Developing Partnerships – schools and business:
A Process Guide

Steps	Some examples
Step 1: Decide what your school wants to achieve through a partnership	
Decide what your school wants to achieve through a partnership. ▸ What's in it for you? ▸ What do you want to achieve? ▸ What's in it for the students and their learning outcomes?	• Making the curriculum more alive and relevant • Enhance the relevance of learning for students • Engage the students in learning • Support with basic skills, such as reading and numeracy • Increasing the employability of our students
Step 2: Determine the kind of activities you want to do	
Once you have decided what you want to achieve (your objectives), map out some activities you would like to do that will achieve your objectives.	*Making the curriculum relevant:* • Set up presentations from business people as part of the teaching program. *Engage and enhance the relevance of learning*: • Take your students out of the classroom and into a real workplace so they can see and understand the value of their lessons to real life. *Basic skills:* • Involve business people as volunteers in school based reading or numeracy support programs. • E-mentoring – use of email for contact and engagement between students and mentors. *Employability:* • Work experience and work shadowing both assist in the development of employability skills and give students a better idea if a particular career is really of interest to them. • Preparing for job seeking, job interviews • A mentoring program provides students with someone outside of their normal life who can support and encourage them. Programs are usually targeted and specific.

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Step 3: Decide who will be responsible for various aspects of partnership activity within the school and who will ensure the correct protocols are followed	
‣ Decide how you will resource your partnership activities within the school. Who will be responsible for what activities? This will depend on your objectives. ‣ Find out if anyone already has relationships with business, through specific programs such as 'Local Community Partnerships'. Make sure there is good communication and coordination within the school around your business partnerships, so you present as one organisation with clear and consistent objectives. ‣ Depending on where your school is located, you may want to communicate with other schools in your area, to avoid overlapping with business contacts and activities that they are developing. ‣ Make sure you are clear about Department of Education policies and procedures regarding engagement with business (identify any 'no-go' areas).	*Employability* A group of teachers decide to foster engagement with business around career education and a number of other curriculum areas. It is important to have one person as the program coordinator. Ensure there is one point of contact for questions and queries from the business. Determine the preferred method of communication with the business and ensure that the school's contact person has the means to respond to the business in a timely manner. Keep the teacher population informed of the program's progress through regular updates at staff meetings to ensure there is consistency of understanding about the program and its goals. This will help ensure the entire school community fully understands and gets behind your partnership program. ### *Hot tip!* Write an information sheet which sets out in dot points the Department's policies on engagement / partnerships with business (excluding sponsorships). This can be very confusing for business people to understand and can scare them away.
Step 4: Consider an alliance with a non-profit organisation	
There may be a non-profit organisation who works with young people and businesses operating in your region. It may be worthwhile to consider engaging with them, as they are specialists who are skilled and experienced in such partnerships, as long as working with them meets your objectives.	Examples include: • The Smith Family has a range of mentoring programs www.smithfamily.com.au/index.cfm?pid=2534&pageid=2560 • Plan-It Youth (www.dsf.org.au) Mentors work one-to-one with young people who may be thinking of leaving school and need extra support to continue at school, or prepare for a successful transition from school to work, or further education and training. Students and mentors work together to map out steps that the student will take, if they decide to leave school. Mentors are trained, and supported by the school, a coordinator and other mentors.

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Step 5: Research potential business partners with in your area	
Make contact with businesses in your local area. ▶▶ Are there major employers? ▶▶ Is there an active Chamber of Commerce? ▶▶ Have you talked to the parent groups at your school – such as the P & C and School Council? Some of them may be owners / employees in local businesses. ▶▶ Some parents may want to be part of the school business-partnership team, as their way of supporting the school. If this is useful, find a role for them.	• Identify three of the larger employers in your area. Research what kinds of people / skills / trades they have. Useful sources of information may include your local Council, the internet, the local paper and the local Chamber of Commerce. • Attend an activity of the Chamber of Commerce. • Do a presentation about your plans to a P & C meeting. Invite interested parents to come and speak with you further.
Step 6: Make contact with potential partners and meet with them to gauge their interest	
Now you have done your research, and identified some potential partners, set up meetings to present your ideas to the business and to find out what they need from a possible partnership. Keep it simple at this step – this is to explore what they may want to achieve from working with you. Follow this up with further meetings, as you explore ideas and partnership options. Be prepared to adapt your thinking to meet their needs, but within the parameters of the objectives you want to achieve.	*From your perspective:* Use your research and meetings with potential partners to find out: • Does the business have a good reputation within the community? • Does the business have the skills and resources to be an effective education partner? *From the business' perspective:* Consider and explain how the business could benefit from a partnership with your school. Benefits could include: • Enhancing its reputation • Opportunities for skills development for employees • Increased staff morale, retention and loyalty through a greater sense of community contribution • Providing staff from across the business with a chance to get to know each other, through participation in the program (if a large business) • Building the workforce of tomorrow.
Step 7: Develop an action plan	
When you have found one or more businesses that want to work with you, develop a plan which sets out how the partnership will work. It is very important that make sure everyone is clear about what is expected of them and what their roles and responsibilities are. Agree who the relevant contact person is within the business.	Your action plan needs to cover: • the goals of the partnership • specific activities • timeframes • resources required • evaluation

Steps	Some examples
Step 8: Implement the plan and evaluate its success	
Implementation: Next step is to put the plan into action and make it all happen. It is important during implementation that you constantly gather feedback from both volunteers and students and deal with any issues that may arise promptly. **Evaluation**: By setting out up front your measures of success, you can track them along the way. As well as educational outcomes, you need to manage the relationships with your partners and ensure the program is delivering to everyone's needs.	Brief business volunteers fully to ensure they know what to expect. Briefings should include information on the objectives of the program, age of students and key benefits. Maintaining regular communication with the business is important, volunteers need to be kept informed of any developments at the school relevant to the program **Evaluation:** Consider questions like: - Did the program go to plan? - Was our action plan sound? Did it cover off everything it needed to? - Did we achieve our objectives? - Was the program manageable for all involved? Gather feedback from both volunteers and students and use this to show the business how their support is achieving the program's goals.
Step 9: Feedback the results to everyone and celebrate success	
Use the feedback to plan for the next time, if you decide to do it again. Consider: - How well the program worked within the school? - What would you do differently? Make sure you: - Celebrate success! - Thank everyone involved	*Reading for Life* Unilever hold a party at the school with the students, parents and volunteers at the end of the semester, to celebrate the effort everyone has contributed. Find a way to acknowledge your business partners, such as: - invite them to an assembly - tell the school community about the partnership and what has been achieved - profile, in the school newsletter, specific individuals who have been 'champions' within the business - consider a joint press release to the local media.