

Apprenticeship Careers Fair case Study: Whitley Academy

Introduction

Minh Nguyen is the Learning Resource Centre Manager at Whitley Academy in Coventry. Whitley Academy is an innovative and inclusive secondary school which received an “Outstanding” Ofsted judgement in December 2013 for the second time.

How it worked

150 year 11 students from the school and 20 of RSA Academy from Birmingham (guest students) attended the event.

From 11:00 -12:30 we ran the “careers speed dating” activity. All year 11 students formed groups of 10 -12 and “speed-dated” with 3 business volunteers of their choice. From 1:30 – 3:10 we held an assembly with our keynote speaker (Robert Zajko of Hilton Worldwide), who then joined in as audience Q&A / chat show run by 12 year old BBC student reporters of the school.

The aim of the event was to inspire students to think about their career choices and what an apprenticeship scheme was about. Additionally it was aimed to give students the opportunities to talk to real life people who have been in business for a certain period of time. This aims were achieved because:

- All contacted volunteers (via Inspiring the Future database) arrived and worked non-stop with the students for 1.5 hours.
- The students behaved very well on the day. They interacted with the volunteers and had raised interesting and challenging questions to the volunteers.
- Some students asked me to contact the volunteers for more information re. career choice for them.
- The volunteers were happy at the end of the session and enthusiastic to come back and talk to the students if possible
- The afternoon keynote speaker’s speech drew attention of both staff and students. A part of which was his high-profile work experience (Robert Zajko manages more than 5000 staff members and recruits high-calibre staff for Hilton Worldwide). He was very honest and calm to talk to both young and older students.

Evaluation

It was the first time we managed to run the project with massive support from Inspiring the Future staff. The support from Inspiring the Future included:

- Very detailed conversations with staff from ItF and follow-up emails
- Extremely helpful advice when I got stuck with any issues which surely helped me to tackle to problem and move on from there.
- Detailed profile of the volunteers once I decided which ones to go with.
- There were 14 volunteers who were very eager to help and were willing to come back to talk to smaller groups of students if they wish to.
- Only one minor recommendation for the volunteers: Please get back to us as soon as you could so that we would be able to arrange for the event accordingly. There were some responses that I received just some hours before our event.

A number of filled surveys were sent back to Inspiring the Future. Some other feedback include:

- “I got to know this person who works in the field I am very interested in as a career later. I have asked her to send you some more details for me please Miss.”
- “I got to know people who work in recruitment. It was great as now I am aware of some websites of recruiting young people”
- “We would like to have another similar event sometime next year please Miss. It would be great to have it sometime after our GCSE exams.”

Overall we had a great day for both staff and students. We would like on-going support from Inspiring the Future so that we could give students more opportunities link directly to their career choice / apprenticeship. We will definitely run other careers activities and events in the future. I would use Inspiring the Future for the database of volunteers and if possible, I would ask Inspiring the Future to give us contacts of volunteers whose expertise / business and life experience would be of interest to our students.

Links:

BBC School report : <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport/28293060>

Video : <http://youtu.be/YkTdRAQNOAY>

Contact Details:

<http://www.whitleyacademy.com/>

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