

Discussion Summary

Basic points to remember

- Date your material – make it clear if a leaflet is replacing an old version (schools and careers libraries usually set a 2 or 3 year shelf life).
- Reviewing the accuracy of information on a webpage can be enough to warrant a new revision date.
- Be clear about the purpose of the material. e.g. are you trying to sell the subject or a specific career?
- Think about how you should be splitting your audience, perhaps by age or geographical area but we didn't feel it was appropriate to split by gender.
- Consider producing versions in different languages; this is particularly useful for parents of minority groups.
- Be aware that schools see science, design and technology and maths as separate subjects and won't necessarily view the links between them as obvious.
- Wherever possible get young people's opinions on your material.
- Look at testing how they react to your messages as well as whether the presentation appeals to them.
- When producing material for teachers curriculum links are important.
- Remember to include a reference for following up their interest.
- A leaflet alone isn't going to sell young people STEM, make use of other ways of getting your message across e.g. Science and Engineering Ambassadors, work placements. Also think about backing up these activities with your material.

Design

- Any photos and images used should be relevant to the text or message – rather than just pretty - and should be representative of all groups.
- Take care with the colours you choose, be aware of their impact on reading difficulties and photocopying needs.
- Limit the amount of text.
- Learn lessons from how commercial companies sell to your audience e.g. look at young people's magazines.

Content/Message

- Make sure your message is tailored to the audience and be clear what you are selling, a qualification or a career.
- There is a need to balance your own agenda with the audience's needs.
- Think about the range within your target audience e.g. 11 year olds are very different to 14 year olds. Is there a secondary audience e.g. parents or teachers?

- Young students can be wary of committing themselves to a decision too early (tailor your message).
- Use topic issues to draw interest and show how they can work in that area.
- Tie to audience interests.
- Using a hook such as a topic area can be good but don't disguise your message too much.
- Talk about applications of STEM in everyday life.
- Don't shy away from including salary information when appropriate for the age range (i.e. not so relevant for younger students)
- Consider contextualising salary information by comparing it to other jobs but be sensitive in the way you do this.
- Remember to include lifestyle information such as flexible hours, opportunities for travel etc.
- Be honest about prospects in the field.
- Include information about the soft skills and transferable skills gained but be specific.
- Use relevant case studies and where possible use young people to help students relate to them.
- Consider the angles that might appeal to different people such as hands on aspects or team working.
- Show that STEM careers are different to their classroom experience of a subject i.e. they may not like their chemistry teacher but that doesn't mean they wouldn't like chemistry in the workplace.
- Promote linked areas or jobs e.g. doctor and radiographer.
- There are areas where the subject disciplines overlap, it can be good to show that you don't get stuck in one field or subject.
- Don't lie. Students will spot it!

Is it working?

- Are the audience picking up the message you want them to.
- Are you getting requests for the material

Nicola Hannam
Careers from Science, Project Manager

n.hannam@sciencecouncil.org
www.sciencecouncil.org/projects.php