**Plan your talk**

Talks can be highly beneficial employer encounters. Examples include:

* Talks in the school or college, led by employers, during assemblies, in-class Q&As and guest speaker slots at key careers or curriculum events.
* Talks led by employers in the workplace during student visits.
* Virtual talks led by employers during school or college hours, such as webinars and seminars.

Use this simple template below to help you plan your talk. *(You can also read a sample completed version below this table from a fictional marketing company.)*

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| **Talk title**  Try and base this around a question or topic which will spark the students’ interest. |  |
| **Focus age-range**  Which age range will you be speaking to? How can you make your content relevant and relatable to this group? (e.g. can you bring a recent school-leaver from your workforce?) |  |
| **Inclusivity**  Think about the demographics and needs of your audience. How can you make your content, business and sector seem relatable, engaging and accessible to your audience. Think about any business jargon you might be using and try to use plain English at an appropriate level for your audience. |  |
| **Participant numbers**  How many students will be attending? Where will the talk take place? (How much time will you have for questions and can some of these be collated in advance if the group is large). |  |
| **What do you want the students to know or understand after the talk?**  Keep this easy and accessible for students to digest. |  |
| **How will you structure what you want to say?**  Be aware of how much time you have and break the session down into manageable chunks. |  |
| **How can you try and link your work to the curriculum?**  Speak to the point of contact in school to see if you can link any aspects of the talk to the curriculum students are following. You can also link to careers education more widely by informing students of the different pathways and entry routes there are to your career and/or sector. |  |
| **What do you need to find out in advance of the talk and who from?**  Ask the main point of contact in school if there is any information which will help you to deliver a more engaging and inclusive experience for students (keep in mind additional learning needs that some students may have). |  |
| **How will you keep your audience engaged?**  Ask regular reflection questions to make sure that the students are accessing the content being delivered. You can also try quizzes, paired or group discussions and mini challenges to help students build on and develop their knowledge and understanding. |  |
| **Who will act as a practice audience and how will you use their feedback to improve the talk?**  Try and practice the talk in full to at least one other colleague or practice audience volunteer. Their feedback will help to improve and strengthen your talk for students. Perhaps you have a recent school leaver in your business who could provide a youth perspective? |  |
| **Will you use handouts, props or visuals?**  Consider if additional materials and resources would improve the experience for students. |  |
| **Will you provide materials in advance?**  It is best practice to share with students an invitation to the talk and a breakdown of what to expect. Students might also enjoy preparing questions to ask when you visit. |  |
| **How will you gauge student and teacher feedback?**  Will you ask for on-the-spot feedback from students and the teacher? Or follow up afterwards with a questionnaire or feedback form? |  |
| **Will you provide follow-up activities?**  Will students benefit from a follow-up activity or task? For example, some research, further information, signposting or an individual, group, class or family challenge? |  |
| **Other considerations**  Is there anything else that you need to consider in preparation for your talk? |  |

*Fictional version from a marketing SME:*

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| --- | --- |
| **Talk title**  Try and base this around a question or topic which will spark the students’ interest. | **Yellow and green or red and white? Why colour in marketing matters.** |
| **Focus age-range**  Which age range will you be speaking to? | **15–16-year-olds.** |
| **Inclusivity**  Think about the demographics and needs of your audience. How can you make your content, business and sector seem relatable, engaging and accessible to your audience. | **As a large proportion of students come from a background where English is an additional language you include information about the diversity of your workforce / sector and how different perspectives are welcomed and valued.**  **As the school offers both mainstream and SEND\* provision you mention the supported internships on offer. (\*Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)** |
| **Participant numbers**  How many students will be attending? Where will the talk take place? | **120 students in a 45-minute assembly in the school hall.** |
| **What do you want the students to know or understand after the talk?**  Keep this easy and accessible for students to digest. | **What marketing and branding are and the role of colour psychology in attracting an audience's attention.** |
| **How will you structure what you want to say?**  Be aware of how much time you have and break the session down into manageable chunks. | **1 – Introduction and state the aim of the session.**  **2 – Tell students the worst mistake I’ve ever made when working with a client and what I learnt from it.**  **3 – Ask students in pairs to discuss a potential definition for marketing.**  **4 – Take feedback and then share the company’s definition of marketing. Compare this to a definition of branding. Tell the group more about the agency and what we do.**  **5 – Display a colour wheel and ask students to think of any high-profile marketing campaigns they can think of which use key colour palettes. Take feedback and then talk students through the impact of some famous brands’ branding – with a focus on colour. Ask students if they can think of any brands who break this mould.**  **6 – True or false activity – The skills and qualities needed to be an effective marketeer.**  **7 – Play the video featuring current colleagues discussing their routes into the agency and their top tips for anyone considering a career in marketing.**  **8 – End with a reflection by asking students to consider if they have any of the skills or qualities required of a marketeer.**  **9 – Ask students to turn to their partner and explain a simple definition of marketing and branding, and the best and worst colours to use in branding.**  **10-Take feedback. End and thanks.** |
| **How can you try and link your work to the curriculum?**  Speak to the point of contact in school to see if you can link any aspects of the talk to the curriculum students are following. You can also link the speech to careers education by informing students of the different pathways and entry routes there are to your career and/or sector. | **Students are looking at persuasive literary techniques in English Language. The teacher would like us to use terms like ‘hyperbole’, ‘rhetorical device’ and ‘imperative’ when talking through the famous clients’ campaigns.** |
| **What do you need to find out in advance of the talk and who from?**  Ask the main point of contact in school if there is any information which will help you to deliver a more engaging and inclusive experience for students. | * **Prepare a ‘what to expect on the day’ resource to support students A and B. The teacher can share this with the whole group if required.** * **Have a standing desk available for student C.** * **Run through what effective listening and collaboration looks like before the session starts to reinforce expectations.** |
| **How will you keep your audience engaged?**  Ask regular reflection questions to make sure that the students are accessing the content being delivered. You can also try quizzes, paired or group discussions and mini challenges to help students build on and develop their knowledge and understanding. | **Embed some of the following engagement techniques:**   * **True or false** * **Paired discussion** * **Direct questions** * **Video explainer** * **Music** * **Storytelling** * **Reflection questions** |
| **Who will act as a practice audience and how will you use their feedback to improve the talk?**  Try and practice the talk in full to at least one other colleague or practice audience volunteer. Their feedback will help to improve and strengthen your talk for students. | **Use the team meeting on the 10th as a trial run. Ask for feedback after the run through. Action any changes.** |
| **Will you use handouts, props or visuals?**  Consider if additional materials and resources would improve the experience for students. | * **PowerPoint** * **Entry and exit music** * **Video** * **Colour palette wheel** |
| **Will you provide materials in advance?**  It is best practice to share with students an invitation to the talk and a breakdown of what to expect. Students might also enjoy preparing questions to ask when you visit. | **Send the teacher a ‘what to expect on the day of the talk’ resource to hand out / email to students.**  **Send some discussion points and an optional research task for students to complete before the talk.** |
| **How will you gauge student and teacher feedback?**  Will you ask for on-the-spot feedback from students and the teacher? Or follow up afterwards with a questionnaire or feedback form? | **Students will be asked to complete an electronic questionnaire via Microsoft forms when they return to their lesson.**  **Ask students to write down one word to describe the session and post it in a box as they exit the room.**  **Send the teacher a separate Microsoft forms link to gauge their feedback.** |
| **Will you provide follow-up activities?**  Will students benefit from a follow-up activity or task? For example, some research, further information, signposting or an individual, group, class or family challenge? | **Find out if the teacher would like us to come in again to deliver the session to any other year groups.**  **Consider following up the talk with a marketing challenge for students to complete outside of school hours, individually or in small groups. Perhaps a branding challenge for a fictious product or client with accompanying justification report. This will help us to build trust and brand loyalty within the community.** |
| **Other considerations**  Is there anything else that you need to consider in preparation for your talk? | * **Ask the teacher about the set-up of the room so that students have the opportunity to engage in paired and small group discussion. They might need to think about a seating plan to support certain students.** * **Discuss computer access so that the PowerPoint is set up on arrival.** * **Consider photography consent so we know in advance which students have parental consent to appear in photography / on social media.** * **Create two social posts to highlight the impact of the session – one thanking the setting and reflecting on what we enjoyed about the experience, the other containing quantitative data from the students’ or teacher’s feedback.** * **Offer support to Jack and Meera – the facilitators, so they feel confident and excited on the day. Consider how best to thank and celebrate their volunteering work after the event.** |

*What’s next for employers?*

Once you’ve had some experience in delivering careers outreach activities, you may be interested to review and refine your offer.

The Careers and Enterprise Company has developed The [Employer Standards](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/employer-standards) a framework and tool to improve quality in **employer outreach in careers education**. The framework shows what good looks like and the **free online** **tool** helps those who want to evaluate their outreach and plan improvements. It’s free and takes just 25 minutes to use.