

**Take Any Activity to the Next Level**

**Four Tips to Using the 3 Cs**

**TIP 1: ESTABLISH A CLEAR PURPOSE AND CALL TO ACTION**

Start with the “why.” Be specific about the call to action!

* Why is this activity happening?
* What is the specific call to action for the employer partner?
* How does it connect to what the teacher(s)/ students need (e.g. curriculum, standards)?
* How does it benefit the employer partner (e.g.., brand awareness)?

**TIP 2: COCREATE THE OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA**

Once you have a clear purpose and call to action, you can then design the experience. Start with the objectives. This drives the agenda and the experience to address how objectives will be achieved. Just like a lesson plan, effective teachers write the objective first, and it’s important to take the same approach here.

**TIP 3: PREPARE ALL ATTENDEES (Internal and External)**

All the people who will be involved in the experience should be prepared in advance. Share the agenda! Share the expectations. What role will each person (business partner, student, and/or teachers) serve during the activity? Is each person clear on their role? How might the teachers prepare students, so they engage and interact appropriately? For example, if you plan on having a guest speaker interact with students, how might the teacher allow the students to research the visiting company and pre-plan interview questions? Give students ample time to process and prepare. The return on the investment will surprise you! Another example, if there are employees from the partnering organization involved, how might you share an overview of the agenda and allow them to ask clarifying questions? That way you can be sure the partner fully understands the objectives, the design of the experience, and their role. The better everyone is prepared, the more likely the experience will produce the desired results!

**TIP 4: THANK YOUS, DEBRIEF, AND WHAT’S NEXT**

Within 24-48 hours of completing the activity, **send** **a** **thank you** to the employer partner. Participation in your activity isn’t necessarily the primary responsibility of your employer partner. Demonstrating appreciation for their involvement can go a long way to strengthening the partnership! In your “thank you”, ask for a time to do a quick debrief. A debrief is your chance to find out what worked and what can be improved. Did we accomplish our objectives;) did this activity align with the original statement of purpose; what might we change and/or improve upon in the future; and what are some potential next steps?

**Step It Up with the 3 Cs**

1. **Communication:** Simply put, communication is sharing information, both internally and externally. Yet, while it can be simply stated, effective communication is a critical and challenging element of success! More precisely, effective communication (both written and verbal) is sharing information in a clear, concise, understandable, and timely way. It requires a great deal of listening, framing, and reframing of concepts tailored for various audiences. Communication helps us to inform, instruct, motivate, and persuade.

So, how do we know if we are set up for successful communication? One way is to ask yourself and your team the following questions.

* + Are you listening actively to the needs of the schools and the business partners?
  + What mechanisms do you use to keep everyone (in the community and district) up to date on current and projected initiatives?
  + How effective is your communication? An effective communication is one that is received, understood, and interpreted as intended.
  + Are you using multiple forms of media aligned with the needs and preferences of various audiences (Google Docs, email, Twitter, etc.)?
  + Are you able to adapt to the different characteristics of your audiences (consider age, multi-lingual, etc.)?

1. **Collaboration:** Collaboration is working together, but don’t let that simple definition fool you. The fact is that, at least Initially, genuine collaboration can be difficult to achieve. The good news is that when done effectively, the benefits far outweigh the investment of time and effort. Genuine collaboration is a skillful way of utilizing various personalities, talents, and knowledge such that it creates a more robust outcome. The outcome provides the desired benefit to the targeted group(s) but also benefits the entire community. Due to synergy, the collaborative outcome has a greater value than what would have been accomplished working in isolation.

Are you set up for successful collaboration? Ask yourself the following.

* + Do you know the individual strengths of your team (including partners)? How can you best use their talents?
  + What mechanisms do you have in place for working together on projects?
  + Is the culture open, so everyone’s ideas are heard? Are all viewpoints valued?
  + How can each person contribute their ideas?

**3. Coordination:** Simply stated, coordination is organizing the various components of a

complex activity, such that they work together effectively. The more challenging part of coordination is getting all the players in the right place with the right information and support to make the activity happen as intended. Coordination requires a broad perspective and project management skills. It means you are coordinating your efforts with the efforts of others.

To see if you are ready to coordinate successfully, ask yourself the following.

* + What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the “trains run on time?” Are projects well managed against timelines, and can they be achieved using available resources?
  + What else might you do to ensure the project runs smoothly and efficiently?

**ACTIVITY PLANNING WORKSHEET**

**STEP 1:**  ARTICULATE THE PURPOSE

**STEP 2:**  COCREATE THE OBJECTIVES AND THE AGENDA

**STEP 3:** PREPARE ALL PARTICIPANTS (e.g., teachers, students, employee partners)

**STEP 4:**  PREPARE PLANS FOR THANK YOU MESSAGE(S), EVALUATION DOCUMENT(S), DEBRIEF AND REFLECTION MEETING, AND CELEBRATION