

PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE WORLD OF WORK

RECIPE 4



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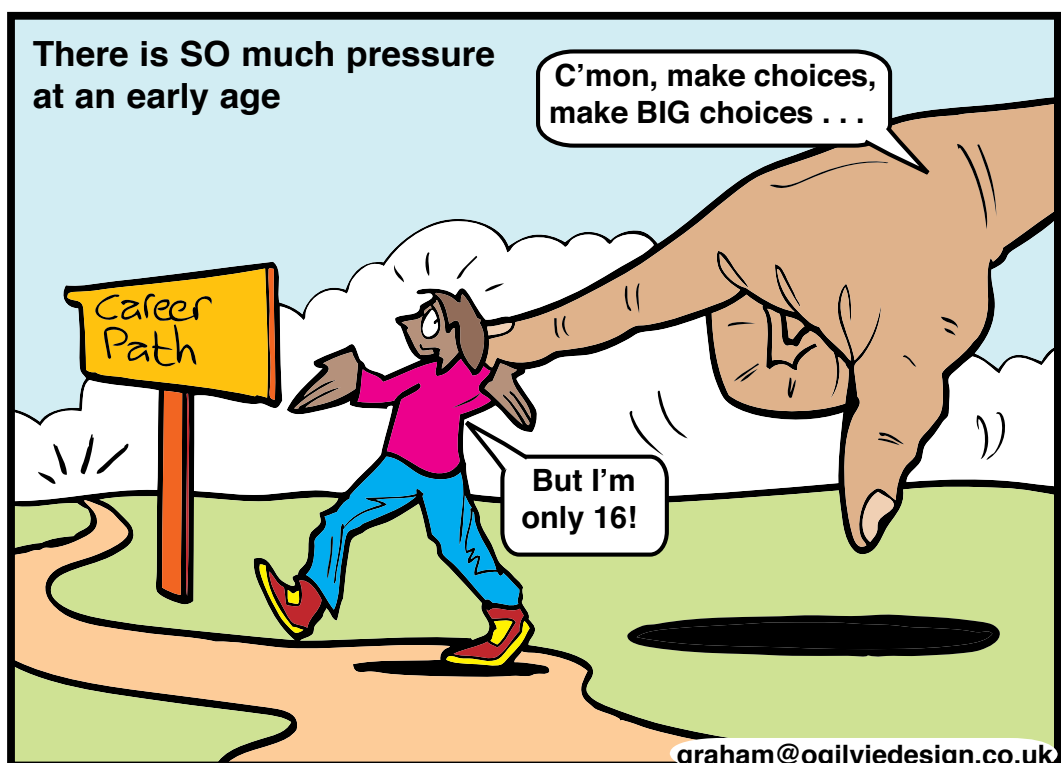


The occasion: The new EU Youth Strategy defines two overall objectives:

- More and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market
- Active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of young people

The Strategy is built in part on the premise that many employment, education and training programmes in Europe are not currently linked to the real needs of employers and the labour market. According to the URBACT Project My Generation: "...education needs to be closer connected to the labour market. The objective should be to enhance and promote employability according to the needs of the employers.... the business community needs to be involved as an active player from the very start".

But what are the secret ingredients that help you to prepare the next generation for the world of work? Are there any special utensils that can make things easier?



Key Ingredients of an ambitious work ready youth population: Do you and your partners have the following ingredients in your food cupboard? If so, you are well on the way to cooking the workforce of the future where young people will have the right skills, qualifications, attitudes and attributes to access and sustain high quality jobs.

Here is a list of ingredients to help you prepare your mixture and ensure that tomorrow's workforce is cooked to perfection and ready to contribute to the growth and resilience of our economies.

<i>Ingredients to add to your shopping list</i>	✓	✗
Multi-stakeholder collaborative approach incorporating education and training providers, local authorities, employers and young people		
Clarity regarding who is leading the process, why this is the case and what resources, skills and competencies they have at their disposal		
Fresh approach which acknowledges the realities of the 21st century economy and recognises that the role of education is changing		
Recognition that change in attitude and culture may be needed and that real impact will take time		
Flexible system which allows education providers to use young people's passions to help them recognise their talents and fulfil their potential		
Close links between education, training and economic development policy areas		
Development of a new skills ecology which considers what behaviour changes are needed at city level to promote a better connected system rather than the development of linked but isolated individual initiatives		
Co-ordinated approach to employer engagement in education and training		
Support to young people to help them communicate their skills and attributes in a way that employers understand and value		
Leading from the front – local authorities are often big employers and can “walk the talk” by investing in the recruitment and development of young people		
Recognition of the importance of role models from all sectors of the labour market – teachers, parents, employers, young people		
Ability to question the status quo to (re)define roles and responsibilities so that young people are engaged actively		
Development of spaces to bring together key players in a facilitated forum		
Understanding of what is possible at local level and scope for change at national level		

Utensils: So now you are clear about the ingredients, what utensils do you need to blend them together effectively?

First on the list is an **UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION** of the whole **SKILLS AND EDUCATION ECO SYSTEM**. This is a complicated world with many different actors playing different parts. In order to make it more effective cities need to “map” existing activity and fully understand the dynamics within it. Many initiatives are developed in isolation and it is important to get a full picture of all of these and how they fit together (if at all) before attempting to address challenges.

Next, cities need to develop **FRESH STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES** based on the needs of the

main stakeholders (in this case employers, education and training providers and young people) and jointly develop a combined approach to action. To do this they need to create spaces where these groups can come together to develop a constructive and mutually beneficial dialogue. The voice of all stakeholders is important and young people's role in this needs to be visible.

The role that cities can play is one of **CO-ORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP** backed up by resources. Clearly other organisations may also have a role to play here but what is important is that a leader is clearly identified and that that organisation has the responsibility, authority and resources to make things happen in a co-ordinated and coherent way. City authorities are well placed to drive this forward.

Alongside all of this, cities need to consider and develop **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT** strategies which help stakeholders involve employers in education and training programmes across the curriculum and targeting all age groups; gather intelligence on the changing needs of the labour market and understand the skills, qualifications and attributes required in the modern workplace.

Good food guide listing:

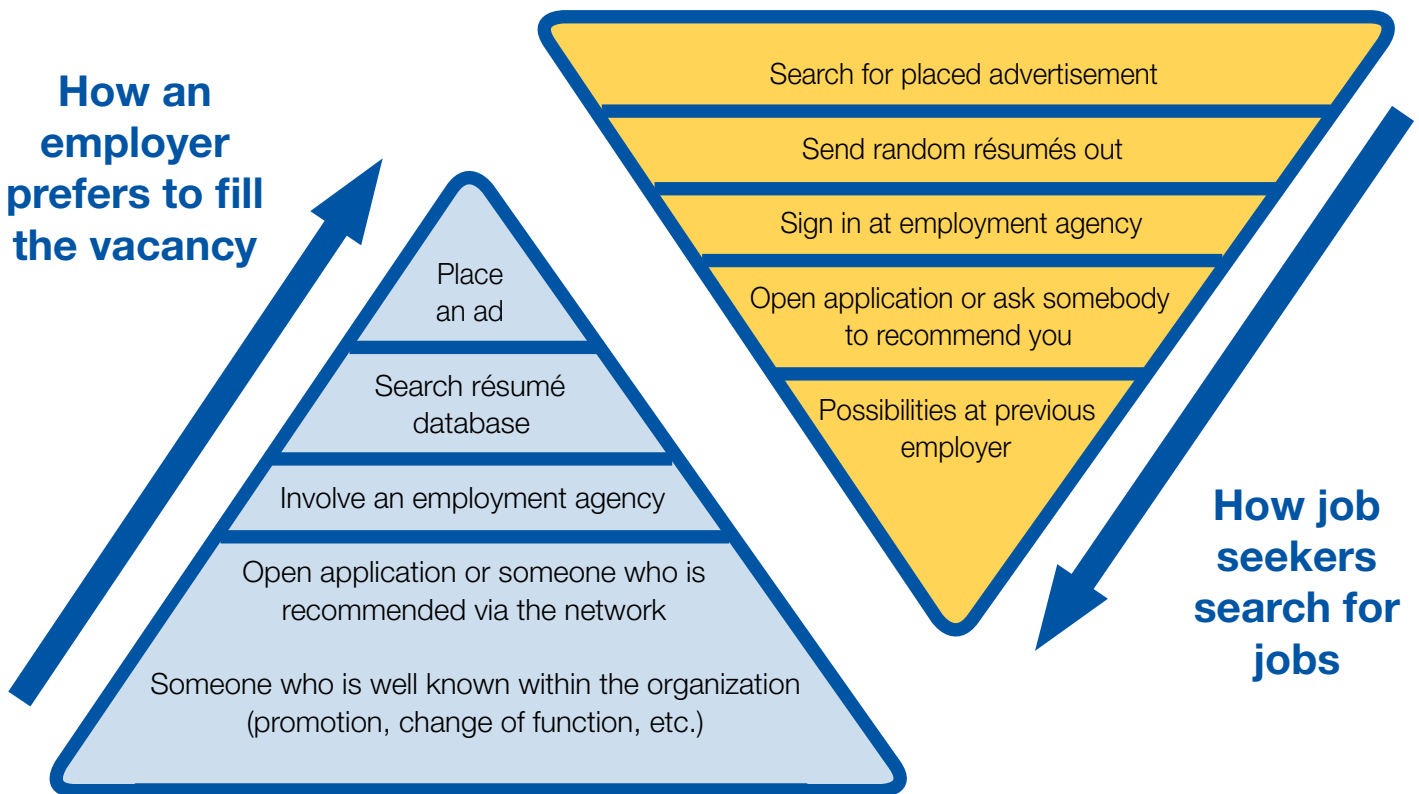
The My Generation URBACT project which finished in 2011 focused on youth engagement in a range of themes including education and employment. Some of the tools identified through the partnership aiming to help young people to prepare for the world of work are listed below:

C Stick – This is a digital portfolio on a USB flash drive. The C-Stick is a central database where young people can gather and store all kinds of relevant information. It provides them with a framework for personal development plans and

it contains a tool to create adjusted CVs in a very quick and easy way. In the C-Stick the main focus is on the identification and development of key competencies. The C-Stick is also connected via the Internet to a server, which keeps a backup of the data. It's also linked to an administrative system by which tutors can send files and competence assessments to their pupils. This innovative tool aims to encourage lifelong learning, facilitate transition and create a link between different learning environments (school, work, leisure time activities).

Hi 5 – This is a foundation in the Netherlands which aims to bridge gaps in society. It teaches organisations that every person in society is a potential client and potential employee and aims to help employers and individuals overcome some of the prejudices inherent in job search and recruitment. Hi 5 has recognised that employers and people seek to fill job vacancies in opposite ways – as illustrated in the diagram below.

Gap between employers and job seekers



The Hi 5 Foundation steps in to broker this relationship: to help employers understand and value the skills, talents and attributes offered by young people and to help young people appreciate the opportunities provided by different employers and jobs.

Takeaway menu: if you like the sound of this recipe and want to try it in your kitchen you can find lots of useful equipment to make your life easier at:

<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/my-generation/homepage/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NugRZGDbPFU>

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/My_Generation/documents_media/Hi5_at_My_Generation_Network.pdf

<http://www.youtheutrio.be>

Serving tip:

See below for an example of how Gävle, ESIMeC's Swedish partner, is taking a proactive approach to the workforce of the future.

Serving tip

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVING THE PERCEPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS AMONGST BUSINESS AND SOCIETY TO FACILITATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Gävle is a medium sized city of 94,000 people located by the Baltic sea, about 160km North of Stockholm in Sweden. The city is home to a university with 12,000 students but it still has a much lower than average proportion of people finishing school and proceeding to higher education (in Sweden). This is linked to the fact that traditionally young people went into local industry (paper, for example) without needing a qualification when they left school. The world has now changed, industry has contracted and the city needs to adapt to this. Employer costs are relatively high in Sweden and the city of Gävle believes that having a very highly qualified workforce is absolutely critical to its economic resilience and growth. Its Vision for 2025 therefore includes skills, innovation and entrepreneurship as one of the five key themes and a wide variety of initiatives have been developed to promote education and training to meet the needs of new and emerging businesses locally.

Ingredients:

Solid policy foundations and long term thinking

Gävle's Vision 2025 was developed through a massive public consultation exercise during 2010. It incorporates the following five key themes:

- Leadership and co-operation
- Quality of life
- Skills, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Infrastructure and communications
- Pride in the city by its population

There is wide public, private and societal buy into the vision as its objectives were jointly developed through multi-stakeholder consultation.

Robust information through annual youth consultation

In order to get an accurate picture of young people's views, an annual youth consultation is carried out in Gävle. Whilst not perfect (there is quite a low response rate for example), this methodology provides robust information on a range of issues including leisure, school, politics, influence, security, health, work and the future. The survey is complemented by a range of focus groups with young people and the results of this research are fed into policy making in the municipality.

Growing amount of work related initiatives in education

Across the city a range of linked initiatives have been developed to help narrow the gap between education and employment. Some of these are summarised here:

- **TENUM** – Technology, Entrepreneurship, Natural Science, Outdoor Education and Mathematics. This programme aims to instill an interest in and aptitude for science and technology across the school curriculum from an early age. Teachers, pupils and employers alike are working together to help increase the relevance of education and skills to the real world of work. In one example 400 “themed” boxes of physical resources (models, tools, building blocks, etc.) are made available to local schools to use to help children as young as 3 understand some of the key scientific concepts. Older students (15-16 year olds) get to spend 3-4 days shadowing engineers in the workplace to help them get a real sense of what it's like to use science and technology skills in the workplace.
- **Entrepreneurial Learning** – in Bergby (a small community of 3,000 people 30km north of Gävle) a new initiative was introduced five years ago to help promote community pride and motivation amongst young people. School teachers were given training on entrepreneurial education and this led to the development of a mentoring programme linking pupils and business people. Mentors and mentees have regular meetings and email contacts as well as practical work experience, work shadowing programmes and careers coaching. During the process each pupil is given a work based challenge to work with and their solutions / ideas are presented at an annual “expo” attended by all mentors, mentees as well as teachers and other employers. Motivation and personal responsibility has improved vastly as a result of this initiative, particularly amongst boys.

- **National Young Entrepreneurs Programme** – For the last 8 years Gävle's 16-19 year olds have had an opportunity to develop a service or product and establish their own company. Groups of 2-4 young people set up and run a real business for 12 months and present their business plan, products and results to an annual Young Entrepreneurs Fair. 1,200 students participated in 2010/2011 and some companies established through this programme have gone on to succeed in the real world of business.

Secret ingredients – herbs and spices

Enthusiasm and vision from all stakeholders including employers

Willingness to think fresh thoughts and try new approaches

Variety of listening methods to ensure young people speak up and are listened to

Strong leadership from public sector backed up by significant resources

All actions rooted in public policy at local level

Cross-fertilisation between education, entrepreneurship and innovation strategies and anchored in Vision 2025

Cook's tip:

"It is very important to give young people role models and a vision of possible professions in order to prepare them for the future. As an example, in 2012 all departments of the municipal administration and companies in Gävle will have to receive students for visits and work placements in order to present the municipality as an attractive and future employer".

Birgitta Pettersson, Director of Department for Education and Labour,
Municipality of Gävle



Takeaway menu:

http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/TENUM.pdf

Youth Consultation (Youth politics and local follow up): <http://www.regiongavleborg.se/1/verksamhet/barn-och-unga/ungdomspolitik-och-lupp.html>

Ung Företagsamhet: www.ungforetagsamhet.se/gavleborg

Cooperation schools – businesses: <http://www.gavle.se/Naringsliv--arbete/Samverkan-skola-arbetsliv>

