

How to engage employers:

A guide for schools and colleges





Leicester & Leicestershire
Enterprise Partnership

creating economic prosperity

With thanks to Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership for sharing the content of their original employer guide and for allowing us to re-purpose the content included.

Contents

1. How to get started	
Five handy tips to help you engage.	1
<hr/>	
2. Case studies	
How schools and colleges have already developed successful employer engagement activities.	7
<hr/>	
3. Templates	
Sample documents to help get you started, keep going, and create a database of contacts.	9
<hr/>	
4. Other sources of help	
Organisations who may be able to help with education-business offers.	17
<hr/>	
5. Glossary terms	18
<hr/>	



The purpose of this guide is to help your school or college to build long-lasting relationships with local employers to enhance the interventions your students receive throughout their time at your establishment. The guide offers top tips to help you engage with employers and then sustain those relationships. It is designed as a practical guide to give you the confidence to get started.

1 | How to get started

Five handy tips to help you engage new and existing employers in supporting your school's or college's careers activities

Whilst we know employer engagement in your careers programme is key to its success, and will help you meet the Gatsby Benchmarks, we also know it takes up precious time. This guide has been created with that in mind, providing top tips and templates you can pick and choose from, and use as best suits your available time.

Our experience from across the Enterprise Adviser Network shows us that where Careers Education is working well, there is ownership and support provided by a senior leader within the institution. As you develop a plan for employer engagement in your school or college, ensure this plan is both supported and driven by your Principal/Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body. This will ensure they can all support strategic links with local business and that this approach is embedded across your organisation.

Tip 1. Plan ahead. Before you start to contact employers, it is worth planning ahead and thinking about the following; why and what do you need employers to do within your school or college?

The Government's recent Careers Strategy asks that schools and colleges work towards meeting all eight Gatsby Benchmarks by 2020. Employers have a role to play across all benchmarks especially:

Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers.

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees.

Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces.

1. How could a business help your students?

- Engaging with employers helps to prepare and inspire young people for the fast-changing world of work. Research shows that if a young person has four or more encounters with the world of work during their secondary education, they are 86% less likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training).
- The Careers Strategy requires schools and colleges to embed Career-Related Learning into the curriculum as outlined in Gatsby Benchmark 4. Your curriculum teaching could be brought to life with real-world examples, and this is further enhanced if people from business are in the classroom helping to deliver the lesson.
- If students are motivated and engaged about their future, this can lead to increased attendance and participation.
- Helping students explore the possible jobs and pathways for them can also lead to positive destinations.

2. How could a business help you and your colleagues?

- Would you like to go on work experience? Evidence shows that teacher CPD which supports teachers to personally understand more about the world of work, benefits both the teachers and students long term. Understanding different industries and sectors can help you bring real life scenarios into your curriculum and teaching.

3. What sort of businesses would be most suitable?

- Do you want to showcase particular industries or job types that you know your students are interested in?
- Do you want to show them what the future world of work might look like? Are there businesses locally who are developing new technologies?
- Do you want them to hear from apprentices/ graduates from local businesses?
- Are there particular needs of your students that employers could support?
- Is your area typically made up of entrepreneurs, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) or large corporates?
- Which businesses reflect the local economy and job opportunities? Your Enterprise Coordinator will be able to provide guidance on this.

Tip 2. Who and how to engage.

Wherever possible, we recommend having one central person building a schools' employer network, in many cases this will be the Careers Leader. Having one person reaching and mapping interested parties will help ensure a clear process internally and ensure a prospective contact isn't put off by multiple asks from the same school/college. Working with your local Enterprise Coordinator will also ensure that where there are multiple requests from multiple schools/colleges to the same employer, these can be consolidated and coordinated to ensure not everyone is asking for the same thing at the same time.

We know if you're starting out with employer engagement, you may be starting with an intimidating blank sheet of paper. We suggest starting to think about who you already know, perhaps using the matrix on the following page. After mapping your contacts using the matrix, you'll end up with four categories of contacts. You can then develop a plan for engaging each of them, deciding who will need a quick call or email and those that will need more of a plan and time to engage.

Internal contacts

⋮

These groups may or may not already exist in your school or college, put them on the matrix where they sit best and if they need engaging from scratch, use the tips in the next section.

- Staff networks (e.g. family, friends, Governors).
- Student networks (parents, relatives).
- Alumni network.
- Supply chains (IT, Catering, Maintenance).
- Any previous employers who have engaged with the school or college.

⋮

Existing contacts

- Your Enterprise Coordinator will have access to local businesses through connections with the Local Enterprise Partnership and local authorities. They may also be able to introduce you to people at the local CBI Council, Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Business, Institute of Directors and other local business membership organisations.
- Your Enterprise Adviser will also have personal and professional business networks who they may be able to introduce you to and could help you plan your approach. We provide a template letter to be sent to a new business contact on page 9 and your Enterprise Adviser can help you to tailor this appropriately.

New contacts

- Contact organisations who are focused on bringing employers into schools/colleges. Your Enterprise Coordinator will be able to help you connect with these organisations.
- Find local careers activity providers and work with them to explore how their activities and networks can bring further employers into your school or college.
- Access employer volunteers through organisations such as STEM Ambassadors, Founders4Schools, Speakers4Schools and Inspiring the Future (see more on these later).

External contacts

Who to contact for your initial pitch will vary, employer to employer, but good people to start with are HR Directors, Learning and Development Managers and Heads of Recruitment. Alternatively, ask for people within the organisation who have responsibility for

one of the following: community outreach; learning and development; early careers recruitment; skills development or education engagement. Don't be afraid to ask for additional names and contacts if the initial connection you make isn't the right person.

Tip 3. Making new employer connections, finding them and preparing for the first meeting.

Hopefully you now have a clearer idea of who you'd like to engage with locally, and here are some suggestions of how to find them.

- Set students a task to build an employer network (see the South Charnwood High School case study on page 7).
- Use social media e.g. websites, Twitter, LinkedIn.
- Post an article or blog in local economic news through local business pages or newspapers, free magazines/parish council newsletters.
- Attend local job fairs, business events or visit local business parks.

Once you have a new employer engaged, think about how best to engage them to create a reciprocal partnership.

Hosting an employer event e.g. a breakfast meeting, is an effective way to maximise both yours and the employers time by meeting with lots of people at once. Use the event to outline what you're looking for and the different opportunities available. Alternatively set up a meeting with an employer - either way, the following tips will help you prepare for both these interactions.

1. Prepare for your meetings:

Businesses may be keen to help but be short on time and unsure where to start. The more clearly you can articulate your ask and the benefits to their business, the better.

Remember that most business people are not educationalists, and vice versa. Be mindful of using too much education jargon and acronyms in your approach. Ensure you are empathic to the pressures of business, whilst at the same time not being afraid to ask for clarification on any of their acronyms or terms.

What is your ask?

- What are you looking to achieve? What is your need?
- Be as specific as possible - what kind of careers activity? which year group? how many students? how much time do you need them for (one-off or an ongoing project?) where will it be hosted? what time(s)? do they need any particular experience or materials?
- Can you give the employer a menu of options so they can pick one that suits their experience and time available? If they cannot help on this occasion, they can also consider other activities that they might engage with in the future.

What's in it for the business?

Have you prepared a 'value proposition': a statement that summarises why an employer should engage with your school or college? The reasons why someone may volunteer or why a business as a whole will engage with schools and colleges will vary on a case by case basis. Building a partnership which has benefit for both the school/college and the employer; which goes beyond just the corporate responsibility of an employer will help ensure longevity. Employers often engage because it allows them to:

Give back to their local community:

- Personal connection, e.g. they have family at the school or a relative works at the school or college.
- History, e.g. they are alumni of the school or college.
- Locality, a local employer wants to give something back to the local area.

Build the talent pipeline for their industry or business:

- Change perceptions of their industry or roles within their business.
- Develop skills in young people that the employer would look for in recruitment.

- Promote apprenticeship/internship or graduate opportunities.
- Attract young people into their industry and close any skills gaps.

Engage and develop their current workforce:

- Participating in employer-sponsored volunteering has been shown to boost employee engagement.
- Volunteering provides opportunities for skills development and some organisations link volunteering opportunities to career progression.
- Some organisations also try to volunteer alongside staff from their clients/customers to deepen relationships so you could be helping them build their business!

2. Hosting an employer for a meeting:

It's important to be realistic about engaging with employers, both in terms of cultivating the partnership and ensuring meaningful engagement with students.

It's worth taking time to consider at which points in the year you have time to engage with employers. Is there an afternoon during the week you don't have lessons? An employer would rather wait a week or two to speak to you properly. Can you organise meetings for either the start or end of term? (see page 14 for a template spreadsheet to keep a track of employer engagement)

Once you're ready to set up the meeting, think about:

- Where? When? Can you invite the business into the school or college for a coffee and introduction?
- Make sure that there is a suitable room available.
- Prepare refreshments.
- Who will lead the meeting from the school and be responsible for greeting the business when they arrive?

Tip 4. Getting the most out of activities.

If you have agreed to work with an employer, here are some tips on how to make it a success. We also provide a template project plan (see pages 10-11) which can be used and adapted according to the complexity of the activity.

1. Working arrangements:

- Ensure you are both clear on who the right contacts are and how best to communicate (e.g. email, telephone calls) to prepare for the activity.
- Be upfront on availability and typical response times – your schedules are likely to differ!
- Be clear on any safeguarding or other regulatory requirements that you need the volunteer to comply with. Employers are unlikely to be experienced in managing a class of student so ensure you have a member of staff on hand to check students' engagement and behaviour and intervene if necessary.
- If the activity is at school, ensure someone is available to greet the employer when they arrive and escort them to the right place in time.

2. Set up the activity for success!

- Be clear on the aims and objectives of the activity for the business, for you and for your students.
- Remember most business leaders are not educationalists so guide them on what they should consider when engaging with your students and brief them on what to expect.
- Stimulate active engagement from students. What can you do to prepare them for the activity in advance so they get the most out of it?
- How can you embed the learning from the activity into the curriculum and ensure students reflect on what they have just learnt?

- Evaluate the activity from all perspectives (as per the Gatsby Benchmarks): employers, students and teachers. This will make sure you measure the outcomes and learning opportunities. It will also ensure the activity gets better and better each time you run it.

3. Follow-up:

- Following their engagement, send the business a note to thank them for their time. If possible, it's great to include quotes or examples of the specific impact they had on your students.
- Seek their consent to be contacted in future for other opportunities and agree any next steps.

Tip 5. Maintaining strong relationships.

For all businesses that you speak with, think about how you can maintain and develop the relationships:

- Log the contact and outcome, and start to build up a relationship history; are they happy to be added to a mailing list? See page 14 for a template database. Let other staff know about the database to avoid any duplication and to ensure you are using that business contact for the benefit of the whole school.
- If they have provided consent, communicate through the year to businesses so they feel part of your school community. Send them updates and invite them to special events at the school such as awards evenings, school fairs or even parents' evenings to help support parental engagement.
- Keep your promises! Make sure you carry out any actions that you agreed to and try to avoid any last-minute changes or cancellations.



Case Study 1

South Charnwood United Business Alliance (SCUBA)

South Charnwood High School launched a new initiative called the South Charnwood United Business Alliance (SCUBA), which aims to strengthen relationships between businesses in the local community, as well as providing the opportunity to build links with the school.

The South Charnwood students were set the task to coordinate and build a local business database, contacting local employers through phone calls, flyers and emails. The students created the brand SCUBA and logo; they also organised and hosted all aspects of the business networking event launch.

The students had to apply in writing for the position of school Business Ambassador and were interviewed, initially by staff and this year by the previous Business Ambassadors to enhance their work related skills/experience.

Simon Andrews, Deputy Headteacher, describes the programme further: “We have seen our Business Ambassadors develop and improve skills such as communication, organisation, working as a team, maintaining a positive attitude, keeping calm under stress, problem solving and time management. The local business leaders were impressed by the students’ maturity and confidence before and during the SCUBA business events.

“The initiative has grown in impetus and we have established a core of businesses that are committed to supporting the school and each other. As a by-product, local employers have offered to: provide work experience for students; attend a careers speed networking event for Year 9 students; organise STEM visits and deliver talks to students in assemblies. “Overall, it has been a tremendous success for the students, the local business community and consequently the school.”

The drive behind starting the initiative came from Dan Lamoon, the school’s Enterprise Adviser, who has been instrumental in every aspect of the journey. Both staff and students alike have found him inspirational and have benefited enormously from his passion and knowledge.

Dan commented: “Building a business community needs to be at the foundations of any business. We are building vital relationships with local businesses and organisations to strengthen and grow the enterprise provisions within the school. By recruiting a team of Year 10 ambassadors to work alongside the senior staff to market and coordinate the events and initiatives; we have created an employability programme for the 10 to 15 pupils involved each year, along with a unique selling point for SCUBA to connect and engage with businesses. Both these direct outcomes are helping to drive a culture of enterprise throughout the school.”



It has been wonderful to see the Business Ambassadors grow in confidence as the SCUBA events have developed. One student stunned us with her amazing natural ability to persuade a number of business leaders to attend our launch event over the phone. All of the Business Ambassadors have developed skills that they never thought they had, such as the resilience to overcome barriers and disappointment/rejection and yet keep going.

Kathryn Juszkiewicz, Assistant Headteacher,
South Charnwood

Case Study 2

The Misbourne School in Great Missenden

Introducing children's book publishing to Year 9 art students

Keen to extend careers across the whole curriculum as part of their overall careers programme, The Misbourne School in Great Missenden asked Bucks Skills Hub to introduce its Head of Art to a children's book publisher.

Maxine Nichols, who teaches art and photography, wanted her Year 9 students who had chosen GCSE Art & Design to experience how illustration is actually used in industry – and inspire them about the careers it could kick-start.

Enterprise Coordinator Luisa Clarke put her in touch with Make Believe Ideas, a children's book publisher based in Berkhamsted, and together they agreed objectives for the collaboration which would take place over the summer term.

Working together

Make Believe would make two visits: the first to present an overview of their industry, explain the publishing process from editorial and design through to production and sales, and set a practical challenge for students to create their own book brief; the second to give feedback on the students' work.

So enthused were they with the idea, Make Believe sent a team to the school to represent the different key publishing roles: including a studio director, account manager and senior editor.

The setting was, naturally, the art room, surrounded by a colourful backdrop of student art projects. The team began by introducing themselves, their company and the publishing process to the group of around 30 students, all of whom would be starting their GCSE the following term.

Their one-hour presentation then explored the interplay between design and editorial, looking at how text and pictures are initially sketched out and finding out how illustrations are commissioned (from initial brief, draft stages, character development, colour palettes, finishes and printer plotters through to end product).

The Make Believe team then left The Misbourne students with a choice of four book briefs to complete, each one with additional guidelines.

Make Believe Ideas returned six weeks later – and every single student had risen to the challenge! The art teachers had worked with individuals to develop their concepts, encouraging students to look at adding depth to their work by including a message within it.

As a result, many had explored themes in their work such as having the confidence to stand out from a crowd or looking at different types of friendship. They had all gone beyond the brief and included notes on ideas such as the target audience, story development, character introductions and colour palette.

Luisa Clarke, Enterprise Coordinator for Buckinghamshire Skills Hub, added: "If there was ever a good illustration of what a 'meaningful' employer encounter should look like, this was it!"

3 | Templates

We have created some sample documents to help you to get started, keep going, and create a database of contacts.

- A** Exemplar letter/phone script
- B** Template project plan
- C** Sample responses for overcoming challenges
- D** Template employer engagement tracker or 'database'
- E** Template questionnaire for your business volunteers



A 'Get inspired' with this exemplar letter/phone script

Use the example below to get started. We suggest that you adapt it to align to the values of your school or college so that it is personal.

Business Name
Business Address
Business Post Code
Date

School/College Name
School/College Address
School/College Post Code

Dear [Named Business Person],

[I/we] are contacting you on behalf of [school/college name]. At [school/college name] we are always striving to provide our students with impactful experiences they can call upon once they have left our establishment to help them succeed in the future. Therefore, in order to help prepare our students for the world of work we would like to partner with local businesses like [business name] to inspire, motivate and inform them of all the possibilities available to them in [the business sector].

We understand that time is valuable to employers and consequently have a range of engagement opportunities planned. We hope that something below is of interest but if not, we are always looking for innovative ways to work with businesses so we would be happy to discuss alternative options.

[list your engagement opportunities e.g.]

Careers Talks: 20 minutes to one hour long and are run at either 8:45am or 1:30pm daily

Mock Interviews: Wednesday 9th May, Year 10, 9:30-11:30, 20 minutes slots

Work Experience: 11-22 June, in one or two week slots

Students who receive four or more meaningful interactions with employers during their secondary school career are 86% less likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET). Therefore, working together we can make a huge impact on the futures of the [school name] students and on the local business community.

If you are interested please email [insert email for member of SLT – a senior person in the school will have more impact on the businesses you are contacting] with the following information. We will then follow up with you in more detail.

Your name
Your business name
Your job title

The opportunities you are interested in supporting us with

Thank you again for taking the time to read this letter, we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

[Head Teacher and Governor responsible for careers]

B Get started with this template project plan

The below template is provided as an example. Depending on the activity being planned, you may need a lighter or more detailed plan.

Pre activity Planning	Date action allocated	Staff member	Date action completed by	Hints and tips
Agree staff project team (for allocating specific tasks).				Include a member of SLT, teaching, CEIAG and maybe a Governor as well. (particularly if you have a link Governors for Careers)
Talk to your Enterprise Adviser.				They may have links to additional support/employer contacts.
Get a group of students to be involved alongside staff.				Create Student Ambassadors.
Agree date(s) for event(s).				Employers will typically need at least 3-4 weeks.
Identify year group and student numbers.				Specific groups e.g. not going to university.
Identify number of employers needed.				Go for 20% contingency on the number of employers you need to allow for drop out. What is the ratio of learner to employer?
Issue a staff wide email outlining the event.				Ask for volunteers and give a deadline for responses.
Add the activity to Tracker.				This will link activities to Gatsby Benchmarks. Contact your Enterprise Coordinator for more information.
Identify which employers you want to target.				Think about labour market information (LMI). Who is recruiting locally? What are the skills shortages? Who is recruiting apprentices locally?
Budget (tea, coffee, biscuits etc.).				A warm and expectant welcome is critical.
Track all employers contacted and outcomes.				Even if someone says 'No', record this and ask if you can keep them up-to-date on the work of the school and its young people.
Issue initial confirmation to employers on their involvement or input and manage/explain any safeguarding requirements.				Manage expectations - who are the year group? What are they thinking about (University, Apprenticeships, entry to work or unsure)?
Book 15 minute update meeting with staff project team (weekly?).				Check against the plan/identify any problems/look at employer tracking spreadsheet.
Post all activity dates on the school website and intranet.				Invite parents to get involved.
Resources				
Book room(s)				Classroom - but do you need a 'waiting room'?
Ensure you have enough tables/chairs for the event.				For student and guests.
Confirm room layout.				Interview style/Speed Networking etc.
Book Headteacher/Principal or SLT member to welcome employers and start the activity.				Help employers understand how important their contribution is to young people.
Create a rolling PowerPoint for the event, welcoming businesses and celebrating the day/future events.				Good to welcome employers but get them thinking about supporting schools in other ways.

Marketing & Resources	Date action allocated	Staff member	Date action completed by	Hints and tips
Create a prompt sheet for employers.				See page 15.
Create a student feedback form.				
Create an employer feedback form.				
Create a staff feedback form.				Take staff views onboard and create ownership/continuous improvement and honest evaluation.
Nominate a member of staff to take pictures and talk about the event on social media. (perhaps supported by a student.)				This person can spot the opportunities that staff involved in the session may not - share with employers.
Student consent forms for photography.				
Issue reminders to employers with instructions/handouts.				If there is over a month until the event then keep employers 'warm' with some level of contact.
Send an invite email to confirmed employers with any instructions or pre-activity planning.				The more you can brief employers the better.
Invite local MP and Councillors.				Give as much notice as possible and ideally let them know about future events.
Invite local media (newspaper or radio).				Give as much notice as possible.
Invite Governors.				Give as much notice as possible.
Invite PTA or any other groups.				Give as much notice as possible.
Use social media to attract volunteers from local businesses.				Use Facebook/LinkedIn/Twitter, include a #hashtag for your schools careers activities.
Keep the staff intranet up-to-date.				How they can get involved/CPD/embed employability into lessons.
On the day logistics				
Ensure there is someone to greet visitors and/or direct them to the correct room.				It could be students who meet and greet but they need to be prepared.
Create a welcome sign or presentation in reception.				Can students design this?
Register the visitors (signing in sheet).				Can students help?
Cloakroom for employers' coats.				
Refreshments laid out.				Can students help?
Welcome note/agenda or programme.				Can students design this?
Promote next event and gain commitment (record on spreadsheet).				
Handouts ready for employers.				
Short thank you from staff and students.				Maximum impact comes from students thanking employers as well as staff.
Post-event				
Thank you event/debrief with employers.				At least an email (include an invite to future events) and also it would be great if this can include specific feedback on the impact of the employer engagement. It would be great if this communication came jointly from the Head and the Careers Leader. Students could also send a thank you email or handwritten thank you card to the employer telling them what they enjoyed most about the session.
Thank you event/debrief with staff.				Good to complete the loop internally and think about learning for the next event.
Case study or press release.				Useful for website and local media, post on social media too.
Social media posts.				Include your employers (use the tracking spreadsheet to engage them).
Blog on school or college website.				Also on school intranet.

C Overcome challenges with these top tips

You may have already sent out emails/letters or you may be cold calling, either way these techniques are applicable. We have compiled eight frequent challenges presented by employers with some helpful tips on how to overcome these.

- Research, Research, Research! Research the company before you do anything else.
- Check if your school or college has existing (or previous) links with the organisation you are contacting.
- Create yourself a script and practice with a colleague or friend; they may be able to come up with objections, enabling you to prepare, before your conversation with employers.
- You may want your Enterprise Adviser (EA) - or other existing business links - to look over your prompt sheet for pointers on how best to approach the conversation.
- Also ensure you have a list of your target companies and ideally specific contact names with job roles, to give your EA a better idea for suggesting suitable approaches.
- Don't forget to keep it as two-way conversation, prepare some questions about their organisation beforehand and ask them - this will provide you with more information to better direct your request.
- Acknowledge when it is a definitive 'no' and let it go. There is a fine line and you do not want to annoy them as they could be a useful contact for you for a future opportunity.
- Put together your own prompt sheet of pointers for potential objections. When you encounter new ones, add them to the list and create a response for next time to learn from your experiences.

- When speaking with a business, make sure that you are actively listening as this will help to overcome barriers and build rapport. Pay close attention to the other person's choice of words, their tone of voice and their body language. Often, finding common ground, empathising and then overcoming barriers is more effective than trying to offer an immediate solution.

1. Getting past the 'gatekeepers'

The gatekeepers could be the receptionists or a PA. Befriend them, they will be your best route. They may say no before they understand your ask, so be nice and get their attention - use your research to drop key words in your first few sentences. This may be something along the lines of "We have a proposal that will benefit your business...[and then use the ideas on pages 4 and 5 of this guide to complete the sentence.]" or "We are looking to make sure young people understand what businesses like yours really look for in their candidates so that they leave school ready for the world of work."

2. "We don't have the time."

Everyone has this issue, so be sensitive. Ask them how much time they feel they would have to give you and then give an example of a way they can be involved with even less time. Perhaps a 30 minute Q&A session with a small group of students (they don't have to prepare anything). This could be via conference call or Skype: students have the opportunity to see the volunteer in their business environment; they are participating in a business activity; and the employer doesn't need time out of the work place. Visit [The Careers & Enterprise Company 'Give an hour' careers activities page](#) for ideas of activities that can be done in an hour.

3. “We’ve never done anything like this before.”

A response could be, “Experience is not required, everyone has to start somewhere - like ABC Ltd who now regularly support us with Q&A sessions.” Supporting your request will give the business the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge through this experience. Tell them that they will be supported, offer pre-support/briefing and for them to speak to other business volunteers (for example, your EA) who have already done this - don’t forget to get permission first.

4. “We have had a bad experience.”

Some employers may tell you that they supported a young person and had a bad experience. In this case, turn it around and ask them to use that story to support other young people. It will help to prepare young people to interact with employers more appropriately in the future.

5. “We don’t have enough staff.”

Support could be from anyone in the company and not just the person you are speaking to. The company can use it as an opportunity for someone to be upskilled, given wider responsibility with varying tasks and maybe even have a project of their own.

6. “What’s in it for us?”

Have a clear offer ready for the business. What can your school do for them? For example, could you offer your school premises as a venue or meeting space? Could you use your community standing to raise awareness of their company through social media? Could you offer them a team building activity such as volunteering to refurbish a room or set an enterprise challenge for a group of students? Maybe you can put a package together in return for business support?

7. “Just put it in an email for me.”

Agree to send them more information but don’t hang up yet. Ask them an open-ended follow-up question such as, “Just so I know what to include in my email, can you tell me how you recruit young people?” Use your research to think of something that may be of interest or a challenge to them. Agree to send them an email as requested but also that you will call back as a courtesy to follow up on the conversation.

8. “I am not the right person to talk to.”

If you are not speaking to a decision maker, ask to speak with the appropriate person. If they are unavailable ask to schedule a call or a meeting at a point they will be available.

D Create a database to track Employer Engagement

This simple Excel database is designed to help you capture all communication with businesses. (Look out for new functionality in Tracker which will include a database you can use to manage your employer contacts).

By populating this database (available to download from the link below), over time you will develop a strong and sustainable group of employers who have committed to working with you. Knowing what these businesses are prepared to offer, and when, will help you to plan for events in advance. This will allow you to be more efficient in the way you engage with businesses, lessening the need for last minute calls and it will avoid multiple people from the school contacting the same employer.

Company Name	Business Type/ Industry	Main Contact	Job Title	Phone No.	Email	Facebook	Twitter	Date initially contacted	Initial Method of Contact (phone, email, letter, in person)	Types of activities	Staff Member Following Up	Date of last contact	Notes	Happy to be contacted in future
Tastes	Cafe	John Harper	Owner		john.harper@tastesgoodya.com	Y	tastesgoodya	15.11.17	Email	Use this column to keep a log of the types of activities that the business volunteer is interested in doing e.g. careers talks, careers fairs, you may want to set up a standardised list or keep notes.	Joe Bloggs	21.10.18	BD to call - available most wednesdays.	Y
ACME Enterprises	Transport and Haulage	Sarah Adams	HR Manager	0116 000 0000	sadams@acmemovers.co.uk	Y	acmeenterprises	08.01.18	Phone		Jane Smith	14.01.19	TT speaking to Sarah and arranging for 2 students to do w/ex in July for one week consecutively. Sarah can do mock interviews.	Y
R H Olston Solicitors	Solicitors	Roger or Helen Olston	Partners	01509 000 000	info@rhlegal.org.uk	Y	N	16.01.18	Email		Priya Kumar	03.08.18	Currently too busy to commit. Happy to get school emails. Maybe do a careers talk later in the year so call back in May.	Y

If you are collecting data, please ensure you comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

www.gdpr-legislation.co.uk

Download the template [here](#).

E Talking points for your employer volunteers

Once you have found your employer volunteers, make sure they are prepared and confident to help your students. We have put together some ideas for talking points below.

The employer could talk about:

- Name, job role, company and what the company does.
 - Their role and how they got into this role.
 - How long have they been doing the job?
 - What would they say to young people about this industry?
 - What soft skills are important in their role (e.g. team work)?
 - How many people are employed in their company?
 - What sorts of job roles/careers are there in their organisation?
 - Do they take on apprentices?
 - What are the GCSEs/qualification/skills that are most valued by their organisation?
 - What is the most popular role enquired about by young people?
 - What, in reality, are the job roles with the most vacancies (perhaps contrary to the above)?
 - The most challenging part of the role.
 - What they love most about the role.
 - What does a typical day look like?
 - How is their job different to what they first expected it to be?
 - Do they travel a lot with their work?
 - What's the best piece of advice they can give about careers?
 - How future technology/robotics might affect their sector.
- Top tips for getting into their area of work.
 - Top tips on how young people can impress an employer.
 - What are the opportunities for promotion/development?
 - What are the skills shortages in the industry?
 - Suggest that they bring along a piece of equipment that they use day to day to open discussions, or some news stories about their industry.
 - They could talk about current challenges the business is facing and could set the young people an activity about how they might solve this!

4 | Other sources of help

Organisations who may be able to help with education-business offers, and other sources of business data.

Consider local and national organisations who offer help to schools and colleges:

- [The Careers & Enterprise Company Provider Directory](#)
- Local Enterprise Adviser Network
- [Founders4Schools](#)
- [Inspiring the Future](#)
- [Speakers 4 Schools](#)
- [Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge for Schools \(ASK\)](#)
- FREE webinars are a great way to bring employers into the classroom in general, see: [learnliveuk.com](https://www.learnliveuk.com) and resources.amazingapprenticeships.com/live-broadcasts
- Your local colleges and apprenticeship providers may have existing employer engagement teams and relationships that could be utilised

Thank you for taking the time to read this Employer Engagement Guide. If you have any further questions or require further support, please contact your local Enterprise Coordinator.



5 | Glossary terms

Business Membership Organisations

There are a variety of business membership organisations in England. These range from national organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to local organisations such as women in business networks. All these organisations have active business members who they communicate with in a range of ways e.g. at events, on social media, via email or through publications. They are often looking for opportunities to share with their networks of members.

Careers Strategy

The government's Careers Strategy, launched in December 2017, is the government's plan for raising the quality of careers provision in England. Along with the statutory guidance published in January 2018, they set out a range of requirements for secondary schools and colleges to ensure quality careers provision for all young people in England.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Often referred to as CSR. It is a mechanism or strategy for employers to assess the impact they have on society. It puts in place ethical policies and activities to support individuals, the local community and the environment.

Enterprise Adviser

Enterprise Advisers use their knowledge of the local business landscape to support the headteacher or careers team to develop an effective careers plan and to create opportunities with their business contacts in the area for their school or college's students.

Enterprise Coordinator

Enterprise Coordinators work with a group of up to 20 local schools and colleges, matching them with a senior business volunteers, known as Enterprise Advisers. Together they work to develop an effective careers strategy in each school or college in their network.

Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks are a framework of eight guidelines that define the best careers provision in schools and colleges. The Careers Strategy is built around them, and they make a great place to start for planning or improving your programme.

Find out more at: careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/understand-gatsby-benchmarks

Local Enterprise Partnership

Often known as LEPs, they are business led partnerships between local authorities and local private sector businesses. They play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and job creation, improve infrastructure and raise workforce skills within the local area. LEP boards are led by a business Chair and board members are local leaders of industry (including SMEs), educational institutions and the public sector. There are 38 LEPs across England.

Find out more at: lepnetwork.net/

Skills gap

Skills gap refers to the difference between the skills required for a job and the skills employees or potential employees actually possess. It's often used when employers can't find the skills they're looking for in local/industry talent pool (potential new employees). They'll say "there is a skills gap locally" or "there is a big skills gap in the technology industry".

Talent pipeline

Talent pipeline refers to a pool of potential candidates, either employees who are ready for promotion or external candidates. These could either be qualified and ready to fill a position, or groups of people that an employer is working with in order to be qualified e.g. college students can be part of the local apprentice pipeline.

The Careers & Enterprise Company

2-7 Clerkenwell Green
Clerkenwell
London EC1R 0DE

careersandenterprise.co.uk