

Job Shadowing

What is it?

Job shadowing allows businesses to bring students into the workplace for a one-day career exploration experience. During the day, a student spends time with a working adult to learn about the specific tasks of his or her occupation.

Checklist for Success

- _____ Employers should determine what ages, geography and interest level of students they wish to tour their facilities.
- _____ Employers should inform themselves of regional Job Shadowing and Workplace Tour days for increased coordination.
- _____ Employers should develop the appropriate training for their employees in order to make the most out of the job shadow experience.
- _____ Employers should identify employees who are interested in having students shadow them for a day.
- _____ The school and employer should discuss desired outcomes of the job shadowing to ensure that the visit provides maximum educational value to the student(s).

Additional Resources:

- **PA Department of Education**
 - www.pacareerstandards.com/business-partners.php
- **Arizona Work-Based Learning Resource Guide**
 - www.azed.gov/cte/guides
- **Junior Achievement Site Coordinator Guide**
 - www.ja.org/files/jobshadow/Job_Shadow_Site_Coordinator_Guide.pdf

Job Shadowing, cont.

Structuring a Job Shadow⁵

Job shadowing is a volunteer opportunity for students to gain valuable exposure to careers they are interested in pursuing following graduation. Students spend a half day, full day, or several days (you decide) visiting your organization, investigating a career field and experiencing a typical day on the job.

Job shadowing allows students to clarify their career goals and understand how knowledge learned in the classroom translates to their ability to be successful in the workplace. An employer demonstrates the connection between academics and careers, exciting students to learn by making their coursework more relevant. It also exposes students to career settings within their interests and offers firsthand knowledge about different career fields. Job shadowing should provide exposure of the day-to-day work environments, job characteristics and responsibilities to assist them in determining a career fit and create a better understanding of the work environment and types of skills needed for specific occupations.

How to get involved

Check with your area(s) school district's high schools, middle schools, and career and technology centers to see if they are participating and let them know that you are a business that welcomes job shadowing. You can also contact the local chamber of commerce business and education partnership representative and/or your regional Workforce Investment Board to see how you can get involved in the job shadowing process. You can find a number of school district contacts at the following website:

<http://www.edna.ed.state.pa.us/>.

The Process

The role of the employer is to:

- Organize a half or full of day of activities or assignments for the student and remain available during the student's shadowing assignment.
- Clarify any behavioral issues, rules, permissions, clothing and safety requirements.
- Provide the hours of the day and the contact information to the schools.
- Provide an overview of the organization and industry, and share career advice and tips on work/life balance.
- Help students understand the required skills and attitudes needed for the job.
- Demonstrate and explain effective work methods and show a desire to work with students.
- Introduce the student to a realistic view of their career area and work roles.
- Welcome questions and provide students with constructive feedback, especially as it relates to realistic expectations of the student.

⁵ Resource created by PA Department of Education (www.pacareerstandards.com)

Suggested Activities

- Encourage students to talk about their interests and abilities. Incorporate that information into discussions regarding career or industry employment choices.
- Organize a tour of your office/facility.
- Engage in brief discussion of different departmental functions, job titles, educational preparation and pay ranges.
- Discuss the relationships between suppliers and customers.
- Introduce the student to the mission of the workplace: What do you do?
- Give a personal note: Why is my job important to me? Why do I like my job? How did I get to my current job?
- Discuss a student's career interests and plans. Offer suggestions for appropriate training or experience.
- If applicable, involve the students in a "hands-on" project/assignment.
- Discuss math, science and communication foundations of the job.

Top Ten List for Creating a Winning Job Shadow

1. Assign one person in your business to act as a guide throughout the day, getting the student from one place to the next. Of course, students won't need a guide if they are shadowing one person throughout the entire day.
2. Make them feel welcome and part of your team. Little things like having a company name badge made up for them, or providing them with a notebook with company materials can go a long way in making them feel valued.
3. Its good for students to begin the day with an overview of your company or organization. Give them a sense of your mission and how you work as a team.
4. Wherever possible, give them a hands-on experience of performing the actual job that they are interested in pursuing or at least observe and/or assist a person who is actually doing the job.
5. Show them the "tools of the trade," which range from software, actual equipment, or even the "people skills" necessary in your line of work.
6. Share information with them on the skills and education they will need to perform the job or career that interests them.
7. Help them identify the courses they should be taking in school to help prepare for this career. Assist them in making a connection between what they're doing in school to the career they want to pursue.
8. If they'll need postsecondary training and education to work in your career, please identify what they should be considering.
9. During lunch let them hear life stories from your staff on how they got to where they are today and what they enjoy most in their work.
10. Students want to do more than just observe, so please find ways in which they can actually participate in performing the job. They may be a bit shy, so you might have to draw them out. One way is to ask them about their impressions throughout the day.