

Green Career Days

A brief introduction

Between October 2009 and September 2011, the Midwestern Ontario Regional Green Jobs Strategy assisted local organizations in organizing green career days including:

- Waves of Opportunity Career Day in Walkerton, Ontario on June 1, 2010
Attendance: 240 students
- Green Energy, Bio-science and Agriculture Career Fair in Sarnia, Ontario on April 12 & 13, 2011
Attendance: 3096 students from 53 schools; 200 individuals from the general public
- Careers in Energy in Walkerton, Ontario on June 1, 2011
Attendance: 231 students

The combined attendance of the above career events is 3,767 participants including students and the general public. The observations and experiences collected while assisting with planning and execution of the events are listed summarily to be included in a toolkit of resources that can be found at www.workgreen.ca. The toolkit also includes planning templates including registration forms, evaluation forms and other documents that will enhance the event.

Best Practices

Planning and Organizing a Career Day

1. Location, location, location

The first step when planning a career day is to find a location that is central to your target audience with sufficient capacity to hold all of the attendees, presenters, exhibitors and organizers.

2. Date and time of event

Once a location has been selected the date and time should be set. Always consider your target audience when making any decisions about the event – this holds especially true here.

Audience

Students
Unemployed Individuals
Underemployed Individuals
General Public

Ideal Days & Times

Weekdays, during school hours
Weekdays, during business hours
Evenings and weekends
Evenings and weekends

3. Finding exhibitors

Local business directories are a good starting point for finding green businesses. Getting a commitment from exhibitors requires multiple forms of contact including e-mail blasts, direct calling, and where possible in-person visits. Exhibitors have other priorities and as an event organizer you are the one who needs to help them see that they want to be at your event. A free booth is a good way to show appreciation for your exhibitors' staffing and travel costs to participate in your event.

4. Forms galore – registration, evaluation, etc.

Once you have the details – who, what, why and where – you can proceed getting the message out about your event. A set of templates can be found in the toolkit on www.workgreen.ca including a registration form for exhibitors and an evaluation form for exhibitors and attendees. These forms may be modified to fit the needs of your event.

Enriching the Experience of Participants

1. Teacher's guide

To increase student participation and enrich their experience at the event, teachers should be encouraged to incorporate relevant activities into the lesson plan before and after the event. A teacher's guide has been compiled with in-class activities that may be circulated to teachers ahead of time.

2. Activities to encourage participation

During the event, activities can be used to encourage participation and deliver the opportunities in various formats. These activities could include presentations, speakers and interactive break-out sessions related to the event. Participants could be given a list of questions to begin a dialogue with exhibitors. The list of questions could be entered in a draw for a prize.

3. Interactive displays to engage students

Hands-on exhibits are a great crowd draw during a trade show. An interactive demo gives people a feel for your product and company on a real level and it's entertaining. Interactive displays will get a potential client or employee to connect with your product or service and leave a lasting impression. A guide that can be shared with exhibitors is included in the registration form template.

4. Prizes, prizes, prizes

The possibility of winning something is always a great motivator to participate and should be incorporated where possible. Prizes could be tied to completion of the evaluation form, participation in a contest (e.g. answering a list of questions correctly – with the help of exhibitors) or at random intervals throughout the day as a way to generate attendance.

Success is in the Details

The little details can make the difference between a smooth event and a disorganized day for the event organizers. On the day of the event, make sure you have on hand:

- Directional signage for inside the venue and outside too
- Evaluation Forms
- List of Registered Exhibitors
- Extra Floor Plan Maps
- Tape (masking, scotch, duct, etc.)
- Sharpie Markers
- Paper