



How to deliver the Talent Week school engagement programme

Further information:

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Contents

Background	3
Partners:.....	3
What is Talent Week	3
Why have a Talent Week?	4
Why include a school engagement programme with employee volunteers?	4
What are the benefits?	4
Shopping centre benefits	4
School benefits	4
Business benefits for company providing volunteers	4
The School Engagement Programme	5
How to work with schools	5
How do I recruit employee volunteers?	6
Key points to consider:	6
Aims and objectives	6
‘All about me’ delivery tips	7
The Talent Brick	7
Talent Week Event	7
Appendix 1 - ‘All about me’ Student Handout	8
Appendix 2 - Hints and Tips for Individual Sections of the ‘All about me’ handout	9

Background

Talent Week helps bridge the gap between the classroom and the world of work. It is an initiative that works to raise aspirations by encouraging individuals to think about their talents and how they could be used in the workplace. The Talent Week initiative was developed in partnership with Business in the Community (BITC) and the British Council for Shopping Centres (BCSC), to encourage the recognition, celebration and development of a wide range of talents amongst all young people. It is hoped that it will become an annual feature in the retail calendar in shopping centres across the UK and start a powerful campaign aimed at raising aspirations based on developing skills for the future.

Partners:

BITC

Business in the Community stands for responsible business. We advise, support and challenge our members to improve their performance to create a sustainable future for people and planet. For further information about BITC visit www.bitc.org.uk or telephone 020 7566 8650.

BCSC

BCSC represents the retail property industry and was established in 1983 as the national organisation for corporations and individuals interested in the managed retail environment. The organisation now has 2,800 members, representing developers, retailers, agents, consultants, architects and public sector managers, among others. For further information about BCSC visit www.bcsc.org.uk or telephone 020 7222 1122.

What is Talent Week

It is a two part initiative:

- 1) School engagement programme
- 2) Talent Week Event (which takes place in the local shopping centre, more information can be found [here](#))

Talent Week will engage:

- **Students (Years 8,9 and 10):** to actively think and take action about their future
- **Employees:** to increase their skills, recognise their own talents and reach their full potential
- **Employer/further education organisations:** to find and develop the potential of a wider group of young people

Why have a Talent Week?

As recently as 2003 over one in six young people in England were leaving school without the ability to read, write and add up¹ Many children lack positive role models to encourage them to want more out of life and often leave key decisions about their future to the very last moment, waiting until just before they leave school to think about what their skills are and how they can use them to find a job, or deciding what they would like to continue to study.

Why include a school engagement programme with employee volunteers?

Through the Talent Week school engagement programme, employee volunteers are able to work with pupils during a session called 'All about me' to help them to start to think about their skills and talents and how these can be applied to the world of work. Employee volunteers in particular are able to use their own experiences to provide perspective and understanding of a wide range of employability skills which are important in the workplace. At a follow up session, teachers will work with those pupils to build a 'Talent Brick'

What are the benefits?

Shopping centre benefits

- Build community engagement and develop further relationships with your customers
- Drive footfall, dwell time and spend per head within your shopping centre
- Provides an opportunity to engage members of your supply chain through offering volunteering placements and/or subsequent involvement in the event

School benefits

- Develop student's ability to effectively communicate their skills and aspirations
- Provides students with valuable exposure to the world of business and, more crucially, adult role models from the world of work
- Improves students' confidence and provides motivation to succeed
- Opportunity for the school and its students to be part of a national programme aimed at celebrating the talents and aspirations of young people

Business benefits for company providing volunteers

- Provides an opportunity for team building and employee engagement
- Opportunity for brand building and improving company reputation
- Employees may bring skills and innovative approaches back to the workplace
- Offers a chance to engage in the local community and contribute to social issues

¹ Skills for Life Survey, DfES, 2003

Business benefits for volunteers

- Provides volunteers with a unique chance to contribute as part of everyday teaching in a school
- Allows employees to work with one another on a unique team project outside of the workplace
- Improves employee motivation and skills, for example emotional intelligence and communication²

The School Engagement Programme

How to work with schools

The first step will be to contact local schools to see if they are interested in taking part in your centre's Talent Week. If you do not already have partnerships in place with local schools, you can either approach local Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) for assistance or contact schools directly through speaking to their head teacher or appointed business representative.

Business in the Community strives to work with community partners in areas of greatest need in order to have a positive impact on those that need it most. By working with the schools near your centre that have students from deprived areas you can maximise the impact of your support. Find out more about deprivation near you by entering your postcode in the Neighbourhood Summary box on the government statistics [website](#).

As the Talent Week event will be held in October half-term, you will need to hold the school engagement programme by the end of September, in order to leave enough turn-around time for teachers to build the bricks with their students, and your centre to create a wall of the completed bricks. It is advised to approach schools before the summer break which happens from late July to end of August, to pre-arrange the session that will take place in September when the schools re-open. When meeting with the school it would be advised to discuss the logistics for the day:

- Who the main school contact will be and their contact details (Check with the school the best times and best way to keep in touch)
- Where the session will be held
- If volunteers will be given access to the kitchen facilities etc.
- Any health and safety rules that volunteers will need to follow

To facilitate the sessions in September you will need a team of 5-10 employee volunteers per 30 students, who will run the sessions in the secondary schools. You may have the same volunteers spend a day working with each class of a year group throughout the day or alternatively have one or more groups of volunteers working with different classes from up to

² As fed back from participants in Talent Week 2009

three schools. This activity is designed for pupils aged 13 - 15; therefore you will be working with years 8, 9 or 10.

How do I recruit employee volunteers?

You can recruit employee volunteers from your centre, along with inviting members of your supply chain and tenants from your centre, providing a unique opportunity for strengthening business relationships.

Key points to consider:

- Volunteers will need a classroom for each session or the use of an Assembly Room
- The school will be required to follow up the volunteer led sessions as soon as possible, providing time for, and access to, the Talent Week website <http://www.talentweekbusiness.co.uk/toolkit.asp>
- Volunteers will carry out one assembly session and at least one 'All about me' session (½ hour set up, ½ hour assembly, 1 hour per session)
- On the morning of the session the volunteers will hold a special assembly for all of the participating students. One or two may act as speakers introducing themselves, the concept of talent and explaining their own career journeys to date. They will then explain what the students will be doing on the day during their session
- Volunteers will then spend an hour per group of students using the 'All about me' handout to help prepare students to create Talent Bricks in a later session with their teacher (See 'All about me' delivery tips below)

Aims and objectives

This activity is designed to meet the following aims/objectives:

- help students to identify and express their own interests, talents and skills
- encourage students to raise their aspirations, to begin to think about their future and to consider how they might take steps towards achieving their goal
- to equip the students to then build their own Talent Brick – and see it as a practical building block, increasing their self confidence and showcasing what they have to offer

‘All about me’ delivery tips

- Have volunteers work with a group of 3 – 4 students
- Volunteers should begin by introducing themselves and explaining what the day will consist of
- Volunteers should students at ease by talking about themselves (briefly) and going through the ‘*All about me*’ form themselves
- Ask students to begin completing their ‘*All about me*’ forms
- Circulate and engage with students to make sure they will be ready to articulate their talents and skills when they build their talent bricks in the teacher led session

The Talent Brick

Talent Bricks are created online at www.talentweekbusiness.co.uk/toolkit.asp. Your centre will need to be given access to the schools’ online folder of bricks via email, with enough turnaround time to have them created into a physical wall for your Talent Week event. As the bricks are created in a PDF format, the teacher could also print off the bricks and display them within their school. There is a [Teacher Briefing](#) for schools to help facilitate the build-a-brick session. For more information about the bricks please read the [brand guidelines](#) provided.

Talent Week Event

The Event may take place over three to seven days. With themes such as: creative media, retail, music, sport, enterprise etc. highlighting the opportunities available to them. As the centre you will organise the event, potentially using a marketing agency to assist. There is a [toolkit](#) to help you run the event on the Talent Week website.

You may also look to organisations such as [Skillsmart](#), for inspiration and support in running engaging activities throughout the week. During Talent Week 2009, [Skillsmart](#) supported Liverpool ONE by hosting a fashion and retail challenge in which young people learned about visual merchandising and competed for a prize.



Appendix 1 - 'All about me' Student Handout

What am I good at?

What interests me?

What am I proud of what have I achieved?

How would you like to use what you are proud of in the future?

What do you think you need to do to achieve this ambition?

Appendix 2 - Hints and Tips for Individual Sections of the ‘All about me’ handout

1. What am I good at?

Encourage pupils to consider specific activities in which they excel, such as sports, academic subjects or practical activities and then help them to identify the skills they use in their chosen talent.

Example:

Activity	Skills
Football.....	Teamwork; Communication
Dancing	Creativity; Memory
Singing.....	Confidence performing; engaging audiences
English.....	Factual/creative writing; correct use of language

From these examples it is plain to see that every talent has an associated skill that is transferable to the workplace.

2. What interests me?

This area is about trying to understand a little more about what motivates the student. Whilst the sessions are not focused on careers it is a good topic of conversation with which to highlight where their skills and interests could be applied. Look at interests both in and out of school and use these to encourage them to think about how they could apply these interests when considering their futures.

3. What am I proud of, what have I achieved?

In this section you should be aiming to encourage your students to think more broadly about their achievements within school and other achievements. For example, many of the students involved with Talent Week will be from schools with a high ethnic minority percentage. Some students may even have moved to England recently and will not view this as an achievement – you may wish to highlight that the process of settling into a new school, meeting new friends and in many cases learning a new language is a huge achievement.

4. How would you like to use what you are proud of in the future?

Aim to help the student see that there are a range of areas that they could apply the skills that they have discussed. There is no need to go into great detail about this, simply speak from experience or use other knowledge where appropriate. For example: a student that may be interested in computing, but also mentions an interest in crime writing or law, may not be aware that they could work in the IT department of a law firm.

Students really have very little awareness of the opportunities on offer to them in the world of work, so it is very much the role of the volunteer to bring this world to life for them and demonstrate that they can work in an area that they perhaps have never considered.

5. What do you think you need to do to achieve this ambition?

Speak to the students about qualifications and experience, but also highlight the importance of personal attributes, for example: determination, tenacity and commitment. The key to this final discussion is to make them aware of three things:

1. They are in charge of their own futures
2. They should be positive, confident and use their initiative
3. They should research and understand the areas of employment that interest them