**Mentored Industry Projects**

Build Your Industry Partner Relationship

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| **TIPS**A good relationship with your Industry Partner is key to the success of your Mentored Industry Project. District C provides this top-10 list for how to recruit, maintain, and retain your industry partnerships. |
| RECRUIT |
| 1. Lead with inspiration. | The best partners will be motivated to support your students’ growth and learning. Get them to say yes by telling an inspirational story of a student who was changed by the opportunity to do real work. |
| 2. Follow with time commitments. | Industry Partners’ schedules will be tight. Send them calendar invitations with the specific dates and times of their commitments and avoid changing the schedule midstream. |
| 3. Clarify expectations for their role. | A high-level explanation of their role is sufficient (no need to get into the weeds). A useful structure is to briefly preview in writing what they will be doing each time they meet with students. |
| 4. Encourage two representatives. | In our experience, two is the perfect number of representatives from the partner. This way they have a buddy and a back-up, and it makes it more fun for all. |
| MAINTAIN |
| 5. Stay organized. | Keep everything your partner needs in one place. For example, if they need their student meeting schedule, links to student folders, parking information, and your cell phone number, include all of this stuff in the notes section of every calendar invitation. |
| 6. Agree on a communication plan. | Communication is key. Ask your partner if they prefer text or email and their preferred frequency of check-ins/reminders from you. They often welcome reminders. |
| 7. Communicate details “just in time.”  | Communicate prep details right before they are needed. For example, right before the pitch, it can be helpful to send some example questions they may want to ask the students. This stuff will get lost if you communicate it too early. |
| RETAIN |
| 8. Bring visibility to the work. | A social media post that celebrates the work can go a long way. Your partner will appreciate the shout-out. Be sure to tag them! ([Example](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/activity-7040082587863707648-vQzR?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)) |
| 9. Until next time … stay in touch. | At the end of the project, ask if they are open to another MIP and what time of year is best for them. To stay on their radar in the interim, send them an email to remind them of the great work you did together. Including an update from a student they worked with is always a winner! |
| 10. Ask for referrals. | When Industry Partners have a great experience with you, they will be excited for their friends and colleagues to engage as an Industry Partner as well. Don’t be afraid to ask for those referrals.  |

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| **RESOURCES**The District C Partnerships Team provided these tips based on their experience working with over 260 businesses of all shapes, sizes, and industries including global tech companies, local nonprofits, city governments, and innovative startups. District C provides full Industry Partner management (sourcing, screening, onboarding, problem scoping, scheduling, and follow up) for its member schools and school districts, including some NAF Academies. See how District C engages businesses [here](https://www.districtc.co/businesses). |