

Guidelines of an Effective WoodLINKS Partnership

- Believe in the cause. Trust the program. Otherwise, why are you supporting it.
- Understand and support the dynamics of effective partnerships and the positive roles you must play to make them work.
- Ineffective, inactive committees are the cancer of any good industry – education partnership. Avoid wasting time. Neither industry nor teachers have the time to waste in today’s workplace. Be participative and be positive.

Source of Leadership

WoodLINKS is an *industry - driven, industry - supported* program that involves the education system as a mechanism to assist in producing our skilled work force needs for the future. **Hence the partnership leadership must come from industry.** The reason many industry - lead partnerships failed in the past is that industry leaders or industries were too busy to lead these partnerships and the task then fell to the other partner – the teacher or the school. It is imperative that this does not happen. Industry must accept the responsibility of leadership.

The WoodLINKS concept will **NOT** work if educators or school drive the process.

Partnership Meetings – Evolution of the Benchmark

Before the WoodLINKS program officially starts in the school, the following meetings should take place:

(1) Organizational Meeting:

Meetings attended by the local wood industries, the local high school or technical school to understand the WoodLINKS program and the capabilities of the graduate students. The roles of industry and education partners, costs and obligations should be discussed. A WoodLINKS representative, (board member, industry leader or WoodLINKS staff) should be there to answer any questions.

Result: Agreement to proceed with the program and the development of the partnership and subsequent action plans.

(2) Development Meeting:

The establishment of a partnership leadership structure, the development of a regional action plan to consider the industry profile, education - needs, fund-raising activities and other requirements of the program.

Note: Keith Malmstadt, Industry leader in Holland Michigan has developed a business plan template that will help partnerships consider and plan all phases of a WoodLINKS partnership including fund – raising. This template is available from WoodLINKS USA.

Result: A functional partnership structure based on positive guiding principles

(3) Fund - raising and Curriculum Development Meetings

Subsequent short meetings should take place to consider a fund-raising strategy and the development of and an agreement to a wood - manufacturing curriculum. Again, refer to the WoodLINKS business plan template.

Fund raising:

Encourage a cost - sharing strategy and try for matching funds with local partners including chambers of commerce and other funding groups.

We recommend that the one – time license fee of \$5000 and a start – up education resource fund of \$1000-\$3000 be collected and deposited into a regional bank account with a two - signature requirement.

Curriculum:

Local industries and the school should agree on the content and delivery - mode of a curriculum that meets the needs of the local industry profile.

We recommend the use of the West Ottawa High School, Holland Michigan curriculum template as a starting point.

Note: It took the industry members and the school staff approximately eight hours of meetings to facilitate an agreement to their curriculum.

You can save much time by modifying the West Ottawa curriculum and agreeing to the contents and processes. The important thing is to get started and make minor changes along the way.

(4) Support Meetings

(a) During the first year, the industry leader should contact the WoodLINKS teacher as often as necessary to provide the teacher with the sense of comfort that he/she is on the right track to producing the skilled students that your companies need. Your other industry supporters should do the same.

Please note the KCTC handout of what industry support implies and how industries can help the school.

During the first year, you may wish to hold two or three informal meetings with as many industry - partners as possible. We recommend that the locations of these meetings be rotated as much as possible. It has been found that meetings held in an industry setting will usually attract a greater number of members.

(b) During the following years, we recommend that you keep your formal industry support meetings to a maximum of two or three per year but encourage full direct participation or interaction with all industry members and the WoodLINKS program. Please encourage your supporting companies to practice on – going recruitment of the potential graduates through the involvement of the teacher and don't wait until the graduation date.