



Industry Leaders of a Next Gen Sector Partnership – Your Job Description

Congratulations! If you're reading this, you most likely have found yourself helping to lead a partnership in your region among your industry peers. This document is intended to help you understand your role and offer a menu of options in how you engage and lead your effort.

What's your initial role in launching a Partnership?

As you may know by now, there are three parts to first launching your Partnership, in which you play a key leadership role:

- **Identifying opportunities for industry growth.** Instead of just providing information about your individual organizational needs, you as business people from a common industry must define a shared vision and shared opportunities for industry growth, shaped by growing markets, technological innovation, and other forces of change.
- **Setting a shared agenda for industry growth.** Once you've surfaced common opportunities for stability and growth, it is usually an easy pivot to identifying shared priorities to drive that growth, which almost always includes talent as a focus, but can include other requirements such as infrastructure or business-to-business networking.
- **Collaborating to implement the shared agenda.** This means joining in on the action items that you collectively as industry leaders have identified as important.

The stage is now set for identifying complementary roles for business and community partners to advance the shared agenda. Because the initial stages of engagement were driven by you, the businesses that make up your industry, you now "own" your agenda, and should be willing to make commitments to advance that agenda. But, what kind of commitments? In most cases, your actions will be necessary but insufficient to get your total desired results. Often, what is required is a mix of public and private action, especially when the goal is talent development, infrastructure improvement, or other changes that involve community institutions. However, if community partners (e.g. your workforce development organizations, your community colleges, your economic development corporations) "take over" implementation at this point (often with the best intentions of saving you time), your partnership will devolve.

Remember, this is *your table* and *your agenda*. Your task now is to ensure it stays that way while maximizing the resources and support from your community and public partner

organizations. The focus therefore should be on determining the mix of public and private action to produce specific measurable outcomes.

What are the evolving roles that you as a business leader might play?

- **Recruiter**—reaching out to other business leaders and to community leaders, securing mutual tangible commitment to pitch in with implementation. *Examples:* signing up businesses to provide workplace experiences for students, using influence on public boards to grow participation in multi-organization collaborations.
- **Expert**—being the consistent reality-check to each other and to public partners on where the industry is headed and what is needed for success. *Examples:* creating the forum for understanding current and future staffing needs based on industry changes and trends, helping update and supplement curriculum, providing guest speakers and adjunct faculty, working with local jurisdictions on permit streamlining or local policy.
- **Advocate**—organizing and focusing the collective industry voice and influence on shared goals. *Examples:* leading a career awareness campaign to change perceptions of their industry with youth, organizing an industry-wide initiative to improve needed infrastructure for growth (e.g., air service, broadband).
- **Investor**—providing “civic venture capital” to advance shared industry priorities, expanding the capacity of local community institutions and/or new catalytic organizations. *Examples:* funding the development of career awareness materials for students, underwriting scholarships, providing equipment to educational institutions, leveraging more public and philanthropic investment through matching funds.
- **Communicator**—articulating an industry growth agenda, a clear and compelling case for industry and community collaboration, and/or specific elements of a shared agenda. *Examples:* sharing unique insights into the state and potential of their industry, spotlighting early wins to build momentum and attract additional support, recognizing good collaborative behavior of local institutions in service of a common cause.
- **Innovator**—making internal changes to their business to be a better partner to the community and/or capitalize on new growth opportunities emerging from collaborative efforts. *Examples:* restructuring internal processes for placing and managing student interns, rethinking supplier strategy to include more local partners, changing hiring practices to recognize and reward education and training credentials collaboratively developed with local institutions.
- **Catalyst**—providing focused energy to keep advancing and refining shared industry priorities, providing a point of accountability and an impetus for continuous

improvement. *Examples:* introducing a structured process to review progress, adapt strategy, and identify the next round of actions.

- **Worker Bee** – actually providing his/her own staff time, or that of his/her employees, to support collaborative efforts, like organizing meetings, managing committees, organizing tours of facilities for students across multiple companies (not just their own), writing proposals, conducting trainings for their and others' employees; for schools; for their peer companies.

What's the role of a Steering Committee in a Next Gen Sector Partnership?

- **Pro-active identification and securement of resources** to support the ongoing work of this Partnership. This Partnership is being staffed on a part-time basis by MEDB staff. In order to implement the Partnership's goals, and to expand, it will need constant and creative leveraging of additional support (staffing, grants, etc).
- **Guidance and recommendations to full membership on new areas of focus**, including issues or areas to pursue that ensure this Partnership is being as opportunistic as possible toward its vision and goals.
- **Agenda development for the full Partnership meetings**_(to occur 3-4 times per year) that appropriately push committee work forward, recruit additional support and leadership from healthcare organization members as well as public partners, and maintain overall Partnership momentum.
- **Messaging and tracking wins/successes of the Partnership** in order to continually build participation, and attract investment to the work of the various committees.