Course Note by Pat Jones

20 Key Ways to Engage with Industry

Introduction

One of the major aims of a TVET system is to prepare people for employment or advancement within employment. Therefore it is essential for a TVET organization to have a close connection with the industry sectors, associations and companies within their local region. In engaging with industry it is necessary to identify and promote the benefits the industry partner will achieve from the engagement.

Industry engagement strategies

1. Member of governing body of organization
2. Member of course advisory committee
3. Provide work-placement for students
4. Provide industry placement for staff members
5. Sponsor student awards/scholarships
6. Advertise their product/company by providing equipment
7. Provide industry visits for students
8. Provide live projects for students
9. Take part in TVET staff selection
10. Demonstrate latest equipment
11. Partner in promotional activities
12. Participate in TVET Strategic Planning Process
13. Use TVET facility for industry meetings, displays, conferences
14. Partnering of TVET and industry in Training: Apprenticeships; On-site Training
15. TVET sponsorship of awards with local Chamber of Commerce and Industry
16. Preferred Trainer – industry bid for projects
17. Collaboration on Technology Transfer
18. Training Services for Industry
19. Joint Learning Resource development
20. Tri-partite Action Groups

|   | **Member of TVET governing body** | Invite an industry representative to be a member of your organisation’s governing body. Ensure the industry member has:
|   |   | • Expertise in governance/senior management
|   |   | • High-level industry sector experience
|   |   | • Committed to TVET
|   |   | • Willing to commit time and effort
|   |   | • Comes from a company with acceptable ethical principles and practices
|   | **How:** |   | Identify 3 key industries you want to target (these should reflect the teaching areas of your organisation).
|   |   | Write a personal letter inviting an ‘Expression of Interest’ from the CEO of these companies. Request a CV to be attached to their Expression of Interest [It is better if a recommendation or personal contact identifies a potential member]
|   |   | Attach to the invitation:
|   |   | - Criteria for membership
|   |   | - Terms of Reference of Governing Body
|   |   | Invite interested personnel to interview
|   |   | Carry out referee check and due diligence check on company prior to offering position
|   |   | If unsuccessful repeat the process

|   | **Member of Course Advisory Committee** | Having industry personnel as members of Course Advisory Committees within teaching departments provides:
|   |   | • Industry expertise into course development
|   |   | • Ensures training programs are more relevant to local industry
|   |   | • Provides an external ‘critical eye’ on course structure and content
|   |   | • Raises the awareness of industry of training issues
|   |   | • Links teaching staff with local industry
|   |   | It is advisable to have industry members occupy at least 50% of committee places
|   | **How:** |   | Establish Course Advisory Committees for each discipline ‘area’. Eg Disciplines of Engineering may be Electrical; Mechanical; Civil as areas.
|   |   | Identify relevant companies that pertain to these discipline areas.
|   |   | Write an ‘Introductory Letter’ to each of the CEOs of these companies outlining what you are establishing and what
| 3 | **Provide work-placement for students** | In the provision of work-placement for students valuable industrial experience is provided to the student. For the industry partner they have ready access to a future workforce, which can save them valuable time in advertising and recruiting.  
- The workplace must be able to provide meaningful experience for the student – the student should not just be engaged in menial tasks nor should they be exploited as cheap labour  
- There should be an Agreement between the industry partner and the TVET provider  
- Clear expectations on the part of the industry partner, TVET organization, and student should be detailed.  
- Insurance issues are a major factor.  
- Student progress and welfare whilst in work-placement should be monitored at all times  

**How:**  
- Nominate a person and allocate time and resources to establish database and process  
- Identify suitable companies for workplace. The telephone or business directory is a good place to start  
- Have a database template, Workplacement Agreement, Q & A Sheet, Insurance details established prior to contacting companies.  
- Personal contact is the best approach: call company; speak to CEO or HR Manager; outline purpose; follow up with a personal meeting where you discuss paperwork and process.  
- Establish what commitment the company will make. [How many placements will they take, for what period, how often etc]  
- Ensure ‘Thank You’ letters are always sent at the end of each placement. |
|  |  | Industrial experience is a critical issue for TVET teachers/instructors. It is important that the industrial skills and knowledge they bring to TVET are kept current.  
- Exposes teachers/instructors to current industry practices  
- Provides relevance to their teaching practice  
- Forms strong links with industry |
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<th><strong>Provide industry placement for staff member</strong></th>
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| | • Often is the catalyst for companies to establish training programs within their own organization  
| | • Companies are more likely to use the TVET provider of the work-placement staff member  
| | **Downside:**  
| | • It is possible the teacher/instructor will stay with the company and leave TVET – This is a risk worth taking.  
| | **How:**  
| | • Process is similar to student workplacement in that it is necessary to:  
| | - Identify suitable companies  
| | - Have a clear process in place  
| | - Have a detailed database  
| | • Identify which staff requires professional development through workplacement and what skills will be developed and/or enhanced.  
| | • Make personal contact with the company to outline process and responsibilities  
| | • Once a company has agreed to participate include potential staff member in any meetings  
| | • Areas of concern for companies are usually: Hours of business; insurance; salary; sick leave etc |

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<th><strong>Sponsor student awards/scholarships</strong></th>
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| | Many companies are willing to sponsor student awards and/or provide scholarships to students – they just don’t know how to go about it.  
| | • First approach to seeking sponsorship should be to companies whom your organization trades with – the suppliers of equipment and teaching materials.  
| | • Make it known at every opportunity that you value and are willing to accept sponsorship of your students and programs.  
| | • Always acknowledge sponsors – banners; brochures; award function programmes etc  
| | • Student awards can be ‘Tools of Trade’; Cash voucher; Training program; VIP visit to company etc.  
| | • Avoid different personnel and/or different sections of your organization approaching the same company.  
| | **How:**  
| | • Identify companies [Suppliers of goods and services to your organisation] should be the first to approach. They usually respond positively because they want to retain your business.  
| | • Establish database.  
| | • Know what type of sponsorship you want  
| | • Highlight the advertising opportunity for the company |
|   | **Advertise their product/company by providing equipment** | One of the major challenges facing all TVET providers is the resourcing of expensive equipment associated with many programs. A number of manufacturing companies are prepared to provide equipment ‘on loan’ or at a greatly reduced cost.  
- Advantage to the company is that they get their product used by future employees who when they become employed will recommend to their company purchasing the equipment they are familiar with e.g. AUTOCAD drafting software.
- Offer to place large advertising banners in workshops etc for companies who donate equipment.
- Publicly acknowledge companies at every opportunity.
- Ensure proper care and maintenance is taken of the equipment – no company wants poorly maintained equipment with their brand on display.  
**How:**
- What equipment do you need?
- Who are the manufacturers/suppliers/agents
- The best way to approach these companies is through industry networks that you or your staff is a member of. Ideally you would like an introduction to key personnel. If this is not possible a well-constructed letter outlining how your vision will benefit the sector is required to the CEO. |
|   | **Provide Industry Visits for students** | Some companies are willing to allow students to view the industrial process in their plant. This is a cost to the company in that they must provide someone to escort the students and they have to consider insurance issues in the event of an accident. Industry visits:  
- Exposes TVET students to industry processes
- Allows local industry to get to know your TVET organization  
**How:**
- An effective way of establishing a listing of companies is to first approach an Employer or Manufacturing Association or local Chamber of Commerce and Industry and ask them to assist. |
|   | **Provide live projects for students** | Some companies are willing to allow students to take on specific projects as part of their learning experience. This greatly depends on the level of expertise of the students and the software/equipment available to them. If the TVET organization has |
software and equipment that is industry standard then the scope to engage in this activity is greatly enhanced.

- Students work on solving real industry problems and build a portfolio.
- Greatly enhances the student’s opportunity for future employment.
- Promotes TVET as meeting industry needs
- Influences course content and delivery methods
- Allows students to engage directly with industry personnel.
- Allows ‘project teams’ to be formed

How

- It is not advisable to put out a general advertisement or request for projects. You could be overwhelmed with responses, unable to meet demand and gain a bad reputation with industry. Proceed slowly and cautiously.
- Offer the option of engaging in projects only to companies you have a relationship with in the first instance until your capacity and capability builds.
- Only take on projects you know your students are capable of.
- Ensure there is a written ‘Project Operation’ document available outlining responsibilities of each party.
- Only accept projects that have sufficient time for students to complete.
- Industry projects should enhance students learning, not replace it.

TVET organizations often tend to be internally focused. This is also true when selecting teaching staff – staff are often selected to meet internal requirements with little attention paid to the external environment. Having an industry representative on selection panels corrects this imbalance.

- Industry person should represent the industry sector the staff member will teach in.
- Prior briefing of the industry representative is essential.
- Allow the industry representative to have input to the interview/selection questions/process.
- Opinions of industry representative should be given equal value in final decision.

How

- Select an industry representative from the same discipline area as the person you are interviewing.
- Industry personnel are usually willing to contribute time and effort to the process as they see it as an honour to be asked.
| 10 | **Demonstrate latest Equipment** | Not all TVET organizations can afford the latest equipment. However some companies who have the latest equipment are willing to demonstrate this equipment to staff and students, particularly in company down-time. Companies love to show off their new ‘toys’ and demonstrate to the world how advanced they are.

**How**
- Link with product manufacturers and suppliers to ascertain which companies have the latest equipment.
- Have a TVET who has expertise in the area make contact with the company – companies feel more inclined to respond positively when they establish a common interest.
- Don’t make the request too onerous on the company – fit in with their availability.
- Always acknowledge company provision. |

| 11 | **Partner in Promotional Activities** | Engage with industry in promoting a particular program or event. The objective is your organization is seen as an equal partner.

**How**
- Promoting trades as a career in a local shopping centre
- Developing a training program brochure with TVET and Company Logos.
- Holding joint information evenings for school leavers.
- Participating in high profile activities such as ‘World Skills’

| 12 | **Participate in Strategic Planning Process** | Ensuring external input to a TVET Strategic Planning process is critical. Since industry is a major stakeholder engaging with them in providing input is essential.

**How**
- Seek information on how well your organization is serving the industry sector.
- Gather ideas from local industry in how your organization can improve in meeting their needs.
- What are industry expectations of your organization? |
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop a questionnaire. Have it clear, succinct and not too time consuming to complete.</td>
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<td>• Allocate some personnel to the task of contacting key companies by telephone (particularly ones your organisation deals with) and go through the questionnaire with key personnel such as Production Manager, Supervisor etc.</td>
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<td>• Collate information from questionnaires.</td>
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<td>• Ensure information is used in the Strategic Planning process.</td>
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<th>13</th>
<th>Use TVET facility for industry meetings, displays, conferences</th>
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<td>Many companies, particularly SMEs, do not have meeting room facilities and free spaces where they can display or demonstrate their products.</td>
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<td>• Offer your facilities to local industry groups to have meetings – it is establishing goodwill and promoting your organisation.</td>
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<td>• If a manufacturer wants to demonstrate some latest equipment to local companies offer your workshop for the event e.g. Car manufacturer demonstrating the latest diagnostic equipment to local dealers.</td>
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<td>• If an industry organization would like to hold a small/medium conference offer your facility to host it.</td>
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<td>• Ensure promotional material for your organization is displayed e.g. On podium; in backdrops; brochures etc.</td>
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<td>• Make it known to local industry, and through industry networks that you are associated with, that you would welcome companies to use space in your facilities.</td>
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<th>14</th>
<th>Partnering of TVET and industry in Training: Apprenticeships; On-site Training</th>
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<td>The most common way of engaging with industry is in the provision of training that specifically meets their needs. This can be done by:</td>
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<td>• Apprenticeship Training where on-the-job training is combined with off-the-job training.</td>
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<td>• On-site training where training is provided by the TVET provider. There are several models for this (covered separately)</td>
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<td>• Short course training.</td>
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<td>• Covered separately.</td>
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### Sponsor Awards with local Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The TVET provider sponsors an award with the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This award can be for a young person who is engaged in training in some way and is employed. The award is presented at an Industry presentation and provides maximum exposure for TVET – Industry Partnership.

- Decide on appropriate award and the cost to your organisation
- Determine selection criteria
- Ensure equity in selection
- Decide on who will nominate the Awardee
- Ensure TVET personnel involvement in presentation

**How**
- The most important decision is whether you can afford or want to be involved in this activity.
- Ensure it has a promotional benefit for your organisation.

### Preferred Trainer – Industry bid for Projects

Many companies respond to tenders to engage in large projects. Very often a requirement within these tenders is for the winning company to provide training to the workforce engaged in the project. As a TVET organization the objective is to partner with the bidding company to be the training provider.

**How**
- Establish a strong link with local Industry Associations and make known your capability.
- Develop a current ‘Organisation and Capability Profile’ to have ready for tender responses.
- Establish a record of industry projects and activity to refer to in capability statements.
- Establish a listing of companies who are prepared to provide references.

### Collaboration on Technology Transfer

With high-volume low-cost manufacturing across the globe increasingly moving to China many countries, including Australia, are concentrating on low-volume high-tech specialist manufacturing. This type of manufacturing requires integration of technologies and high level skills transfer.

- Form Industry/TVET technology forums
- Industry use of TVET specialist equipment and vice-versa for tasks such as prototyping
- Joint working groups on the integration of disciplines such as engineering – computing – automation etc

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| 10   | Training Services for Industry | - Only consider this if you have specialist or high-tech equipment.  
- Identify companies that use this equipment in their manufacturing process.  
- Link with them in establishing a training partnership. |
| 18   | Training Services for Industry | There are a number of Training Services as opposed to Training Programs that TVET can work with industry on. These include  
- Training Needs Analysis  
- Enterprise training plan development  
- Assistance with training component of Enterprise Agreements  
- Advice on establishing an in-house training centre  
- Recognition of skills of staff (RPL)  
- Applied Research  
**How**  
- The key requirement prior to offering any of these services is that you have staff who are trained, and confident, in delivering them to industry.  
- Establish through discussions with industry which services they most require.  
- Train or employ staff in the ‘high demand’ areas.  
- Develop promotional brochure.  
- Advertise to industry on a fee-for-service basis |
| 19   | Joint Learning Resource Development | Where a company installs a new system or high-tech equipment they usually want to train their staff in its use. Often this requires the production of a training manual/CD/DVD etc.  
- Joint development of training resources  
- Joint copyright so that the resource can be customized to meet TVET and industry needs  
- Capitalising on technical expertise of company and resource development expertise of TVET  
- Cost-effective method of developing new resources  
**How**  
- Having established a partnership link with a company offer to develop Learning Resources to facilitate in-plant learning.  
- Ensure joint copyright so that the resources can be used in your organisation. |
<p>|      |         | In regions where there is a low uptake of technical and vocational education by school leavers, or where there are severe skill |</p>
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<td>shortages, it is often beneficial for local industry, TVET provider and local schools to join forces in developing and implementing strategies to address these issues. Actions could include:</td>
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<td>• Joint ‘taster’ programs</td>
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<td>• Promotional seminars and forums</td>
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<td>• Technology ‘fun’ events</td>
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<td>• Work with a tradesperson for a day</td>
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<td><strong>How</strong></td>
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<td>• Participating with industry, the community and local schools develop ideas for short ½-day or 1-day programs, and/or promotional events.</td>
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<td>• Ensure your organisation is prominently promoted.</td>
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<td>• Encourage staff to be involved.</td>
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