



ESSENTIAL CAREER RESOURCE

# HOW TO **ENGAGE EMPLOYERS**

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



## INTRODUCTION



### Why Engage Employers

## WHY ENGAGE EMPLOYERS?

Preparing students for the world of work is only half of the battle; the other is building strategic and meaningful relationships with employer partners to provide opportunities for students to make the transition to the world-of-work.

**A key role of the career center is to engage potential employers to:**



**Provide:**

- Internship,
- Externship,
- Job Opportunities



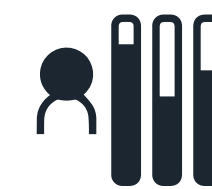
**Participate in:**

- On-Campus Recruiting
- Career Fairs



**Act as a:**

- Guest Speaker
- Career Panallist



Consult on curriculum to ensure skills align with employer demands.



Provide capstone experiences.



**Donate:**

- Funds
- Equipment
- Resources

Part of your role is to close the gap between students and potential employers. The more exposure students get during their university years, the better prepared they will be for networking and job applications.

## INTRODUCTION



### Your Resources

## YOUR RESOURCES - A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This tool provides a step-by-step guide of how to engage employers on your campus, including how to:

**1**

### IDENTIFY

potential employer  
partners

**2**

### FIND

your point of contact

**3**

### MAKE

an introduction

**4**

### EXPLORE

potential engagement  
opportunities

**5**

### CARRY OUT

the engagement  
activity

**6**

### FOLLOW-UP

including capturing  
lessons learned

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



### Step 1

## STEP 1: BRAINSTORM POTENTIAL EMPLOYER PARTNERS

### What kinds of employers should I engage?

The short answer is all kinds! Especially anyone who will be hiring recent graduates for entry-level positions. However, it is important to engage employers based on the needs of the student population that you are working with. As a team, we suggest you:

1. Identify the most common industries students are targeting for their careers (examples: business, engineering, education, hospitality, agriculture, etc.).
  - a. Enter these in Row 1 in the table below
2. For each industry identified, brainstorm potential employer partners.
  - a. Complete the table below to ensure you're targeting a variety of employers – government agencies, non-profit organizations (NGOs) and a mix of small, medium and large private enterprises.
  - b. If you have personal connections to companies, include them here!

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



Step 1

INDUSTRY	INDUSTRY 1 Example: Tech	INDUSTRY 2	INDUSTRY 3	INDUSTRY 4	OTHER
<b>Small-Medium Company</b>	Yoco				
<b>Large Company</b>	Facebook				
<b>Government Agency</b>	South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA)				
<b>NGO</b>	Phambano Technolog Development Centre				

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



### Step 2

## STEP 2: FIND YOUR POINT OF CONTACT

For each of the companies above, find the appropriate person to contact. Personal connections work best, but you can also “cold contact” companies.

### **How to Find Personal Connections:**

1. Check LinkedIn to see if you know anyone at these companies, or have mutual connections
2. Reach out to colleagues and ask if they know anyone at these companies
3. Ask ALA?

### **Cold Contacting Employers**

1. For local and/or small-medium sized companies, see if you can find contact info for the CEO or HR Director
  - a. Check company website and LinkedIn (search for the company, then click on “people”)
2. For larger companies, see if their website has a “Partner with Us” section with contact info
3. If you can’t find a point of contact, email the general support email address (sample emails below)

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



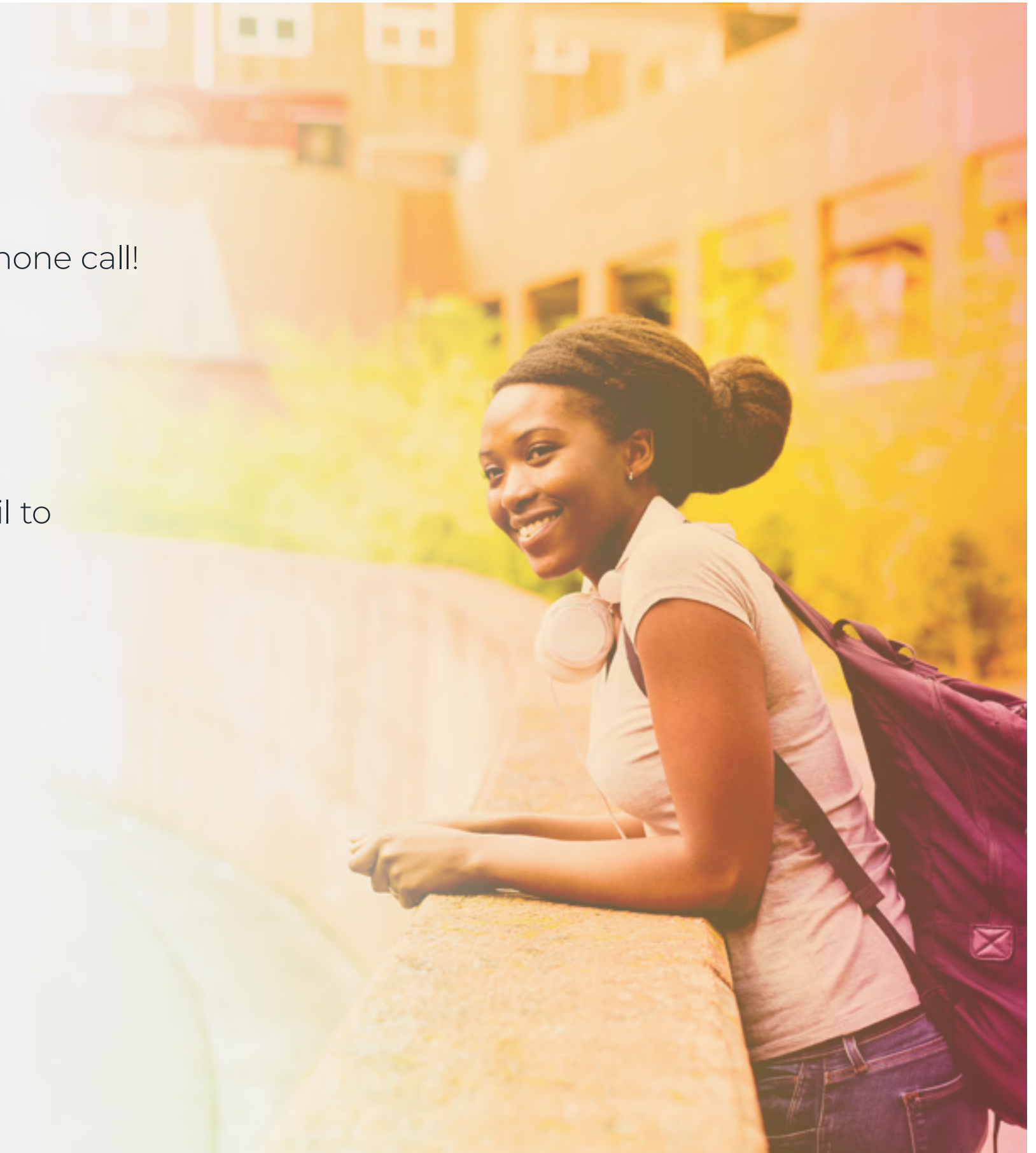
### Step 3

## STEP 3: MAKE AN INTRODUCTION

The next step is reaching out to the companies to ask for an exploratory phone call! Below is a sample email you can adapt for your purposes.

### **If you don't hear back:**

1. Wait one week, then follow-up (with an email or phone call)
2. See if you can find other contacts in the company to forward the email to
3. If you don't hear back after the follow-up, time to move on



## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



### Step 3

New Message — ✖ ×

To johndoe@gmail.com Cc Bcc

Subject .....

Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name],

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm the Director of Career Services here at \_\_\_\_\_ University. I'm writing to see if you would be open to exploring potential partnership opportunities with our university. We are looking for local companies to share job openings, provide internship or capstone experiences, and/or participate in on-campus events, among other things. In exchange, we can give you access to a pool of bright, talented, motivated students.

Would you be open to a short video call to explore potential partnership opportunities, and how we might help in your recruitment efforts? Here is my availability...

Thanks for your time, and hope to hear from you soon,  
Your Name

Send 🗑️ | ▾



## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



### Step 4

## STEP 4: EXPLORE PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### During your phone call:

1. Give a brief overview of the “menu of options” for engagement:
  - a. Post job openings
  - b. Provide internship, externship or capstone opportunities
  - c. Participate in career fairs and recruiting events
  - d. Act as guest speakers and career panellists
  - e. Consult on curriculum to ensure skills align with employer demands; provide real-world case studies
  - f. Coordinate a site visit (even a virtual one)
  - g. Donate funds, equipment or resources
2. Make clear “what’s in it for them” – in addition to giving back to the community, these activities will give them access to a pool of some of the best candidates on the continent!
3. Ask what sounds most appealing/do-able to the partner
4. See if you can get them to commit to at least one action
5. Clarify next steps

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



Step 5

### STEP 5: CARRY OUT THE ENGAGEMENT

If the employer commits to a partnership engagement, be sure to maintain regular communications, keep them informed of any programme updates, offer support in any way you can, and generally act professionally to nurture the relationship.



## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



Step 6

### STEP 6: FOLLOW-UP

#### For one-off engagements:

1. Send a meaningful thank you note after each engagement – get specific about how the employer contributed to achieving goals
2. Conduct a “post-game analysis” with the partner – what went well, what could be improved, and recommendations for moving forward
3. Ask if they’d be willing to participate again in the future
  - o If not, ask if they have any recommendations for other people/companies that might be interested

#### For ongoing engagements:

4. Maintain regular communications
  - o Provide regular updates
  - o Promptly respond to correspondences from employer partners and follow through on action items agreed upon by the partnership
5. Ask employers for feedback
6. Collect data to ensure all parties’ needs are being met
7. Regularly recognize employers for their input, support, and guidance as the programme matures