

Toolkit Activity 30: How to engage employers in WBL?

Activity title	How to engage employers in WBL? Reflection for mentors on the first contact with employers
Aim	Make mentors reflect on the 1st contact with companies in order to think about the most appropriate strategies to engage and involve them in WBL activities addressed to highly disadvantaged young NEETs
Related to subchapter	6.3: Engaging Employers in Work-based Learning Initiatives
Group / Individual activity	Group
Duration	40 minutes
Online / Offline activity	offline activity
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pens and sheets of papers for the observers to take notes - Markers and flipchart for the feedback and debriefing phase

Step-by-step instructions:

This activity is designed for mentors. In your organisation, all persons working as a mentor meet together to perform this activity.

Instructions:

1. For this role play divide the big group into smaller groups (3 persons each group).
2. One person plays the mentor who calls the company and asks to speak with the HR manager or the employer, another person plays the employer or the HR manager role and the last person acts as an observer. Change the roles each 5 minutes so that this part of the activity lasts around 15 minutes. Every participant should play the mentor (who makes the phone call) on one occasion.
3. The aim is that the participants get a feeling for how long such a phone call should last and which topics are discussed (and how) in order to involve and engage companies in WBL.
4. As far as each smaller group has carried out the role plays, all mentors together manage a group discussion about their experience and feelings during the 1st contact

with a company (which can be both a phone call or a face-to-face meeting). They will debrief this activity by using some questions such as:

- How did I feel in proposing the company to participate in a WBL experience?
 - What did I find challenging / difficult?
 - How do I have to mention / explain the target group they are going to host in WBL?
 - How was the communication flow? Was I convincing enough?
 - Which aspects should we emphasise in order to attract / involve companies?
 - Which elements are important in a first contact?
5. As they have acted as observers too, they will provide feedback on what they have seen when others played the role of mentor and HR manager.
 6. On a flipchart, one of the mentors highlights the most important elements that come out from the debate and tries to define some strategies that can be used to engage companies in WBL activities addressed to highly disadvantaged young NEETs.

Take-away message: This activity helps mentors to reflect and find suitable strategies to involve and engage companies in WBL activities in the frame of an integrated guidance approach. This is a key element, especially when you have to engage companies in WBL activities addressed to highly disadvantaged young NEETs.