

IMPACT

 University of Idaho
Cooperative
Extension System

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Work Ethic Training Helps Teens Gain Employability Skills

The Situation

Teens often lack the basic employability skills needed to get and keep a job in today's society. Research shows that 85% of people who lose a job do so because they lack good work habits, rather than lack appropriate job skills. Factors most often cited for job loss are tardiness and absenteeism, failure to follow instructions, and inability to get along with supervisors or fellow workers.

Basic employability skills that are based in a strong work ethic are needed in all occupations. While the proper technical skills are important, today's employers are looking for employees with the ability to communicate effectively, work on a team, resolve conflicts, confront ethical dilemmas and manage their time in an effective manner.

Our Response

Marsha Hawkins, Jerome County Extension Educator developed "Succeeding in the Working World" a curriculum to help prepare teens to successfully enter the workforce. "Succeeding in the Working World" was presented as a series of workshops in the Jerome and Idaho Falls School Districts. The workshop sessions included presentations by extension educators with assistance

from local employers. The following topics were covered in the trainings:

- What is a work ethic?
- The importance of dependability, initiative, and interpersonal skills.
- What do employers want in an employee?
- How to make a positive first impression.
- Tips for mastering the paperwork (applications and resumes).
- The successful job interview.
- Skills needed to keep a job once you get it.



Program Outcomes

Forty-three students from Jerome High School and eighteen students at Hillcrest High School in Idaho Falls participated in the employability skills training. Ninety-four percent of the participants surveyed showed a positive increase in their understanding of how to get a job and keep it after completion of the workshops. After participating in the program respondents felt they would be able to prepare a resume, make a good first impression, fill out a job application, prepare for a job interview, and practice good work ethics. Upon completion of the training students were provided with certificates to be placed in their portfolios.



Participants' Responses

When asked what they learned from the "Succeeding in the Working World" program students responded:

- "I know that from now on I will never be late for anything or try not to be late. I will also be dressed well and groomed very well so that I can get the job that I want."
- "How to be more professional when going on an interview. I also learned how important dependability and work ethics are in the work area."
- "The importance of making a good first impression."
- "How to apply for a job and pointers to get it."

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

The program received a \$1,500 grant from HealthNet and the Idaho School to Work Coalition and a \$2,000 critical issues grant from the University of Idaho to assist with curriculum development and piloting. Business professionals from D.L. Evans Bank, Jerome City Council, South Central Health Department, St. Benedict's Hospital and Jerome County assisted with conducting the mock job interview session of the workshops.



The Future

This program has received very positive reviews from students, school personnel, local employers, Extension Educators and HealthNet administrators. The program will be presented in the Valley School District in January of 2002 and throughout central and eastern Idaho schools in the ensuing months.

For More Information

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