

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important events in the life of any school is its Career Fair. For many students, the career fair is their first and perhaps only exposure to the incredible array of careers available to them in our modern world.

With this thought in mind, the members of Cohort II have put together this Career Handbook. The sole purpose of this information is to guide others, as well as ourselves, in recreating one of the most positive and lasting experiences in the lives of the students we hope to serve in the near future.

SURVIVAL ORGANIZER

THE CAREER FAIR CHECKLIST

_____ Set date with principal three (3) months in advance.

_____ Inform teachers and staff of Career Fair's date as soon as it is determined.

_____ Have after school planning meeting to see if any teachers are interested in helping to plan the Career Fair (or meeting can be held during teacher's common planning periods).

_____ At the above meeting, present date of the Career Fair.

_____ Discuss possible formats for the Career Fair at this meeting:

1. What grades will the Career Fair serve?
2. Do you want to have the Career Fair in one place and have the students rotate in small groups from station to station to hear each presenter, with a set amount of time given for each rotation?
3. Do you want to have presenters rotate from classroom to classroom? (Keep in mind, if presenters bring props or use video equipment, this format is not suitable).
4. Do you want to have the Career Fair in one place with ten to fifteen presenters and allow the students to visit the various stations randomly?

We recommend option two; the checklist will focus on this option.

_____ Brainstorm at this meeting possible agencies and businesses in which staff members have connections. Be sure to write the name of the staff member with the connection beside the name of the agency or business.

_____ Brainstorm possible themes for the Career Fair.

_____ Brainstorm at this meeting the tasks that need to be completed.

_____ Establish times for fair.

- _____ Arranging for place where fair will take place.
- _____ Arranging to have tables/chairs to be placed in clusters around the room.
- _____ Setting up any A/V equipment.
- _____ Arranging for surveys to be sent to students to see what careers they are interested in learning about at the Career Fair.
- _____ Tallying of interest surveys.
- _____ Making verbal contact with individuals who have connections with agencies or business we want to invite to the Career Fair.
- _____ Contacting for presenters who are not on our “staff connection” list.
- _____ Sending letter of confirmation and request for any special equipment that may be needed about four (4) weeks in advance once verbal confirmations are received from presenters. (Enclose self-addressed envelope)
- _____ Letter of confirmation includes verification that the presenter will be present on the day of the Career Fair, what equipment the presenter will need, a map to the school or wherever the Career Fair will take place, the name and address of their supervisor, the correct spelling of the presenters name, and the presenters telephone number and address.
- _____ Calling each presenter two days in advance to remind them of the Career Fair.
- _____ Presenting students with a list of the careers that will be represented at the Career Fair and have students do minor research on at least one to three of the careers and form questions to ask the presenters. (It is recommended that the research is completed through Social Studies or Language Arts classes a week before the Career Fair)
- _____ Making and laminating Career Fair Welcome Banner to be place at the entrance to the Career Fair.
- _____ Making name tags for presenters and school staff involved in the Career Fair.
- _____ Making (8 1/2 x 11) cards with presenter’s name and job title typed on them, then laminating the cards on construction paper and attaching finished product to a stick of some kind and place it in a potted plant that will be given to the presenter at the end of the Career Fair. (You may decide on another gift to

give to the presenters in which you can decide where and how to place the name cards).

_____ Purchasing and setting up a potted plant or another gift at the presenter's stations.

_____ Setting up a hospitality room or area where the presenters can take a break away from the Career Fair arena between presentations.

_____ Setting up tables/chairs and any other household products (tablecloths, silverware, napkins, etc.) the room will need to make it home away from home for the presenters.

_____ Arranging for breakfast food for the presenters in the morning. (pastries, bagels, cream cheese, donuts, milk, coffee and

condiments, juice, paper goods, etc.)

_____ Arranging food on platters, baskets, or a container of some kind in the hospitality room.

_____ Making sure there are coffee filters and knives for cutting bagels or spreading cream cheese.

_____ Arranging for a large (30 gallon) garbage container to be in the room.

_____ Greeting presenters as they come in to set up. Have an agenda prepared to give to the presenters so they will know the day's schedule.

_____ Making sure a bottle of water is at each presenter's station.

_____ Placing a memo in the teacher's mailboxes a week in advance informing them when and where the Career Fair will be held and what time they are to bring their classes and how the students will rotate around the room to see the presenters.

_____ Meeting classes outside of the Career Fair as they arrive to encourage the students do behave appropriately and give them instructions on the rotation procedures.

_____ Dividing the students into small groups at the door and taking them to their first station.

_____ A timekeeper to notify presenters when they have one minute left before the next rotation and then giving notice as to when the students should rotate to

the next station by ringing a bell or flipping the lights, or whatever method the group decides to use.

_____ Arranging for lunch to be served to the presenters.

_____ Making sure tables/chairs are set up for lunch with tablecloths, napkins, paper goods, silverware, etc.

_____ If ordering lunch from a store, we recommend purchasing sandwich rings from Publix or party sub sandwiched from Subway or any other sub place.

_____ Purchasing food to accommodate sandwiches, such as, individual chips, vegetable trays, fruit trays, cookies and drink, etc.

_____ Making sure there are a sufficient number of serving platters and utensils. (Make sure there are a number of sharp knives available in case the sandwich rings are not cut).

_____ Purchasing or making sure ice is available.

_____ Arranging for a large (30 gallons) garbage container to be in the room.

_____ Creating and making sure presenters complete Career Fair evaluation forms. (Form should ask for an overall rating of the Career Fair, rate organization, time, student response, and an area for comments). Tally evaluation forms.

_____ Creating (making sure principal sign them) and giving presenters a Certificate of Appreciation, their plant or gift, and thanking them for participating in the Career Fair.

_____ Having someone take pictures during the Career Fair of the presenters, the students, the organizers and whatever else that you think needs to be remembered. (Be sure to send the presenters copies of the pictures you take of them, also you can make a poster with the pictures to display at the school, or put together a photo album to record the event.)

_____ Having students/teachers complete Career Fair evaluations. Evaluations should ask what they enjoyed the most, what career would they like to see at next year's fair, and provide space for comments. Tally the results.

_____ Sending thank you letters to the presenters and their supervisors. Photographs from the event and a page of positive statements from the student evaluation forms can be enclosed with the letter.

_____ Cleaning the areas used by the Career Fair.

_____ During this brainstorming of responsibilities (or maybe at a second meeting) have the above tasks assigned to different members of the committee or staff.

_____ The Guidance Counselor should follow up with members of the committee or staff to inquire about their progress in performing their assigned tasks.

_____ The Guidance Counselor should send thank you notes to all who help plan the Career Fair and made it successful (faculty, staff, meeting room, hospitality room, environmental services, etc.)

THE SURVIVAL GUIDE

PRACTICAL HINTS

1. No man is an island. Form as many committees as possible to perform the various task to organize the Career Fair .
2. Have separate people or committees to (1) handle breakfast, lunch, and whatever snacks you are going to provide and to (2) welcome the presenters. This will allow the food committee to arrange the food items at the appropriate time while the greeters welcome assist the presenters. If there are not enough volunteers, students can be trained to be greeters, for their service will only be need at the beginning of the Career Fair when most of the presenters are arriving. If you have another group of presenters arriving at a later time, make sure the greeters are back on their post at that time.
3. Have a definite traffic flow plan which is obvious. Arrange furniture, rope off areas, indicate directions with masking tape arrows or colored tape, use signs, etc. to indicate the flow pattern. Also have volunteers to direct the students from station to station. Parent volunteers through PTSA, or students from the middle or high schools (i.e. middle or high school students from neighborhood schools for elementary career fair), or if that is impractical, the upper classmen at the school (fifth or sixth graders in elementary school, eighth graders in middle school and seniors in high school) could be volunteers. What a great opportunity for the student helpers, too!
4. Have students enter the Career Fair in small groups and immediately direct and/or escort them to the nearest unoccupied station. This strategy eliminate confusion and prevent students from passing over a station.
5. Be sure adults are scattered throughout the Career Fair are to resolve any discipline problems or safety issues that may occur.
6. If the form for presenters is returned, you should know in advance which presenters will need A/V equipment, extension cords, electrical outlets, etc. Be prepared and have spares.
7. Take the time to circulate and attend a portion of each presentation and provide immediate feedback to the presenters (positive student comments, your own positive observations, reactions, etc.) You will learn a great deal, therefore, you should express gratitude to the presenters for a job well done.

8. Provide individual chilled bottled water, w/cups of ice preferably, at each station for the presenters. They will be talking for several hours and will appreciate this gesture.
9. Minimize expenses. Contact as many businesses as possible to solicit donations such as food, drink, and tokens of appreciation to include certificates, plaques, and trophies. They usually need 30-day notice to process the paperwork.
10. Secure a good location/space to host the Career Fair.
11. Send letters to every industry/business/professional in the area to request a representative for the Career Fair.

SURVIVING BREAKFAST & LUNCH

AT THE CAREER FAIR

1. A variety of foods and drinks should be provided for the presenters at the career fair. Breakfast items include pastries, bagels with cream cheese and croissants. A fruit tray consisting of grapes, apples, bananas, oranges, and cantaloupe is a nice addition. The following drinks should be made available: coffee (regular and decaffeinated), juices (orange and apple), milk, bottled water, regular and diet sodas. Condiments such as salt, pepper, mayonnaise, mustard, sweeteners, and cream should be accessible to enhance the flavor of food and drinks.

2. The guests can easily serve themselves if sandwiches are prepared for lunch. These can be supplemented with individual bags of chips, sliced pickles, and an assortment of cookies for dessert. A supply of paper products to include plates, cups, utensils and napkins should be provided as well.

3. Depending upon the size of the group to be served, food items can be a costly expense. The following businesses should be solicited for donations: Publix, Winn-Dixie, Larry's Giant Subs, Subway and Sam's Wholesale Club. These businesses need at least 30 days to process the requests and get approval through the corporate office. Food items can also be purchased through the school food service, Aramark. You will need to contact the manager of the school cafeteria if interested.

SURVIVING TOKENS OF **APPRECIATION**

A career fair would not be complete without some expression of gratitude to show appreciation to those who gave so freely of their time to support the event. Some suggested tokens of appreciation are plaques and certificates. Plaques may be a little more expensive, but you can request donations from Office Max or Office Depot time permitting. Certificates of appreciation can be purchased or you can create your own. A sample certificate is included for as a guide, if you should choose to create your own certificates.

SURVIVING CAREER FAIR

DECORATIONS

1. Form a decorating committee.

2. Create a theme for the Career Fair.

- Choose a title and/or decorations to represent theme.
- The theme should enhance the career fair and help bring everything together.
- Inform presenters of the Career Fair's theme, they may choose to use them in their presentation.

3. Favors

- The presenter name tags and station identification tags could have the theme designed on them or tied into the theme some way.
- The presenter tags and/or station identifier tags could be a favor/token for the presenter to take home.

(Explained in more detail under checklist)

4. Stations

- Keep stations far enough apart so that presenters and students are not distracted once the Career Fair begins.
- Pre-plan the number of students that will be at one station at a time.
- Visual aids help students identify what station they are to rotate to once the signal to move to the next station is given. (Ex.: arrows on the floor) The visual aids can also go along with the theme.
- Encourage presenters to bring visual aids. The visual aids will help stimulate the students and maintain their attention.