## **Inquiry Team: How do we make industry connections?**

Dear Inquiry Team,

HOW DO WE MAKE INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS?

Identifying the industry - First we decide which industry/industries would best suit our upcoming learning needs.

Initial connections — There are many ways to make initial links with industry. We have found the best way to do this is to have a mutual connection. Some schools will send a letter to parents/caregivers/older siblings at the beginning of the school year and ask about their career and any links they have with STEM. Teachers then use the information to either invite parents/caregivers/older siblings into the school to share their career and inspire students to choose a career in that field, others use the information to help make industry links for projects such as this.

Another way is networking personally outside of school. This opens up your connections as a teacher and hopefully avenues in which you might choose to take advantage of at a later date.

Being from a small country town, we are lucky. Everyone knows of someone who is a friend of a friend who works in an industry and this is how we make initial links.

Once you have made initial connections, the next step is probably the most crucial.

Making a positive first impression- We have been very lucky that so far, no industry has turned us away. Generally, owners/representatives are very excited to get involved with schools as the students are our future! The initial email to an industry needs to outline that you would like to connect with them to build an industry link for your school and that students are very interested in what happens in their industry.

Direction - You need to have 'some' idea of where you want the project to go and outline this, but it's important to add that you are open to suggestions and that this is just a starting point. This will help them envisage what their involvement could possibly be.

Involvement - It's a good idea to outline their level of involvement expected from you and any positives that you can envisage happening for their company.

Stepping up the ladder - Sometimes the first person you link with within an industry may not have the authority that you need. I always add in my initial email: 'Thank you so much for your consideration! If you think there is another person better suited for me to discuss this with, I would love for you to forward my email to them for consideration'.

Warm regards

Amanda Bowman

STEM Leader