

Tips for a Successful Job Shadow

Creating a successful job shadowing experience requires some planning. Meredith Knopp from Junior Achievement of Mississippi Valley helped create these lists of tips for students and employers.

Tips for Students

1. **Dress appropriately.** Professional dress shows you are taking the opportunity seriously.
2. **Make a good first impression.** When meeting people, be sure to make eye contact and offer a firm handshake. Practice with friends and family members beforehand to gain confidence.
3. **Be respectful and polite.** The person you shadow has the potential to be a valuable mentor. Do your best to impress them. Remember your manners, and do not chew gum or bring a cell phone.
4. **Come prepared with questions.** For example, what education is required for your position? What do you most like about your job? How many different departments are within your company, and how do they all work together to achieve the company mission? What is the salary range that someone in this position can make? Asking questions will show you are interested and you will get more out of the experience.
5. **Express your appreciation.** Thank your mentor for allowing you to shadow him or her when you meet, when you leave for the day and later with a handwritten thank you note. Again, you never know how the connections you make may end up helping you in the future.

Tips for Employers

1. **Have a plan.** Mentors need to prepare talking points. Students will be interested in the history of the business, its mission, its various departments, job opportunities and what is required for advancement, as well as the background of their particular mentors, including their career histories and education paths. Mentors also need to know what they will show students and, when fitting, even prepare tasks for the students to complete.
2. **Create an informal interaction time.** Providing lunch is a good way to let the mentors and students get to know each other on a more personal level. This social time also helps students build confidence and important interpersonal skills.
3. **Make it fun!** Keep the focus on the kids, and be flexible enough to work with their interests. Remember, a successful job shadow will get students excited about exploring their career options. Make it an upbeat, positive experience.

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More information is available at http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri_connections_news_room.htm.

The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership workgroup represents a collaboration of state agencies concerned with education and workforce development who are helping inform and build awareness among the public, particularly students and potential students, of targeted careers, educational and industry trends, and workforce development priorities. Workgroup members represent the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Department of Higher Education; Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development and Missouri Economic Research & Information Center; Missouri Center for Career Education; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freelance writer is Anita Neal Harrison.