

# Making Meaningful Career Connections: Leveraging Your Community Mentors

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# Our Time Together

1. An Intro to the University of Toronto
2. What makes a conversation **meaningful**?
3. Job Shadowing Program
4. Mentor Recruitment Strategies & Onboarding
5. Rub Points & Challenges
6. Community Sharing
7. Q&A

# The University of Toronto Context: Students

**61,339** students on the St. George Campus

- 17,519 graduate
- 43,820 undergraduate

**21.3%** of U of T students identify as International (19,187)

~**700** undergraduate programs & +**280** graduate programs



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# 2017-18 Numbers: Community Mentors

How many mentors participated in career exploration?

90 Job Shadowing Hosts

1,805 U of T 10KCs Hub Members

246 panelists and other volunteers

212 faculty on the Research Catalogue

That means we engaged and partnered with **2,353** co-educators!



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*What makes a conversation  
meaningful?*

# What makes a conversation meaningful?

Based on answers from participants in U of T's Job Shadowing program:

- Two-way dialogue
- Sharing knowledge
- Mutually beneficial
- Evokes emotion
- Rewarding
- Transformative



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# Career Exploration: Job Shadowing Program

- ½ to five day experience for 1-8 participants
- 3 Components:
  - Workplace Tour
  - Career Conversation(s)
  - Simulated Activity

**Purpose:** connecting U of T students and recent graduates to community professionals to engage in meaningful career conversations that help them...

- Explore and learn about careers
- Answer the question “what can I do with my degree?”
- Practice career-related skills (e.g. networking)



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# Pop Quiz!

How long does it take to **recruit** a host?

- a) 2-3 Weeks
- b) 5-13 Days
- c) 2-4 Months
- d) 2-8 Months



# Job Shadowing Program (2017-18)

## 90 hosts

- 585 placement vacancies
- Top Industries
  - Health Services
  - Education
  - Legal & Security Services
  - Community & Social Services
  - Government



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# How Do We Find and Recruit Our Hosts?

1. Annual Host Recruitment Plan
  - Student Interest
2. Targeted Approach
  - Industry Research
  - Professional Titles and Organizations
  - Alumni vs. Non-Alumni Individuals
3. Non-Targeted Approach
  - In-reach
  - Referrals (Employer, Alumni, etc.)
  - Personal Connections



# Getting the “Warm Yes”

- Career Programming and Alumni Engagement Coordinator
  - Joint role: Division of University Advancement + Career Exploration
- Employer Recruitment & Engagement
  - Weekly Report
  - Events
- U of T Alumni Offices



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# Host Onboarding

Someone wants to host! Now what...?

- Coffee Chats
  - 75% conversion rate
  - “Quality Control”
  - Goal setting
  - Managing expectations
- Host Resources
- On-going support



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***This all sounds great, but...***

# Pop Quiz!

How long does it take to recruit, onboard, and manage **ONE** host?

- a) 11 hours
- b) 3 hours
- c) 30 minutes
- d) 5 hours

# Rub Points & Challenges

## Recruitment

- Red tape
- # of outreach vs. # of recruited
- Expiration of the 'yes'
- Program integrity

## Onboarding

- Budget requirement
- Resource allocation
- Participation\*\*

## Student Safety & Insurance



# Why do we do this work?

## Host Feedback

*“Great to connect with students interested in my field, and great to be able to give back to the community. I had the chance to observe as a student, and I am happy to be able to repay the favour!”*

*“I think it is important for business professionals to better understand the perspective of young people entering the workforce. I think it helps in the recruitment and hiring process to better understand their challenges, barriers and experiences in trying to gain entry.”*

*“The experience was an opportunity to renew my passion for the job, it served as a nice reminder of why I got into this field. I loved meeting someone who was as eager and excited about the field as me.”*



# Why do we do this work?

## Student Feedback

*“Networking previously seemed to be a cold process. With the [Job Shadowing] process, it removes some of the awkwardness, as it is a sharing of information without conditions, with people who are willing to talk about themselves and what they do.”*

*“Understanding that others are also going through similar experiences makes me feel that I am not alone and that this is a common struggle for people in university, and it reminds me to keep going and working hard.”*

## As a result of this program...

**25%** of participants can see a clear relationship between the skills and knowledge gained in their studies and a range of career opportunities

**11%** of participants feel more confident approaching professionals for career related information

# Leverage Your Professional Networks

- What are some strategies you use to recruiting mentors for your programs, services, or events?
- How do you prepare mentors to have meaningful career conversations with students?
- What challenges do you face in your work?

## Community Sharing Forum



# Questions? Let's Chat!

thank you!

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