Conquering the Career Fair!

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**FIRST STEPS IN PLANNING YOUR CAREER FAIR...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNING YOUR CAREER FAIR:</th>
<th>WHAT WE DO:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a time of year/date that works best for your school or district</td>
<td>We hold the career fair on the Friday morning before Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>(Consider other events in the district or surrounding areas that might impact your volunteers and/or students)</td>
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<td>Establish the grade level(s) you wish to include</td>
<td>Our high school career fair is only available for juniors</td>
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<td>Determine how long you want it to be (entire day? ½ day, other?)</td>
<td>½ day</td>
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<td>8:00 – 10:55 a.m.</td>
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<td>Determine where you could host the event</td>
<td>Off campus—Nixa First Baptist Church</td>
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<td>Determine your budget (if one is needed)</td>
<td>Church rental, breakfast/lunch for speakers, busses, folders, nametags, pencils</td>
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<td>Decide what format you would like to use</td>
<td>Small group, round table format</td>
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***Depending on the format you decide on, look at the number of students that will be participating and determine how many speakers are needed***
TRIED AND TRUE FORMAT:

- We like a more intimate format—round table/small group
- A ½ day format has been very successful and is somewhat easier for volunteers to manage
- Sessions are limited to between 8-15 students to facilitate questions and discussion

Sessions are 20 minutes long—our schedule looks like this:

- 7:30 – 7:50 a.m. Participant Set-up
- 8:00 – 8:20 a.m. First 20-minute Session I
- 8:25 – 8:45 a.m. Second 20-minute Session I
- 8:50 – 9:10 a.m. Third 20-minute Session I
- Break to Transport Students
- 9:45 – 10:05 a.m. First 20-minute Session II
- 10:10 – 10:30 a.m. Second 20-minute Session II
- 10:35 – 10:55 a.m. Third 20-minute Session II
TRIED AND TRUE FORMAT:
HOW DO I CHOOSE/SOLICIT SPEAKERS???

• Survey the students who will attend and ask for their top 3 career choices; these are collected and sorted by the top “picks”

• Students can be surveyed using a google form or on paper—we like to do this early in the year at the first class meeting during the 2nd week of school!

• Once it is decided what career choices you want to have available, utilize your staff and community resources to help you find volunteers to speak. Some possible resources might be:
  
  **Personal Contacts**
  **Teacher/Staff/Parent Contacts**
  **Local Chamber of Commerce or other local organizations such as Community Theatre**

• Solicit speakers by email, in person or through phone calls. Keep a list of speakers from year to year with contact information

We choose 4 seniors to come assist during the career fair—they direct speakers to their location, help them set up if needed and hand out folders to the students as they enter the foyer of the church on the day of the career fair. They are also available to help clean up!!! We feed them and of course, they get out of class that morning to help!!!
COMMUNICATION WITH CAREER FAIR
SPEAKERS/VOLUNTEERS

• It is helpful to try to start making contacts and confirming speakers well before the career fair—usually 2 ½ - 3 months in advance (if possible)

• 1\textsuperscript{st} Contact: Once the list of speakers is finalized, contact your volunteers formally as a means of thanks and confirmation. Include the date, time and location of the event as well as information about the format. This can be done via letter, but email is also acceptable

• 2\textsuperscript{nd} Contact: When students are signed up and you have session numbers, send out a second communication to speakers. This serves as a reminder about the event, the numbers of students speakers can plan for and contact information (personal cell phone number and email!) where you might be reached the day of the event in case of a last minute emergency or cancellation. Any last minute details may also be added to this letter or email. This is typically done about 1-2 weeks prior to the career fair.

• We invite administrators such as the building principal from the high school, the director of secondary education, superintendent and communications person to attend (you could also invite board members)
SIGNING THE KIDS UP!

GOOGLE FORMS FOR CAREER FAIR SIGN UPS!!

*Create a section for each session

*Use “Choice Eliminator 2” as a google form extension to limit the number of students who can sign up for each speaker each session (click on Choice Eliminator 2, then click on “configure”)

Choice Eliminator 2

Configure

Help
SIGNING THE KIDS UP!

- Create nametags and folders for all students who will participate in the career fair—the student name can be affixed to the outside of the folder and nametags, session questions, schedule and a pencil can be inside.

- Allow students to sign up for the sessions they are most interested in—via paper or google form (preferred).

- Collect responses and sort/compile sessions so that students get their top choices and session numbers are kept as even as possible.

- Create student “schedules”......this can most easily be done via mail merge!

- Print and cut student schedules--attach to inside of folders!
PREPARING THE KIDS FOR THE EVENT

• We divide our junior class into two groups as evenly as possible (by letter of the last name). The first group attends, then the second group attends—due to space and numbers.

• We have a class meeting the day before the career fair in the auditorium to explain what the schedule will look like and what to expect. We also stress our expectations for the event!

• We do not allow students to carry bags, backpacks or purses on the bus to the career fair--they are asked to leave them at the high school where we have someone there to watch their things while they are gone.

• We coordinate with junior teachers to serve as bus chaperones to and from the career fair--schedule the busses!!!

• We coordinate any special travel or event situations that might involve special education students or special situations—such as paraprofessional escorts, special education bussing, location of speakers for accessibility (based on student schedule), nurse, etc.
CAREER FAIR PREPARATIONS & SET UP

• Careers/Speakers are numbered—signs for each speaker/table are made from cardstock

• Purchase orders for drinks, breakfast items and box lunches are taken care of and items ordered/picked up

• The day before the career fair, we go to the church to get things set up; the tables have the number of the speaker and the career title—student schedules have this same information (set the speakers up so that the table numbers are in some sort of flow in the room, which makes them easier to find)

• Make sure any speaker who needed an outlet for a device is placed accordingly and provide extension cords if necessary! We place nametags, speaker list and career fair survey forms on the tables for the speakers as well

• Set up food table and get things ready for the morning (we bring tablecloths, some small fall decorations and serving trays)

• Take student folders and surveys—student helpers can sort those out when they arrive early the next morning

• Make sure sound system is working and ready to go
In the event that a speaker must cancel last minute, create a sign such as this so that students will know to choose a different table.
CAREER FAIR DAY!!!

- Get to the church early to get coffee going and set out food for volunteers
- Ask senior, student helpers to arrive to help get student folders organized and ready to hand out
- Greet and help welcome volunteers and assist in set-up if needed
- Get sound-system turned on and ready to go! Announce to speakers that breakfast items are in the kitchen area
- When the busses arrive, student helpers pass out folders—this is when the students first see their schedule. Use microphone to let them know they need to find their first table. Adult volunteers/teachers help students find tables/rooms if they are struggling to do so
- Get first session started! Use microphone to announce when it is time to rotate to the next session
- Once the first group of students are done, they can keep their folders, but ask that they complete the survey on the bus back to the high school—busses pick up 2nd group and return to the church (speakers can get a drink, snack, use restroom, etc. during this time)
- Repeat! We have box lunches delivered after the start of the 2nd group and have those set out and ready for speakers to grab on their way out!
FOLLOW UP AND THANK-YOU

- I try to get to each table/room during the career fair and get a picture of the speaker in action with their students. These pictures can then be dropped in to a card (I created one in publisher and in word) so that each speaker gets a thank-you card with a picture of their table.

- We keep all notes and contact information from year to year as a reference. If things appear on the surveys that we want to make note of for the following year’s event, we add that to the information.

- We usually get a small gift card from Sonic/Starbucks or something like that for each student helper with a thank-you note for their help.

REMAIN CALM AND CARRY ON....

YOUR EVENT WAS A SUCCESS!!!
GENERAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

For all conference related information, download the Conference Yapp App: The Yapp ID is MSCA18.

- Please complete the Workshop Evaluation:  http://bit.ly/2pS2YKq
- Please complete the Full Conference Evaluation:  http://bit.ly/2yGVzBy
- Support this year’s Annual Project through raffles, bingo, Monday reserved seating, Monday power hour, and service project. Visit the activities desk for additional information.
- Visit exhibitors and the MSCA promotions booth in Windgate Hall. Make plans to participate in evening activities:
  - Hospitality from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
  - Bingo from 9:30 to 10:30 p.m.
  - Dance beginning at 9:30 p.m.

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