

## MAXIMIZING A PARTNERSHIP: COMMON MISTAKES AND TIPS

Common Mistakes:	Tips:
Businesses have one point of contact.	It's best to have an understudy on the business side, so there is continuity in case the primary person is not available or no longer with the company.
Partnerships are often with one person in the company and are not "institutionalized." When that person becomes disengaged or leaves the company, so goes the partnership.	Partners are encouraged to get organizational buy-in to the partnership, especially with executive leadership/management.
Schools ask for money.	Schools need to be able to articulate what their needs are in measurable, concrete ways. For example, we need half-day job shadows for 50 of our students by the end of the semester, or we need five engineers to judge student projects on Oct. 17th. Employer partners want to help, but it cannot be their responsibility to figure out how to help.
When multiple teachers/administrators in the building begin making multiple "asks" to multiple partners, the opportunity for miscommunications increase exponentially.	There needs to be ONE partnership owner in the school who is responsible with interfacing with business partners.
Frontline service staff (school secretary, librarians, custodians, etc.) often provides the critical first impression to new volunteers and are often the last person that sees the volunteer before they leave the building.	Schools need to train their frontline service staff (school secretary, librarians, custodians, etc.) on how to interface with business partners.
Not saying "thank you" with regularity to your partners can damage a relationship. Schools overlook this one way too often.	Business partners are taking time from their own responsibilities to help our students. Say "thank you." In fact, say it a couple of times.
When asking for help, it is a common mistake to provide too late of a notice and/or no calendar of opportunities.	Academy coaches should create a flexible year calendar with major events and milestones that the partner will help on. Business partners need notice and sufficient lead time.

*Adapted from Academies of Nashville*