



Ask the Entrepreneur Activity



About this activity

Use this activity to increase knowledge about entrepreneurship as a career option or to help start or grow a 4-H Business and Entrepreneurship Club.

AGE:

12 and up

OBJECTIVES:

Participants will:

- Learn how successful local entrepreneurs got their start.
- Network with local entrepreneurs.
- Become more comfortable asking adults about their careers.

LEARNING AND LIFE

SKILLS:

- Social Skills: Relating to others
- Increasing communication skills and becoming comfortable interacting with local entrepreneurs
- Gathering information
- Listening
- Exploring careers

What You Will Need

MATERIALS:

- Refreshments
- Bidding sheets for the silent auction (optional)
- Nametags
- Water for panelists

MATERIALS CONTINUED:

- MI 4-H Career Education handout, “Ask the Entrepreneur Sample Questions”
- MI 4-H Career Education handout, “The Perfect Business Handshake” (optional)
- “Rate Yourself: Are You Ready to Start a Business?” handout from the *Be the E* National 4-H curriculum (optional)
- Sign-up sheet for youth or adults interested in joining or becoming volunteers (or make an announcement as to how or who can do this)

TIME:

1-2 hours

SETTING:

- A large room with tables set up for the panel of entrepreneurs and enough chairs for 40-50 audience members.
- Depending on the size of the room, a lectern or microphone may be necessary.
- Designate a table at the entrance for registration/check-in name tags.
- If a silent auction is included to raise start-up funds for a 4-H Business and Entrepreneurship Club, additional tables and space will be necessary.

Procedure

BEFORE THE MEETING:

1. Invite successful local entrepreneurs from a variety of career pathways to be panelists to speak to 4-H club members and nonmembers (if you are trying to start a Business and Entrepreneurship Club or draw in new members to an existing club). Explain that their presentations will be followed with a question and answer session.
2. Use the “Ask the Entrepreneur Sample Questions” handout or have club members prepare questions in advance for the entrepreneurs, just in case the youth audience is hesitant to ask questions.
3. Prepare a press release and/or public service announcement for local media outlets to inform the public of the event.
4. Create a flyer and/or social media graphic to be posted and distributed as an advertisement for the event.

5. Have club members create/gather products to be auctioned off at the event and/or seek donations from local businesses. Inform all panelists about the silent auction, because some of them may decide to make a product or service donation.
6. Set up a table with all the products to be auctioned off with bidding sheets.
7. End the meeting with an activity with refreshments (such as an ice cream social) to stimulate discussion and networking after the question and answer session.

DURING THE MEETING:

1. Greet each attendee at the door explaining that there is an auction of products created/gathered by club members during the meeting and that they may write down a bid before or after the meeting.
2. Begin the meeting with a brief welcome and thank you by one of the club members; remind attendees about the auction. Introduce each guest entrepreneur to the group and explain that the auction will close shortly after the question and answer session.
3. Allow each guest entrepreneur to speak about what they do, how they got started, and other relevant points of interest. Set a time limit of 3 to 5 minutes for each introduction. After each entrepreneur speaks, open the floor up for questions and discussion.
4. Following the question and answer session, begin serving refreshments and remind everyone that the auction will be ending in 10 minutes.
5. Announce the winners of each auction item and collect the money. Thank everyone for coming.
6. Make sure the club sends a thank you letter to each of the guest entrepreneurs and auction item donors if applicable.

Try This, Too

1. If there are few attendees other than club members, club members could split into small groups and ask one of the guest entrepreneur questions one-on-one. Each group of students could go with one entrepreneur. After a set amount of time (10-12 minutes) bring the group together and have each club member group introduce the entrepreneur they interviewed, telling the large group what they have learned. After all the entrepreneurs have been introduced allow time for questions and answers as a large group.
2. Offer guest business owners the opportunity to set up a display about their business to facilitate networking and conversations prior to and after the panel activity.

Talking it Over

Either following the event or at the next club meeting, ask the following questions:

- What was the most interesting thing you learned?
- Did anything surprise you?
- What did you like? Dislike?
- Did any opinions you had about entrepreneurship change after your questions were answered?
- What are the pros and cons of the lifestyle of an entrepreneur?
- What other information do you need to decide whether or not you would like to start your own business?

Visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/youth_entrepreneurship/ for more information about Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Entrepreneurship.

**If you have questions or need help implementing this activity contact:
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