



## GUEST SPEAKER INFORMATION

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This guide is designed to give you the information you need to plan an inspiring, fun, and successful career presentation. If you have any questions, or need additional support, please don't hesitate to contact Lisa McNaney at [lmcnaney@tvp.org](mailto:lmcnaney@tvp.org).

Guest speakers provide students with a true perspective of what it is like to work in the "real world." As a guest speaker, you will share your personal experiences with students and support them in grasping the importance of planning for their future.

### **YOUR ROLE AS A GUEST SPEAKER:**

- Describe what you do and what led you to enter this field. If you grew up and/or went to school in the Bay Area, let the students know where. It can help them relate to you.
- Explain which school subjects/academic skills you utilize during a day-in-the-life of your profession, and what skills you learned in school that you use now. Think about how you can describe your profession in concrete, specific terms and use personal stories and anecdotes.
- Explain what type of education or hands-on experiences you obtained after high school (e.g., college, training, apprenticeship) to prepare you for your job.
- If you can, provide visuals (photographs, sample documents etc.) as they can help students better understand your career. However, do not feel pressured to provide them.
- Identify a typical salary range for your career field (starting salary, highest potential salary etc.)
- Be honest about difficulties you have faced. Students benefit from hearing from adults who have overcome challenges in school or work. The message we want students to hear is that anyone can succeed with hard work, effort and time.

## **“HOW TO ANSWER THE “TOUGH QUESTIONS”**

- What attracted you to the company you are currently working for?

Students are always curious about the decision-making process around selecting a job. Were you attracted to the company because of the culture, team members, mission, or was it simply a monetary decision?

- What is the most exciting and least favorite part of your career?

Students might be surprised to learn that even “dream jobs” have some aspects that are not interesting or exciting. Feel free to share your honest feedback. If you don’t have a “least favorite” aspect of your job, that’s okay too.

- How did you prepare for your career?

Feel free to share your major in college, and additional training, apprenticeships and/or internships that prepared you for your career. If you are a career changer, feel free to share your experiences too. This helps students understand that the world of work is dynamic, and there are always opportunities to reinvent yourself and change directions in your career.

- How much money do you make?

You might be surprised to see this question, but our students love to know the specifics, and are not afraid to ask. The best way to respond to this question is by sharing how much a typical employee can expect. Appropriate responses include, “recent college graduates usually start at X,” or “salaries range from X-X.”

## **SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR GUEST SPEAKERS**

1. Describe a typical day. What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
2. Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like most about this company?
3. What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job?
4. How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work?
5. What can you tell me about the employment outlook in your occupational field?
6. Does your work relate to any experiences or studies you had in college? How well did your college experience prepare you for this job?
7. How important are grades/GPA for obtaining a job in this field?
8. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?

## **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

- **BE HONEST!** Students really appreciate learning more about you and your career path.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Though your students participate in career academies and are familiar with basic industry terminology, it's best to explain ideas in plain English. Students might not understand all of the industry language, thus it's best to keep it simple.
- **STAY CURRENT.** Share information with students that is current and relevant. Instead of talking about programs that occurred in the "good old days," talk about current opportunities that are available to students.
- **BE CONCISE.** Limit your responses to 90 seconds. This way, students will stay engaged.
- **GIVE ADVICE.** Share anything that you wish someone would've told you, or any other information such as "get involved in extracurricular activities" or "try to get an internship." Students appreciate your words of wisdom.
- **ENGAGE STUDENTS.** Feel free to ask questions to engage students, such as, "how many of you know X," or "how many of you are thinking about majoring in X?"
- **STAY CONNECTED.** If you would like to connect with students, feel free to share your email address or social media address or business card.