



## **ASSOCIATION PROFILE**

### **Marin Builders Exchange**

Size: Small  
Region: Suburban  
Industry: Construction

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### **Overview**

The Marin Builders Exchange (MBE) provides an excellent example of how small businesses can collaborate to have a big impact on education for and awareness of their industry. With over 1,000 members who are small- to medium-sized independent building contractors in Marin County, MBE maintains the goal of informing every high school student in Marin County of the many career opportunities in the building trades.

MBE and its committed members have forged solid partnerships with several Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs) that open doors for students considering careers in the construction industry. Along with the local School-to-Career partnership, MBE seeks to broadly expand the reach of its program to many more schools and students throughout the area. Exchange members offer guest speaking and teaching, job shadowing and internship/pre-apprenticeship opportunities, and classroom support in curriculum development. Two of the full-time assistant teachers in the local ROP programs are licensed contractors and MBE members, and the organization allocates funds to underwrite a liaison between students and building contractors and to assist ROP activities.

### **Critical Success Factors**

Below are several critical success factors for the Marin Builders Exchange and its School-to-Career activities:

- Patience, patience, patience. From the industry side, you need to identify how to pace the progress, when to move quickly to respond to school needs and when not to push for action.
- Constantly promote School-to-Career to members, students, parents and schools in order to gain buy-in. MBE focuses on success stories, many of which come from informal gatherings after weekly job-shadowing programs where students and teachers meet for a luncheon to share information and results.
- Think broadly about whom to involve in School-to-Career activities and who can supply needed resources and expertise from industry. MBE has worked hard to include lumberyards, material supply companies, public works departments and the city planning office to expand the scope of resources available.

### **Marin Builders Exchange's Path to Success**

According to the Marin Builders Exchange, the industry has not done a good job of promoting education and careers among local youth. Traditionally, union apprenticeship programs were seen as the only mechanism for placing entry-level workers in careers. MBE believes that, by focusing on pre-apprentice training, job shadowing and internships, many more doors to success can be opened for young people. The success and growth of MBE's activities have depended largely on collaboration among its members, local schools and the School-to-Career partnership.

### **Strategies/Activities**

- Job shadowing
- Quality internships for high school/Regional Occupational Program (ROP) students and teachers
- Pre-apprenticeships
- Guest speaking and teaching in local classrooms
- Advocacy on behalf of School-to-Career and support for the involvement of other companies
- Financial support for School-to-Career liaisons
- Advisory board and committee participation
- Career placement for student graduates of the programs