Real-World Wednesday | Welcoming Business Partners to the Classroom

Why engage business and industry partners in the classroom?

Having students meet with business partners is a wonderful opportunity to make connections within the community while instilling the value of the SkillsUSA Framework in your classroom. Business partners bring the Framework to life by providing real world examples of how the Essential Elements are applied. And, business partner connections can provide an interactive lesson plan in person or if students are learning online. Here are some other reasons this is important:

- Students can connect with professionals in their community.
- Students can explore careers through relevant examples and testimony.
- Business partners can interact with potential employees.
- Students can meet their potential future employers.
- Perspectives can be broadened and questions can be answered.
- Business partners allow you to deepen instruction in areas where you may lack personal knowledge or experience.
- Business partners give you and students a break from the regular routine (a little variety goes a long way!)

Use the Business Partnership Outreach Guide found in the Framework Integration Toolkit to support this process. As a benefit of professional membership, this resource streamlines the process of welcoming business partners into your classroom. You will find guidance in business partner outreach, resources for business partner preparation, student activities and exercises and evaluation tools for measuring student growth. Evaluation of growth is especially important as it ties directly into the objectives of the Chapter Excellence Program (CEP).

Like everything you do with your SkillsUSA chapter and in the classroom, intentional learning and personal growth relative to Framework skills are an integral part of business partner engagement. The opportunities for student learning and active participation by your local business community will enrich your program now and in the future.

Access all Professional Membership Benefits in SkillsUSA Pathful (pathful.skillsusa.org).

FRAMEWORK INTEGRATION TOOLKIT

Focusing on the SkillsUSA Framework

The easiest way to link business partner involvement with your chapter and classroom goals is to use the SkillsUSA Framework as your foundation. The Framework provides a common language that resonates with students, school administrators, parents and business partners, and it gives purpose to every SkillsUSA activity. It is the critical measure of student development along a learning continuum of awareness, demonstration and mastery.

As you and your students identify business partners and plan for their visit, reference the Framework to develop questions and structure student participation. Here are recommendations of how to keep the Framework central to each step of business partner outreach.

- **Display a copy of the Framework when brainstorming which business partners to invite to the classroom.**
  - Which business partners would be best to cover specific skill areas and Essential Elements for my chapter/subject area?
- **Once you have a list of potential business partners, consider their relevance to a specific skill area and highlight the Essential Elements you'd like them to address.**
  - What skill area and Essential Elements do my students need to hear about the most from this business partner? Maybe they can touch upon several.
- **After partners have accepted the invitation, share the Framework background with them and discuss how you would like them to use it.**
  - How can the partner reference the Framework to provide clarity in their presentation and support student understanding?
- **Have students reference the Framework to develop questions prior to the partner visit.**
  - How do the questions relate to the Essential Elements being presented?
  - Will the questions lead to valuable discussion and insight?
  - Are the questions relevant to the partner's industry/business in supporting career exploration?

SAMPLE Email Invitation from Student

To: mradefeld@northsidehospital.org

From: Susie Smith

Subject: Healthcare Career Visit to Northside High School

Dear Nurse Radefeld:

The Northside health science program is currently studying careers in our Introduction to Health Science class. As a sophomore at Northside High School, my classmates and I are excited to be learning about healthcare careers. We would like to invite you to visit our classroom to discuss your experience as a registered nurse, and the roles of a few others you work with at the hospital.

Our class is particularly interested in learning about the type of education and experience required for different positions as well as the academic, technical and employability skills needed. We are also interested to know how these details tie into our SkillsUSA Framework of personal, workplace and technical skills that help prepare us for career success. Within the Framework, our class is currently focusing on the Essential Elements (employability skills) of integrity, work ethic, and multicultural sensitivity and awareness. We are interested in how these three areas impact employment in the health care industry. I have attached a copy for your review.

We are flexible, but propose the following date and time:

Date	Wednesday, Feb. 5
Time	10 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.
Location	Northside Town High School Health Science Lab, Room 415

I will follow up by phone to determine your interest. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at Susie.smith@NorthsideHS.edu. Please note that if the proposed date and time doesn't work with your schedule, we can discuss alternative options.

We appreciate your consideration of our invitation. Thank you for all you do as a registered nurse.

In gratitude,

Susie Smith
SkillsUSA Partners and Alumni Committee Chair

Note: If sending email first, always call and confirm email address. Also, make sure the subject line is short and relevant.