

# The Schools' Business Partnership Skills @ Work Evaluation 2014

## 99%

of participating companies would recommend the Skills @ Work Programme to another company



### The Schools' Business Partnership

Adding value to the Department of Children & Youth Affairs, School Completion Programme, The Schools' Business Partnership aims to positively impact on educational inclusion in Ireland. It does this by matching one school with one large business and engaging in programmes to encourage school completion while broadening students' horizons about their future studies and careers.

## 99%

of companies said the top benefit of participating in the Programme was being able to make a contribution to the local community

### About Skills @ Work

The Skills @ Work Programme aims to provide senior cycle students with insights into the world of work and the opportunity to consider the many and varied career and study options open to them when they finish school. Research shows that if a student can aspire to a career and see the link between education and work, then they are much more likely to complete their education to Leaving Certificate and beyond. **25,967** students have participated in the S@W programme to date. The programme typically includes the following over the course of an academic year:

- 'A Day in the Life' talks/speed-dating
- CV & Interview Skills Workshop
- Company Overview
- Mock Interviews
- Site Visits
- Optional sessions including Team Work and Workplace Etiquette
- Wrap up – delivered by the students

## 98%

of students found the programme very enjoyable or enjoyable

### 2014 Evaluation

**131** school and company partnerships completed the Skills @ Work Programme in 2014. On completion of the programme, the company coordinator, school coordinator and a range of students from each school were asked to complete an online evaluation. The evaluations were divided into different sections and included questions on demographics in the case of the students; structure & content, programme benefits & impacts, communication, service & support and recommendations.

## 92%

of schools said that participation in the programme contributed towards positively influencing students to consider 3rd level education/ further training

### Response Rates

|         | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|
| Company | 99%  | 98%  | 95%  | 83%  |
| School  | 100% | 96%  | 96%  | 88%  |
| Student | 96%  | 86%  | 80%  | 73%  |

## Student Evaluation 2014

**96% of students would recommend the Skills @ Work programme to another student.**

In total, **3, 190** students completed the 2014 Skills @ Work Programme. We asked each school to provide **10 student evaluations** reflecting a broad range of students' experiences.

### Student Profile

Of those students who completed the survey, **46% (587)** of respondents were female and **54% (677)** were male. 75% of students indicated they were in their first year of the Leaving Certificate while 9% were in Leaving Certificate Year 2 and 16% of students were in Transition Year.

46% were preparing to take the traditional Leaving Cert with 40% preparing for the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the remaining 14% taking the Leaving Certificate Applied.

### Session Enjoyment

Students' experience of the programme was overwhelmingly positive. **98%** of students found the programme **enjoyable** or **very enjoyable**. **86%** of students indicated that they **enjoyed all parts of the programme**.

*"I just really liked seeing how everything worked and seeing people at work. It gave me a realistic view of what working there was like and what was expected from you."*

*"I enjoyed every part of the programme. The staff were all really nice and easy to talk to"*

**83%** of all sessions were rated as either **excellent** or **very good**. The **site visit (88%)** followed by CV & Interview Prep (87%) and Mock Interviews (87%) were identified as the most popular sessions.

Students indicated that the **site visits** (36%) were the most enjoyable sessions, closely followed by **mock interviews** (32%). Students also enjoyed CV & interview prep (11%), the final wrap up session (11%) and the Day in the Life talk (7%).

*"I enjoyed the site visit the most because I thought it was something different. It was the best way to learn about the workplace."*

*"I really enjoyed the mock interviews because it will help me a lot when I go for a job or college interviews and I gained more confidence."*

### Programme Benefits

Half of the students (54%) responded that the **mock interview** was the most beneficial session of the programme, followed by **CV & interview preparation** (25%).

*"It was great to get advice from a HR manager on the do's and don'ts of an interview and I now know for the future the right and wrong way to approach an interview."*

*"I was given an honest opinion on my curriculum vitae by an experienced worker who knew what employers would be looking for. I was given tips on what could make an impression on the interviewer and was told how confidence is key."*

# 96%

of students would recommend the programme to another student

# 90%

of students said that they had learned about jobs and roles within companies and how these companies operate

# 88%

of students strongly agreed or agreed that the Skills @ Work Programme improved their communication skills

# 86%

of students enjoyed all parts of the programme

**98%**

of students found the programme very enjoyable or enjoyable

**83%**

of students rated all the sessions as either excellent or very good

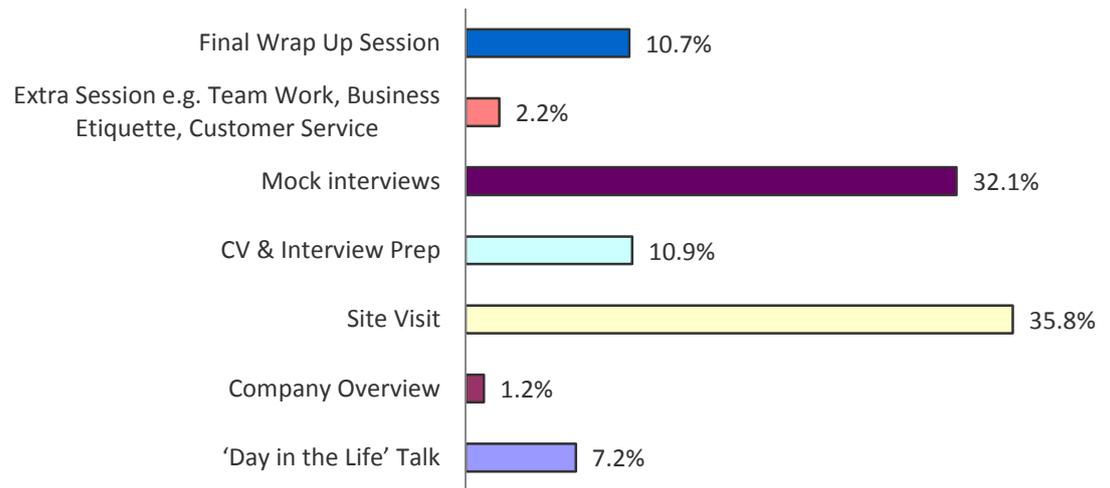
**80%**

of students would make no changes to the programme

**54%**

of students identified the mock interviews as the most beneficial session

Chart 1: Most Enjoyable Element of Programme (Schools)



**Programme Impacts**

Students were asked to identify the impacts which the Skills @ Work Programme had on them. Students indicated that the programme had a number of significant impacts.

**88%** indicated the programme **improved communication skills** while **84%** felt it **increased self-confidence** and **80%** felt it **improved teamwork skills**.

| Answer Options                                    | Strongly Agree | Agree | No Change | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Improved my communication skills                  | 40%            | 48%   | 11%       | 1%       | 0%                |
| Increased my self confidence                      | 38%            | 46%   | 15%       | 1%       | 0%                |
| Improved my teamwork skills                       | 35%            | 45%   | 18%       | 2%       | 0%                |
| Helped me make decisions about my future career   | 35%            | 38%   | 24%       | 2%       | 1%                |
| Helped me make decisions about going to college   | 33%            | 36%   | 27%       | 3%       | 1%                |
| Improved my interpersonal skills                  | 32%            | 48%   | 19%       | 1%       | 0%                |
| Gave me new ideas                                 | 31%            | 45%   | 22%       | 2%       | 0%                |
| Inspired me to do well in school                  | 30%            | 42%   | 25%       | 2%       | 1%                |
| Got me to consider alternative options            | 29%            | 48%   | 20%       | 3%       | 0%                |
| Improved my ability to apply myself to my studies | 22%            | 52%   | 24%       | 2%       | 0%                |

*"It changed my college decisions and motivated me to work well and harder."*

*"I met people who didn't know what they wanted to do when they were in school and that reassured me that other people feel like me."*

*"This programme gave me a sense of independence that no other subject gives."*

*"Gave a real life understanding of real businesses"*

# 84%

of students strongly agreed or agreed that the Skills @ Work Programme increased their self-confidence

# 80%

of students strongly agreed or agreed that the Skills @ Work Programme improved their teamwork skills

# 55%

of students indicated that the programme had positively influenced their attitude towards the Leaving Certificate

# 36%

of students rated the site visit as the most popular session

## Influence of Programme on Students

- 55% of students indicated that the programme had **influenced their attitude in a positive way towards the Leaving Certificate** by understanding the importance of it (36%) and by working harder for it (18%)
- 40% of students answered that they had **always intended to stay in school** and complete the Leaving Certificate
- 5% (63 students) responded that they had been considering leaving school but **the programme has encouraged them to stay**

*"I was giving up on school at one stage but after these talks I got the knowledge to keep going on and complete the rest of my school year."*

*"It was really inspiring and encouraged me to do that bit more study or bit more hard work to get a really good leaving certificate, possibly better than what I would have originally got if the Skills @ Work Programme was not in place."*

**90%** of students said that they had **learned about jobs and roles within companies** and how these companies operated.

*"I was very interested in working in the construction industry but not as a tradesperson. I found it very interesting hearing about different jobs .... and how a third level degree will help me secure a better career in that industry."*

*"There are so many jobs within a company and it just made me realise I have got more options."*

## Recommendations

**80%** of students would make **no changes** to the Skills @ Work Programme. Of the remaining 20% of students, suggestions and improvements related to: more information on the different types of jobs within a company, more detailed site visits, work in smaller groups and spend more time with employees, opportunities for work shadowing and work experience.

As mentioned above **96%** of students would **recommend the programme** to another student.

*"It makes school more relevant and helps build teamwork and interpersonal skills."*

*"I gained a lot from it which I can even see the change in myself as a person I am so much more motivated."*

*"It is an eye opener to the working world because a lot of us younger pupils are nervous about moving on and are unsure about what we have to do."*

**Students were also asked what they would say to students to encourage them to do the programme.**

*"I would recommend the Skills @ Work programme to another student because it helps you develop both socially and academically."*

*"It changed my outlook on life."*

*"It helps boost your self-confidence and overall helps you decide on your future career"*

# School Evaluation 2014

**100% of respondents would recommend the Skills @ Work Programme to another school.**

## Structure & Content

**131** schools completed the evaluation report – a **100%** response rate!

**86%** of school coordinators rated the company's preparation as **excellent** with a further **12%** rating the preparation as **very good**.

*"Top class, as expected. Very helpful. Factory guides were very informative. Treated the students with respect and encouraged them to excel at their studies and to aim high."*

**100%** of schools found the **relevance of the material delivered** by the company excellent or very good. **99%** of school coordinators rated the **insight given by the company into their business/ industry** as either excellent or very good.

*"Really relevant to the needs of our students - helps them to understand the world of work and all that it entails."*

## Benefits & Impacts - School

The top benefit to the school of participating in Skills @ Work was **developing a valuable relationship with the business community (99%)**; **providing assistance with mock interviews (98%)** was also seen as beneficial to the school along with **improved participation among the class group (92%)** & **providing valuable assistance with LCA/LCVP modules** or programmes (80%).

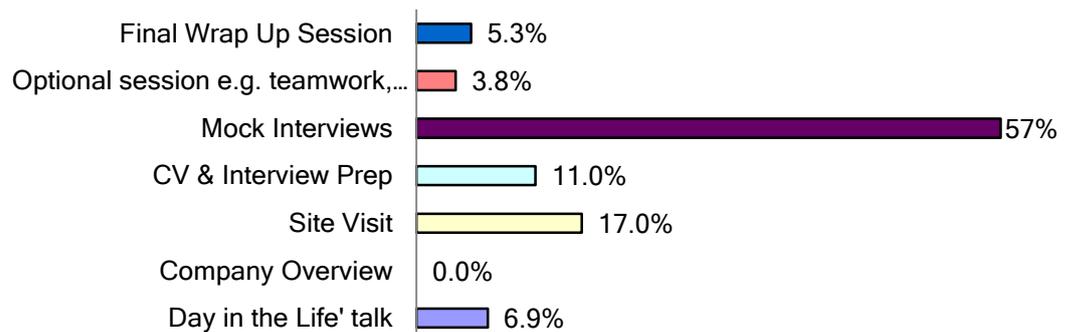
*"We are privileged to work with and receive an insight into a professional and successful business .....the staff and students and the school community has benefited from this link and we appreciate it very much"*

## Benefits & Impacts - Students

**Mock interviews (57%)** were identified by the school coordinators as the most beneficial session to students. The **site visit (17%)** and **CV & interview prep (11%)** were also identified as beneficial.

Chart 2: Most Beneficial S@W Session to Students

Which session benefited your students most?



*"A particular pupil who has a learning disability came to the fore in his commitment, work rate and practical skills as a result of this programme and received a prize from the company for his showing at the mock interviews."*

# 100%

of schools found the relevance of the material delivered by the company as either excellent or very good

# 100%

of schools rated the partnership with the company coordinator as excellent or very good

# 98%

of teachers rated the company's preparation and presentation as either excellent or very good

# 57%

of teachers felt the most beneficial session for students was mock interview

# 100%

of teachers would recommend the programme to another school

# 99%

of schools indicated that developing a valuable relationship with a business in the community was beneficial to the school

# 95%

of teachers indicated that the Skills @ Work Programme helped motivate students on their career path

# 85%

of teachers saw a positive impact the on attitude, commitment and focus of students

School coordinators indicated that the Skills @ Work Programme had a number of significant benefits to students. **97%** strongly agreed or agreed that the programme **improved students' self-confidence** while **95%** indicated the programme **helped motivate students on their career path** and **86%** felt students were **better able to identify their own skills**.

Other benefits included improved commitment to study; improved teamwork skills; expanded students' experiences and improved relationship with teachers.

*"The programme has helped to focus students on their future and brought them outside the world of school into the world of work and it brought a new perspective to them. The emphasis on the value of education and lifelong education and ambition has certainly helped a number of students."*

| Programme Impact on Students   | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| Contributed to positively influencing students to consider 3 <sup>rd</sup> level/ further training | 92%  | 88%  | 95%  | 92%  |
| Attitude, commitment & focus positively changed  | 85%  | 87%  | 85%  | 90%  |
| Contributed to retaining a student likely to leave before completing Leaving Cert                  | 49%  | 46%  | 45%  | 45%  |

*"The program has helped improve school attendance as well as retention of students otherwise at-risk of dropping out. I can identify at least one student involved in this year's program as well as several students from previous years."*

*"The programme gave them hope and optimism, areas that are sadly lacking amongst many of them. It inspired them to seize the opportunity and enjoy their own career journey. Is Féidir leat was the message that many of them took home."*

*"Students seem more empowered to carry out jobs on their own initiative; they are willing to get more involved in different activities in school. The class work is more focused and their interpersonal skills have definitely improved."*

*"For several students this program has helped to improve their attendance as well as their interest in school ..... the program has focused their attention on next year and what they hope to achieve in their Leaving Certificate and beyond. This effect has been noticed with other students in previous years and is one of the program's strengths for students previously adrift."*

### Communication, Service & Support

The **service provided by the BITCI coordinator** was evaluated as either excellent or very good by **88%** of schools. **100%** of schools rated the **partnership with the company coordinator** as either excellent or very good. The **partnership with the link company** was evaluated as **exceeding expectations** by **76%** of school coordinators.

### Recommendations

**69%** of respondents would make **no changes** to the programme. Of the remaining 31%, recommendations related to; the programme timetable, site visit, student interaction & engagement, the wrap up session and CV & interview preparation.

# 97%

of companies said Skills @ Work contributed to their corporate responsibility strategy

# 97%

of companies rated the partnership with the school as excellent or very good

# 94%

of company coordinators found the schools' general preparation excellent or very good

# 84%

of company coordinators said the main benefit of Skills @ Work to employees was being able to make a difference in a young person's life

## Company Evaluation 2014

**99% of respondents would recommend the Skills @ Work Programme to another company.**

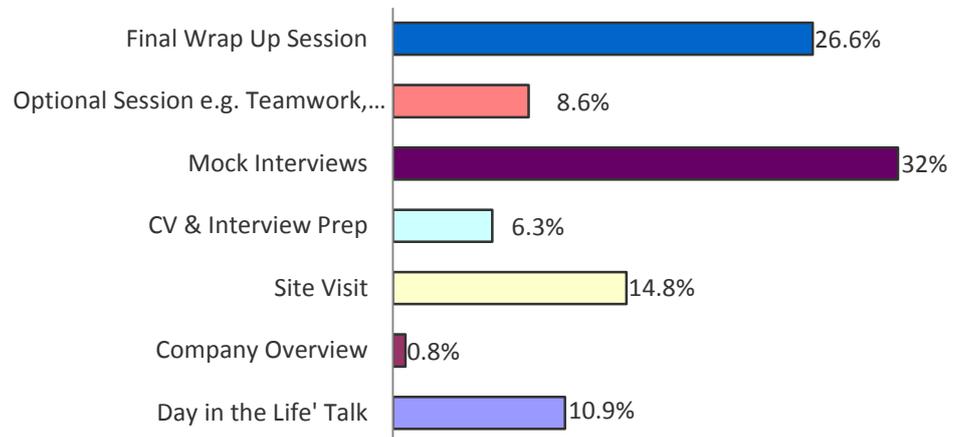
**130** companies completed the S@W evaluation in 2014, representing **99%** of the companies involved. Companies found that the schools' general preparation throughout the programme was of a very high standard. **94%** of company coordinators rated the preparations as either **excellent** or **very good**.

### Session Satisfaction & Enjoyment

**95%** of companies rated the **CV & Interview Prep** as either excellent or very good. The **'Day in the Life'** talk along with the **Site Visit** sessions were regarded as either excellent or very good by **94%**.

**Mock interviews** (32%) were the most enjoyable sessions for the companies, followed by the **final wrap up** sessions (27%), **site visits** (15%) and **Day in the Life** talk (11%).

Chart 3: Most Enjoyable Session of S@W Programme (Company)



*"This year the standard at the mock interviews was excellent, it was apparent that the students had prepared before hand - I would like to think this was following the CV & Interview preparation module."*

*"Each section brought different elements, the highlight being the site visit and the final wrap up session. It was amazing to see how appreciative the students were during the year and the realisation of how much they really learned during their time with us."*

### Benefits & Impacts - Employees

**84%** (108) of company coordinators felt **being able to make a difference in a young person's life** was the most beneficial aspect of the programme to company employees. 78% indicated a **feel good factor** was beneficial along with **the opportunity to be involved in a project outside of normal working hours** (77%).

*"Employees reported a great sense of achievement in ensuring they gave as much help and support as possible to the participants. It became a regular source of discussion between peers and gave a definite feel good factor."*

*"An opportunity to work with young people, get to know them and the way they think nowadays"*

# 98%

of companies rated the service provided by the BITCI coordinator as excellent or very good

# 98%

of companies rated the communication with the school coordinator as excellent or very good

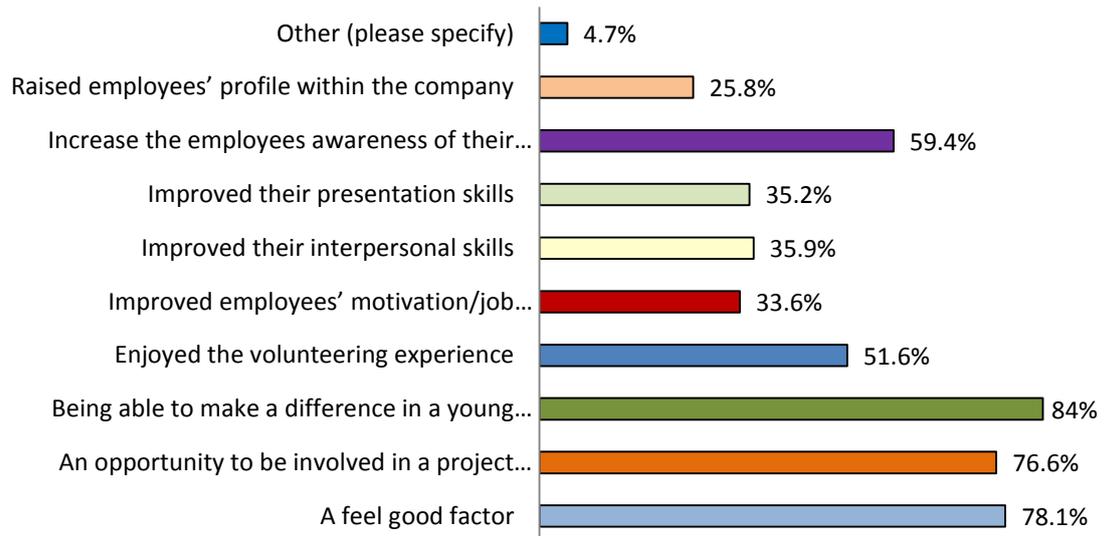
# 95%

of company coordinators rated the CV & Interview Prep session as either excellent or very good

# 74%

of company coordinators would make no changes to the programme

Chart 4: Programme Benefits to Employee



### Benefits & Impacts - Company

Company coordinators were asked to rate the different benefits to the companies. As with previous years, the top benefit to the company was **making a contribution to the local community (99%)**. **Contributing to the company's CR strategy (97%)** and **promoting educational opportunities to young people (95%)** were also seen as top benefits.

*"We depend on the community for business and it was nice to be able to return something to them. I do believe that the students will remember the programme and their "Site Visit" which will in turn raise the profile locally through them speaking to family friends etc."*

*"Employees really enjoy watching youngsters grow especially in terms of confidence. It's a pleasure to know that you played some part in that development from the first day you see them to the day that they present back to you. So it's a pleasure and privilege to be involved."*

### Communication, Service & Support

**98%** of companies evaluated the **service provided by the BITCI Coordinator** as either excellent or very good. **Communication with the school coordinator** was rated excellent or very good by **98%** of respondents. **97%** of the respondents rated the **partnership between the company and their link school** as either excellent or very good.

*"My BITCI/SBP coordinator was fantastic. Having the coordinator taking care of setting up the sessions and sending reminders and generally offering support, makes the tasks involved very smooth from the company's perspective."*

### Recommendations

**74%** of respondents would make **no changes** to the programme.

Recommendations from the remaining 26% related to; Site Visit, CV & Interview Prep, 'Day in the Life' talk and the Optional Session.