Tips for Creating a Fun and Engaging MiCareerQuest Exhibit

Thank you for participating in MiCareerQuest! We appreciate your willingness to donate your time and resources to make the event a HUGE success. Your MiCareerQuest exhibit will provide an opportunity for thousands of young people to experience the wealth of career possibilities in West Michigan's high-demand industries.

Here are some tips to enhance the planning, design and implementation of your MiCareerQuest exhibit.

Planning and Designing Your Exhibit:

Use the 3 Modes of Learning. People learn by listening, by seeing or by experiencing/touching. An exhibit that engages all three learning modalities will create the most memorable experience. Successful exhibits will be those that are engaging, hands-on, interactive, and accurate in the information they convey.

Always Consider Your Audience. MiCareerQuest is intended for middle and high school students (14-18 years).

Timing is everything. Hands-on activities should last no more than five minutes and should be designed to be presented to 5-6 students at a time.

Speak in Clear Layman's Language. When talking to the students, don't use too many technical words and terms. When you do use technical terms, make sure you follow it immediately with a clear, concise explanation. And remember…humor, smiles, voice inflection and gestures are other good ways to keep your audience engaged.

Give Them Something to Touch. Young people like to be physically active in the learning process; interactive tactile activities are the most fun and memorable. When planning, think about what interactive experience would draw you into your booth if you were a spectator, and then plan accordingly.

Keep Your Presentation Active By Asking Questions. Keep the learning process active by asking students probing questions from time to time, such as “What do you think we use this kind of tool?” or “Can you think of others reasons why…?” Ignite their curiosity!

Don’t Forget Passersby Who May be Interested. Assign a volunteer or two to draw in other students you are busy engaging your audience. Some students are more timid and might appreciate an invitation to participate.

Plan for Supplies and Booth Staffing. MiCareerQuest will draw 8,000-10,000 students. Keep this in mind when ordering supplies or give-away items.

High and Low Tech Activities. An activity can be ‘high tech’ like letting kids explore virtual reality headsets, or they can be ‘low-tech’ like making virus particles with marshmallows and tooth picks. The goal is an interactive activity that allows students to experience some aspect of the particular occupation.

Exhibit Safety. Keep in mind any safety precautions for an activity and plan accordingly if your booth requires lab coats, gloves or safety glasses. If your exhibit might get messy, bring any necessary cleaning materials (paper towels, trash bags, etc.).

Helpful Tips for Your Staff and Volunteers:

- Make sure everyone is trained beforehand.
- Volunteers should be at least college age or older.
- At least 2-3 people should staff the booth at all times to help with explaining and crowd control.
- Have the volunteers overlap shifts so that they can observe the activity.
- Have enough volunteers for shifts of 2-3 hours long. If you are limited to a number of people, have them rotate throughout the day and explore other booths for a few hours to help refresh them.

Things you might want to bring:

- Lozenges for your volunteers who will be talking all day.
- Snacks (water and lunch will be provided)
- Hand sanitizer, Kleenex, cleaning wipes, first aid kit, paper towels

Most importantly- **HAVE FUN!!**

MiCareerQuest Hands on Activity
Development Prompts to Brainstorm with AI

1. Activity Prompt

I am planning an exhibit for MiCareerQuest, a large-scale career exploration event for 8th-10th grade students. I represent the occupation or career field of **[INSERT OCCUPATION]**.

Please suggest **five hands-on activity ideas** that:

- Can be completed in approximately 3-5 minutes
- Are engaging, interactive, and age-appropriate for 8th-10th grade students
- Help students experience an authentic aspect of the occupation
- Give exhibit staff an opportunity to talk with students while they participate
- Can accommodate either one-on-one interactions or small groups of students
- Are safe, portable, and practical for a trade-show style environment
- Create a memorable experience that increases awareness of careers in the field

For each activity, please provide:

- Activity Name
- Brief Description
- What Students Learn
- Materials/Supplies Needed
- Staffing Recommendations
- Estimated Cost Level (Low, Medium, High)
- Scalability Considerations for an event where up to 1,000 students may participate throughout the day
- Swag or Incentive Suggestions (optional prizes, giveaways, or completion rewards)

Examples of successful MiCareerQuest-style activities include:

- Performing CPR on a training mannequin
- Completing a PPE relay challenge
- Participating in wheelchair races or wheelchair basketball drills
- Building, assembling, testing, or troubleshooting simple equipment
- Interactive simulations that mirror real workplace tasks

Please prioritize ideas that are:

- Highly interactive
- Fun and memorable
- Easy to reset between participants
- Conversation starters that help staff discuss careers, education pathways, wages, and workplace experiences

Additionally, for any activity involving consumable materials, tools, or personal protective equipment (PPE), estimate the quantity of supplies needed to serve approximately 1,000 - 1,500 students during a single event day.

2. Fast-Paced Challenge Prompt

I am designing a highly interactive MiCareerQuest exhibit for the career field of **[INSERT OCCUPATION]**. The exhibit will serve approximately 1,000-1,500 students (grades 8-10) throughout a single event day.

Please generate 10 fast-paced, hands-on challenge activities that:

- Take **2-5 minutes** per participant
- Can be completed **individually** or in **small** groups
- Simulate real tasks performed by professionals in the occupation
- Encourage conversation between exhibit staff and students
- Are exciting enough to attract students from across the exhibit hall
- Require minimal reset time
- Are safe in a trade show environment
- Work well with high student volume

For each activity provide:

1. Activity Name
2. Challenge Objective
3. Step-by-Step Student Experience
4. What Real-World Job Skill It Demonstrates
5. Materials Required
6. Estimated Cost (Low/Medium/High)
7. Reset Time Between Participants
8. Throughput Capacity Per Hour
9. Tips for Staff Career Conversations
10. Suggested Giveaway or Prize

3. STEM-Focused Career Exploration Prompt

I represent the occupation of **[INSERT OCCUPATION]** at MiCareerQuest.

Generate 8 STEM-focused exhibit activities that help middle school and early high school students understand how science, technology, engineering, math, problem-solving, and critical thinking are used in the profession.

Requirements:

- 3-5 minute activities
- Hands-on participation
- Suitable for grades 8-10
- Easy to transport and set up
- Safe for public events
- Small footprint exhibit space
- Capable of serving 1,000+ students

For each activity include:

- Activity Name
- STEM Concepts Demonstrated
- Student Instructions

For each activity include (Continued):

- Conversation Starters for Staff
- Equipment List
- Quantity Needed for 1,500 Students
- Estimated Staffing Needs
- Cost Estimate
- Learning Outcomes

4. Career Pathway Conversation Prompt

I am staffing a MiCareerQuest Exhibit for **[INSERT OCCUPATION]**.

Provide 5 hands-on activities specifically designed to create opportunities for meaningful career conversations for students in grades 8-10.

Each activity should naturally allow staff to discuss:

- Education requirements
- Apprenticeships or training
- Certifications
- Wages and salaries
- Workplace technology
- Advancement opportunities
- Daily job responsibilities

For each activity include:

- Activity Name
- Activity Description
- Recommended Talking Points
- Questions Staff Can Ask Students
- Questions Students Commonly Ask
- Learning Objectives
- Materials Needed
- Estimated Cost
- Scalability for 1,500 Students

5. Budget-Friendly Exhibit Prompt

I need exhibit activities for MiCareerQuest a large-scale career exploration event for 8th to 10 grade students. I represent **[INSERT OCCUPATION]** with a total exhibit budget under **[Dollar Amount]**.

Design 5 hands-on activities that:

- Cost less than [$amount] per activity
- Serve large numbers of students
- Have minimal consumable costs
- Require little or no electricity
- Fit inside a [dimension] space
- Take 3-5 minutes per participant
- Provide authentic occupational experiences

For each activity provide:

- Activity Name/Description
- Materials Needed
- Estimated cost
- Quantity Needed for 1,500 Students
- Setup Time
- Storage Requirements
- Career Concepts Demonstrated

6. High-Tech Interactive Prompt

I represent **[INSERT OCCUPATION]** at MiCareerQuest a large-scale career exploration event serving 8th to 10 grade students.

Generate 5-10 technology-enhanced exhibit experiences using tools such as:

- Tablets
- Touch screens
- Simulators
- Virtual reality
- Augmented reality
- Sensors
- Interactive displays
- Digital games

Each experience should:

- Take 3-5 minutes
- Accommodate multiple students
- Demonstrate authentic workplace technology
- Create excitement and engagement
- Include backup options if technology fails

For each activity provide:

- Activity Name
- Technology Used
- Student Experience
- Cost Estimate
- Staffing Recommendations
- Scalability
- Career Connection
- Backup Low-Tech Version

7. Competition-Based Activities Prompt

I am developing a MiCareerQuest exhibit for **[INSERT OCCUPATION]**.

Create 8 competitive activities where students can race against:

- A timer
- Their friends
- Previous participants
- A leaderboard

Requirements:

- Safe
- Fast-moving
- Easy to reset
- Authentic to the profession
- Suitable for grades 8-10

For each activity include:

- Competition Format
- Scoring Method
- Time Required
- Materials List
- Occupational Skills Demonstrated
- Throughput Capacity
- Recognition or Prize Ideas

8. Occupational Skills Showcase Prompt

I represent the career field of **[INSERT OCCUPATION]**.
Identify the 10 most important skills professionals use on the job.
Then create a separate 3-5 minute hands-on activity for each skill for an exhibit at MiCareerQuest a large scale career exploration event for 8th to 10th grade student.

For every skill/activity pair provide:

- Skill Name
- Why the Skill Matters
- Hands-On Demonstration Activity
- Student Learning Outcome
- Materials Needed
- Quantity Needed for 1,500 Students
- Cost Estimate
- Staff Talking Points

*Prioritize high-energy, hands-on experiences that authentically represent the profession while maximizing student engagement and career awareness.

These prompts work especially well for skilled trades, healthcare, IT, manufacturing, construction, engineering, public safety, transportation, agriculture, education, finance, and emerging technology careers.

This can be included with each prompt also.