



DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS AS

A CHAMPION OF YOUTH MENTORING:

A Guide for Getting Started



Our Vision is that no youth shall be denied the inspiration of a caring and involved mentor

GETTING STARTED:
Developing Your Workplace Partnership with Youth Mentoring

To answer the call to Indiana businesses, decide how your company will deepen its investment in youth mentoring. There are a variety of ways your workplace initiative can take shape, depending on the:

- A. RETURN ON INVESTMENT you want to see and
- B. RESOURCES (of leadership, people and/or dollars) that you will lend

Develop your workplace initiative by taking these 5 CRITICAL STEPS:

- STEP 1. Answer the Key Starting Questions: Focus and Define
 - STEP 2. Put the Required Leadership and Staff Lead in place
 - STEP 3. Select your program partner(s)
 - STEP 4. Create the Culture: Leverage widespread buy-in and involvement
 - STEP 5: Manage it
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STEP 1. Answer the Key Starting Questions:

Begin by focusing your intent and defining your strategy. Make sure you are able to answer these questions before moving forward.

- Broadly, why does this initiative advance our company's vision, values and goals?
- Specifically, how can this initiative align with our community involvement priorities and current activities?
- What is our desired return on investment? What story of impact do we want to be able to tell, in 1 year and in 5 years?
- What resources are we planning to invest, now and in the years to come (for example, leadership/ advocacy, people/ volunteers and financial support)? Keep in mind two factors in determining your investment: 1) it is best to start small, and then expand, as initial success and resources allow and 2) the more significant the investment, the more significant your returns will be.
- How will you manage it? Specifically, will a staff person be charged with managing it and how will you document/ evaluate it?

STEP 2. Put the Required Leadership and Staff Lead in Place

- ✓ **Senior Management** –
Ensure the CEO and senior staff are driving the internal culture toward supporting your initiative. Advocacy and meaningful involvement from management is one of the most essential best practices for workplace community initiatives.

- ✓ **A Staff Lead to Manage Your Initiative** –
Assign a staff person the responsibility for managing your initiative. This is the most critical best practice to ensure that your initiative is successful, documented and sustainable. To the extent possible, build it into a staff person's job description and define what the measures of performance and accountability will be.

“We have created the culture at every level of the organization, beginning with the top. The argument to participate is changing – this appeals to people’s need for a personal legacy.”

- Randy Rusch, Do It Best Hardware

STEP 3: Select Your Program Partner(s)

At least some, if not most, of your investment in youth mentoring may involve investing in youth mentoring programs. When identifying the organizations you will partner with, be sure to use the same high standards you do with any investment of your company's capital.

Choose investment partners (youth mentoring organizations) which are:

1. The best fit with your company's vision, available resources, and desired return on investment
 2. Operating with the highest quality standards and effective practices in order to maximize impact
 3. Generating the greatest documented returns for youth and volunteers
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STEP 4: Create the Culture: Leverage widespread buy-in and involvement

Many companies invest in youth mentoring with their human capital, in addition to/ or in lieu of their financial capital. If you are trying to leverage your own people in this investment, it is important to note that your Return on Investment will depend just as much on your internal culture as it does on the quality of the program(s) you partner with.

Your company is the single greatest authority on how to best create a movement among your own employees. You will know best how to make the case, issue the call to get involved and then support those who do.

As you move forward internally, the following proven practices of workplace engagement may be helpful:

A. Have a Clear Strategy and Reason for involving employees

B. Make the Case to them for getting involved:

Some effective ways to make the case:

- Leadership's continued voice and advocacy: Use leadership's existing communication venues to build it into their bully-pulpits: e.g. annual meeting, staff meetings, staff newsletter. The most critical point is to keep it in front of employees and not have it become perceived as the "idea of the day"
- Promotional materials and documentation: Be as clear as possible, in writing, with what you are encouraging employees to do and why. Include what the company is offering (e.g. flex/paid time for volunteering) in addition to what is being asked of staff.

C. Issue the Call to Get Involved in Youth Mentoring

Some effective ways to issue the call:

- Introduce the initiative to your employees in a powerful and compelling way (e.g. at staff meeting or annual meeting), you may wish to involve speaker(s) from partner organization(s)
- Host a "Meet and Greet" event that gives your employees the opportunity to speak directly with the partner organizations and, ideally, become more invested in their stories. This would be similar to a "volunteer fair"
- Continue issuing the call: Realize that not all of your involved staff will sign up after the first call is issued. Some will wait to sign up until their schedules allow it or until they learn more (about leadership's commitment, the experience of their colleagues, etc...) Keep it in front of them, to the greatest possible.

STEP 5: Manage It

- A. Sustain the resource investment: Remain committed at the level of your initial investment long-enough to generate significant returns. Youth, and the programs and businesses which support them, need long-term support if they are to succeed long-term. With mentoring, the short-term infusion of volunteers who end their relationships prematurely (before 12 months) can create more harm to the child, than if no mentoring had occurred at all.
- B. Support and Celebrate Employee Involvement: Use existing communication channels to acknowledge and celebrate the involvement of employees. Some possible venues include staff meetings, newsletters, special events, presenting awards (to employees and/or their programs), etc...

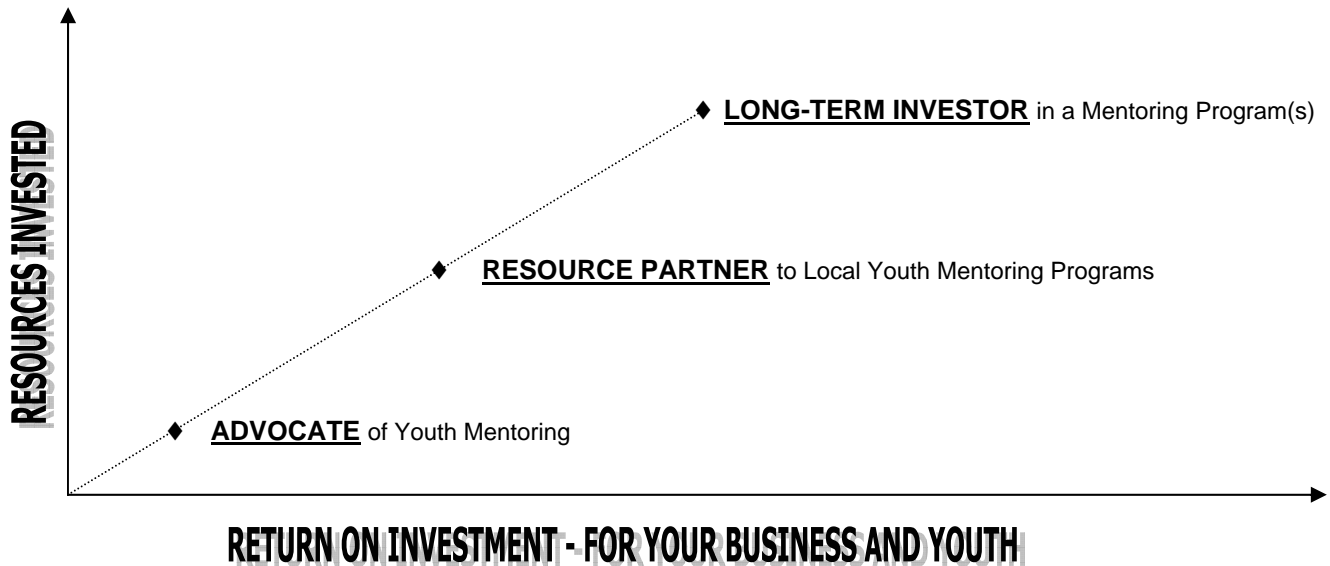
- C. Document and Evaluate your Workplace Initiative: Regardless of the level of resources you are investing, be sure to evaluate your initiative and its outcomes. Evaluation is often the last priority for workplace volunteer initiatives. However, without evaluation, it is impossible to tell the story, to know if there was success and the return on investment was leveraged. Evaluations do not have to be expensive. Very valuable information can be gleaned at minimal cost. However, the larger the company and/or the initiative, the greater the investment in an evaluation mechanism (such as software) should be.

For any company, the lead staff person can oversee the evaluation which may include some or/all of the following:

- Survey (baseline and annual follow-up) of participating employees
- Survey/ some data collection from program partners
- Data management system, developed internally
- Purchased software designed to track/manage volunteer initiative

RESOURCE DOCUMENT 1. Determining Your Company's Starting Level of Investment:

Although very different, companies generally become involved with youth mentoring on one or more of these levels. Business can invest in mentoring by playing one or more of the following roles:



DEFINING THE LEVELS OF COMPANY INVESTMENT:

Tier 1: An ADVOCATE of Youth Mentoring ... a Common Place to Start

- Get to know the youth mentoring programs in your service area(s)
- Use your corporate voice to become a champion and advocate of supporting youth mentoring, internally and in the community
- Dedicate time at a staff meeting to introduce your employees to youth mentoring and encourage them to get involved
- Identify at least one high-quality program as one of your company's signature projects and recommended a site for employee, customer and partner involvement

Tier 2: A RESOURCE PARTNER to local mentoring programs ... Beginning to Grant Company Resources to Programs

- Serve as a program partner to your signature program partner(s) by offering in-kind company resources that meet the agency's programming needs. Options include opportunities to connect with your staff as community role models, provide direct resources to mentors/ mentees, or donate requested "wish list" items to the organization
- Become a program/event sponsor by providing financial support that underwrites a specific event or programming cost.

Tier 3: A LONG-TERM INVESTOR in a Signature Youth Mentoring Program ... The Deepest Level of Company Investment and Greatest Returns

- Cultivate and support your employees as a pool of volunteers for your partner program(s)
- Offer multi-year financial support to your signature project that funds the operational costs of providing high-quality, long-term youth support

RESOURCE DOCUMENT 2 – POSITION DESCRIPTION: Staff Lead/ Liaison

The primary functions of your company's Staff Lead/ Liaison are to:

- a) Manage, evaluate and be held accountable for your company's investment in youth mentoring and
- b) Serve as the main contact at the workplace, on behalf of the partnering program(s). As the internal contact, the Liaison communicates the needs and experiences of your staff and company to the program partner(s). It is recommended that the Liaison volunteer as a mentor, but not required.

For almost all companies, the Liaison position is built into a current employee's job description. The amount of time required of the Liaison will depend largely on the scope of your initiative, including how many programs and employees are involved.

Primary Duties:

- Manages all aspects of your company's investment, including reporting and evaluation
- Serves as chief liaison between the program partner's staff contact and volunteers;
- Serves as main resource and contact for volunteer-related questions and needs;
- Distributes program-related information to volunteers at the request of program staff contact;
- Acts as a liaison during the volunteer application process
- Helps with the program design, scheduling and logistics;
- Helps program staff contact monitor matches, including scheduling meetings;
- Notifies program staff contact of any volunteer scheduling or participation issues;
- Attends all relevant trainings; and
- Coordinate events/ meeting related to the initiative.

RESOURCE DOCUMENT 3 – A VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT SESSION: Guidelines and Sample Agenda

Goals of a Volunteer Recruitment Session:

You may wish to add your own goals to the list below:

1. To provide prospective volunteers with the information they need to decide if they have the commitment and time to volunteer as a mentor;
2. To provide a clear understanding of the volunteer needs and expectations;
3. To give information about where and when employees can volunteer;
4. To explain the application process and criminal background check policies;
5. To explain the company's volunteer policies, including release-time policies and risk-management policies;
6. To introduce prospective volunteers to the program partner(s), and
7. To explain the support that will be provided to employees by the program partner(s).

Key to a Successful Recruitment Event:

- If possible, make sure the program partner is ready to place volunteer mentors within six to eight weeks of recruitment session;
- Make sure someone from management (the higher, the better) opens the recruitment session and explains the support employees will receive;
- To the greatest extent possible, have a senior level staff person talk about the personal commitment he or she is making as a volunteer mentor;
- Invite the staff from the partnering program to attend the event and meet the employees;
- Give plenty of notice so they can put it on their calendars;
- Keep it to one hour;
- Have food (coffee, soda and lights snacks are fine);
- Invite an experienced volunteer mentor (preferably from your company) to be on the agenda. They are often the best salespeople for the program;
- Keep extra handouts for those who could not attend, but still may be interested;
- Be clear on the next steps employees should take if they are interested in volunteering/ learning more;
- To the greatest extent possible, direct staff to contact the program directly as their next step, so that your company does not get involved with the screening and application process and
- Assure all employees that their application and involvement with the program will be managed by the provider and information will not be shared with their company (under most circumstances)

Sample Agenda for Your Volunteer Recruitment Session (Assuming a 1 Hour Meeting):

- a. Introductions by attendees
- b. Tell a story of impact – preferably one from a current employee involved with mentoring
- c. What are the Volunteer Needs? (Definition, screening process, expectations of volunteers, outcomes)
- d. Our Company's Investment – Why and how we are doing it (from senior level management)
- e. Our Company's Policies - How the company will support their commitment to become a volunteer
- f. Introduction of Signature Program Partner(s): Company's explanation of their selection
- g. Program Partner(s): Compelling story of Impact, overview of the program, more details about becoming and staying involved
- h. If Interested – Next Steps To Take
- i. Questions and Answers

RESOURCES & CONNECTION– **Offerings to Business Partners from the Indiana Mentoring Partnership**

Start-Up Support:

- “Developing your Business as a Champion of Youth Mentoring: Toolkit for New Corporate Partners”
- Meet with your Staff Lead/ Liaison to identify a plan for moving forward
- Key Leaders: Meeting to define goals and next steps
- Employees: Presentations and Trainings
- Community Footprint: Connections to the high-quality mentoring programs in your service areas

Customized Technical Assistance:

Developing Your Own In-House Youth Mentoring Initiative

- Consulting: One-on-one support available to craft your business’ in-house youth mentoring initiative including a strategic plan with benchmarks
- Evaluation: Survey development, data collection tool for use with program partners

Contact the Indiana Mentoring Partnership:

To learn more about how IMP can serve your business, contact us by calling (877) 661-3040 or by e-mailing mentoring@iyi.org. Visit us online at www.abetterhour.org

