methods

## **ROLE OF THE STUDENT**

- Demonstrates desire to explore career options, personal skills, attributes
- Willing to develop a personal action plan to improve education and skills
- Participates in preparatory activities conducted by the school
- Follows all safety and security policies and procedures of the employer
- Actively participates in activities structured by the Workplace Host

## **ROLE OF THE TEACHER OR SCHOOL COORDINATOR**

- ✓ Identifies interested students
- ✓ Provides the Workplace Coordinator with descriptions of participating students, including their special needs and interests and courses of study
- ✓ Teaches students a selection of pre- and post-job site activities
- ✓ Collects Parent/Guardian Consent Form and Medical Authorization
- ✓ Arranges student's transportation to work site
- ✓ Accompanies students to site or manages supervision

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

In order for the student to understand your job and the work place skills you use to perform your job, it is important that you think about your job and how a person can obtain this type of position. You will have to communicate many of these concepts to your student shadow.

Here are some questions to help you organize your thoughts.

- ✓ What is your job title?
- ✓ What are your responsibilities?
- ✓ How do you help this workplace meet its goals?
- ✓ What is a typical day like for you?
- ✓ What do you like the most about your job? Why?
- ✓ What do you the least about your job? Why?
- ✓ Why did you select this type of work?
- ✓ How much education do you need for this job?
- ✓ Did you need more job training after you completed your education?
- ✓ How do you use reading on the job?
- ✓ How do you use writing skills on the job?
- ✓ Is math important to your job?
- ✓ Why is it important to have good listening skills?
- ✓ When do you need to use good speaking skills?
- ✓ Do you work on a team on your job?
- ✓ What kind of problems do you solve on your job?
- ✓ What skills do you need to solve those problems?
- ✓ What did you learn in school that helps you most on the job?
- ✓ What do you wish you had studied more of when you were in school?

## ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS TO DEMONSTRATE

### Telephone Skills

Demonstrate the correct procedure for answering phones and instruct the student on what is appropriate. If your job entails a significant amount of phone work, demonstrate communication skills by allowing the student to listen to a few calls on the speakerphone. Be sure to introduce your student to the caller and let the caller know that you have a "shadow." Prepare a list of calls that you can make that will help the student understand your job. Before each call, explain to the student what you hope to accomplish. At the end of each call, review the results you achieved, positive or negative. In addition, you may wish to review the skills you used on the phone.

### Computer Skills

**Word processing:** Dictate a memo or letter to your "shadow." Explain the reason you need to write the memo, and ask the student's opinion on how to express some thoughts.

**Spreadsheets:** Copy a spreadsheet into a new file and have the student input or manipulate data. Have the student change some parameters and notice how the entire spreadsheet changes. Have the student think about how long it used to take to change the rows and columns by hand.

**E-mail:** Dictate to the student an e-mail message and have him/her send it.

**Graphic software:** Copy a file and have the student help you design something for a current project.

**CAD:** Copy a file, then discuss your design parameters. Ask your student for input on a design change you are working on and have him/her make the change.

### Skills/Equipment

**Adding machines:** Prepare some calculations for the student to complete.

**Fax:** Have the student send faxes for you throughout the day.

**Other:** Have the student experiment with other equipment that is safe for him/her to use, such as the postal meter or copy machine.

### Client/Customer Contact

If your job requires client or customer contact, have the student observe the exchange.

### Meeting Skills

Having the student attend a meeting with you is fine as long as it is inside the building. Before the meeting, give the student some background information so he/she better understands the conversation. It is recommended that meetings last no longer than an hour.

### Presentation Skills

Show the student a presentation you are working on. Have the student critique your presentation. Then have the student add ideas of his/her own. Ask the student to modernize it for you or show you how to market more effectively to people his/her age. Encourage all the student's ideas.

## **PLAN THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES**

The following guidelines will help workplace hosts plan before students join them in their workplace so that both the host and the students get the most out of the job shadowing experience.

### **Greet Your Student**

Your student should be greeted as an adult business associate, with a handshake and a warm hello.

### **Introduce Yourself**

Provide your name, job title and business card. Let your student know that you volunteered to be a workplace host because you think it is important for students to see firsthand the application of what they are learning in school. Encourage them to ask questions during the time you have together.

### **Talk to the Student about Themselves**

**Interests and Hobbies** - Students are most relaxed when they are talking about something they know and aren't being "tested" by an adult. Take some time with this question. Ask your student what hobbies they enjoy and why.

**Community Service** - Community service can accomplish three important functions in your students life: 1) it makes his/her community a better place to live; 2) it will help him/her get into the college of his/her choice; and 3) it provides him/her with an opportunity to gain valuable job skills. Many people started their careers by volunteering.

**Career Interests** - Ask your student about his/her career interests. If possible, relate those interests to any careers in your workplace. Note: Your student may not know what careers interest him/her. In that case, reassure your student that finding the right career path takes time.

**Job Experience** - Talk about your student's job experience in positive terms including babysitting and newspaper delivery. What did your student like about the job? What did he/she learn from the job? Tell your student about any jobs you held as a youth and how those early jobs helped you get where you are today.

**Special Skills** - Ask the student if they have any special skills such as computer skills, speaking skills, dancing, swimming, etc. Try and relate skill development to future success on the job.

**Education** - This is your opportunity to encourage your student to get a good education. Reinforce that what your student is learning in school is important to earning a good living. When employers look at a resume, they look at the education level of an applicant. Tell them how much education you have completed.

**Student Interview** - To provide more insight about your job, suggest that your student conduct an interview with you. You can use this opportunity to help your student link what he/she is learning in school to what you do on the job. Answer questions thoughtfully. If appropriate, comment on any good interviewing skills your student demonstrated.

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# **PLANNING A COMPANY ORIENTATION**

Students arrive and are settled in a comfortable meeting place.

## **Orientation Session (10 minutes)**

- Introduction of Senior Leadership Personnel to discuss:
  - Mission of workplace
  - Purpose of workplace
  - Personal note: Why is my job important to me?
  - Why I'm glad you've joined us today.
  - Reason they're involved in Job Shadow Day.

## **Workplace Coordinator Introduction (20 minutes)**

- Conducts workplace tour
- Passes out organizational chart (simplified, if necessary) to students
- Engages in brief discussion of different departmental functions

## **Human Resources Director Introduction (10 minutes)**

- What is the role of Human Resources Director
- Reason they're involved in Job Shadow Day
- Why the Human Resources Director is glad to be participating in job Shadow Day

## **View Organization Video (if available) (10 minutes)**

- Good introduction to workplace for students
- Visually reinforces comments from senior leadership
- Usually relates workplace to community and people

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR A LUNCH SESSION**

Lunch is a great opportunity to gather everyone together for a relaxed review of the day so far. Workplace Hosts might want to facilitate one of the following activities to make this time even more productive. These activities provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their experience and how it relates to their future education, training and career development. Workplace Hosts may join the students for an informal lunch. If they do, have them sit dispersed throughout the students to facilitate further discussions.

### **Lunch (25-30 minutes)**

#### **Suggested Menus**

- Order pizza in several varieties. Pizza is always a hit at any age.
- Order box lunches, as if for a business meeting (tip: keep the menu very simple, such as turkey sandwiches, chips and fruit).
- Have the students join in the cafeteria line.

#### **Where to Eat**

- If possible, have the students eat where the employees eat.
- Students may eat in a large meeting room.
- Weather permitting, students may enjoy outside seating areas.

### **Lunch Activities (10-15 minutes apiece) (Select one or more)**

- "More than Meets the Eye" (included.) Make sure to review this activity before students arrive as well as make copies of the worksheet.
  - If the Human Resources person has not met the students, have him/her speak on the need for strong skills and education in the workplace. The Human Resources person can also discuss what he/she looks for when hiring and other benefits besides salaries that employees enjoy. Facilitate conversations between students and the Human Resources person about what the students learned about working in the workplace. Reinforce the message that every job in the workplace is important.
  - Have a final demonstration of something the workplace does, such as a slide presentation of some projects the workplace has completed, or packages of products, or a video, if not yet viewed. Ask the student what types of jobs and what skills were needed for the workplace to be successful.
  - Students may fill out their Student Reflection Activity.
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## **IT'S A TEAM EFFORT: JOB SHADOW DAY WRAP-UP SESSION**

If teachers participate in Job Shadow Day, they can collaborate with Workplace Hosts to conduct the following activities on site to conclude the day's experience for students. This activity is designed to illustrate how different departments in the world of work are interrelated, and how teamwork plays an integral role in getting any job done. It will also demonstrate that every employee counts in the success of the workplace.

### **Materials Needed**

30 organizational charts (provided by host site)  
30 copies of attached worksheet  
30 pencils

The teacher and the Workplace Host wrap up the day, making the following points:

- The world of work is within reach for every student.
- The jobs that students will hold in the future will be as different as the ones seen here today.
- Each job is important to the success of the workplace.

Ask the students: "From what you saw today, what do you think are the overall goals of this workplace?" (The answers may include the following: to make a profit, to provide a good service, to help the community, etc.). Have Workplace Hosts remind the students what the real goals of the workplace are.

### **Activity**

Pass out the organizational chart to the students. Explain that an organizational chart graphically illustrates how a workplace operates: it depicts which departments report to the senior leadership or to another department. Give a specific workplace example of how this works. Break students into five groups and distribute the "It's a Team Effort" worksheet to each student. Before this activity, pick five departments in your workplace to eliminate - one per group. Write them on separate sheets of paper, and pass out the name of ONE eliminated department to each group. Be sure the other groups do not see them.

Tell the students you have just given them the name of a department and that you want them to cross out that department's name from the organizational chart. Each group has been given a different department; their job will be to identify what might happen if that department was eliminated from the workplace. Give the groups 10 minutes to fill out the worksheet. Tell each group to select a recorder and a reporter. The recorder will write down the information for the group, while the reporter will summarize the group's answers to the entire class. The teacher and the workplace host should move around the room to help facilitate group discussion. Remember that this is not a test! Answering all of the questions will be key to student learning during this activity.

**Summarizing the Findings**

Tell the class they will have to listen to the groups' answers very carefully, as it will be the class assignment to try to guess which department was eliminated from the reporting group's organizational chart. Each reporter must be allowed to present his/her full answer before the class is allowed to guess (no interruptions). Suggest that the class refer to the organizational chart. Once the correct answer is given, the next reporter should be called.

Wrap up the discussion by summarizing the activity for the students:

- It is the combined skills of all the employees that allow the workplace to operate successfully.
- Every department is key to the overall success of the workplace.
- The departments work together to successfully meet the workplace's goals.

## WORKPLACE HOST EVALUATION FORM

Thank you for participating in Job Shadow Day! Please complete this brief evaluation and return it to your Workplace Coordinator. He or she can share it with his or her Job Shadow Day partners in order to continue to improve the program.

**Please rate the following on a scale of 1 through 5** (1 indicates that you strongly agree with the statement, and 5 indicates that you strongly disagree).

I was well prepared to be a Workplace Host. 1 2 3 4 5

Today I gained a new perspective about my job. 1 2 3 4 5

I was at ease interacting with my student throughout the day. 1 2 3 4 5

I enjoyed my experience and would be willing to do it again. 1 2 3 4 5

I would recommend Job Shadowing to other employees. 1 2 3 4 5

For successful Job Shadowing experiences in the future, you might:

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What should we stop doing?

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How could we better support you throughout your experience?

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Any additional comments?

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