

Transcript video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O89Uj3-Db6c>  
Steve Abrams, Co-Founder of Career Day, <https://careerday.me>

0:01

looking to network and hitting the pavement.

0:04

We've done the work to help you get ready for your next job.

0:07

We've got the experts and the latest tips and we got you.

0:12

This is Job Hunt LA.

0:25

Hi and welcome to Job Hunt LA. I'm career guy Daryl Gurney.

0:30

For the next 30 minutes we're

0:31

going to help you not only find and capture a new job,

0:35

but also discover ways to find meaning and purpose

0:39

in your career and advance in your career.

0:42

So joining us today is Steve Abrams.

0:44

Steve is the co-founder of Career Day.

0:48

Thanks for joining us, Steve. Let's just jump right in.

0:52

So, Steve, you have had a great career.

0:55

You've, uh, in production in the entertainment industry,

0:59

which is all about finding and keeping jobs.

1:02

You also have your master's in education.

1:04

What really fascinates me is for the last five and a half years,

1:07

you've been the co-founder of Career Day.

1:11

Tell us a little bit about Career Day.

1:13

First off, what we do is we focus on helping those students

1:20  
who are not thinking about going on to a four year college,  
1:26  
but kids who want to get right into the workforce.  
1:30  
And we are connecting them  
1:31  
with employers who are desperate for people just like them.  
1:36  
We focus sort of on the CTE pathways.  
1:39  
So we go to high schools.  
1:41  
We take our take employers to the high schools,  
1:45  
where they can meet the students  
1:46  
who are actively looking for work.  
1:49  
And it's even great for kids who are going to school after,  
1:52  
because a lot  
1:53  
of them are working and they need great jobs,  
1:56  
and it can help align them  
1:57  
with jobs that are working in their majors.  
2:02  
So first off, you're providing a huge service,  
2:07  
it sounds like,  
2:07  
to high school students in moving on,  
2:11  
whether they're going to go to college and work  
2:13  
while they're in college,  
2:14  
or they're just going to not go to college  
2:17  
and choose to go to work.  
2:20  
I noticed something on your website that said 34%

2:24

of high schoolers

2:25

actually choose to not go to further education.

2:30

One question I had is that higher or lower

2:33

than it was 20 years ago? I mean, is, are more students

2:37

just going into the workforce now than before?

2:41

Yeah, absolutely.

2:44

The college paradigm is

2:45

absolutely changing in all over the country.

2:49

An even crazier statistic is that in the last two years,

2:53

almost two thirds of young men who graduate from

2:56

high school don't go on to college,

2:58

which is skewed

2:59

the college Population in favor of young women,

3:03

almost 54 to 55%.

3:05

So it's a trend in 20.

3:07

It just people are realizing that, you know,

3:10

coming out of college with a mountain of debt

3:13

and limited career opportunities is not a recipe for success.

3:20

So tell me this then, how what do you tell

3:24

high schoolers who are making that choice?

3:27

What what are what are the tips that you are offering them?

3:33

Well, the the educational landscape is changing, Daryl.

3:38

And most high schools now,

3:40

based on federal mandates and state mandates,

3:42

are focusing on the career and technical education pathways.

3:46

So a lot of students are able to sort

3:49

of find what interests them earlier.

3:52

So what we're telling them is

3:54

that there are incredible opportunities

3:56

for them

3:58

in many different fields that they just don't know about.

4:02

And we're helping to introduce

4:03

them to whatever opportunity fits,

4:07

not just their career and technical education pathway,

4:10

but their skills and their values.

4:14

Yeah, I'm glad you spelled that out.

4:16

I was wondering what CTE was.

4:18

So now you've told me I don't have to ask.

4:21

So tell me then, what is your process?

4:24

How do you go about making this connection?

4:29

Because I know when I was in high school,

4:31

I know when my son was in high school,

4:33

I mean, I was going to go on to college.

4:36

Uh, but there's not a whole lot of information or guidance.

4:40

How do you even get them into this process?

4:44

Well, it's funny you say that, Darrell,

4:46

because that's the genesis of what we're doing is the fact

4:49

that we would go to career fairs for other endeavors

4:53

and find out that students just were not being educated,

4:57

not just in what careers are out there,

4:59

but in how to find them and how to write a resume

5:03

or go on an interview.

5:05

And those are important skills.

5:07

So our model is to go through the look at the high schools,

5:13

and we find the high schools

5:14

in the area of a of a specific employer.

5:18

And we look for those high schools that are

5:21

focused on the career

5:22

and technical education pathways that fit that employer.

5:28

And then we bring that employer to the high school.

5:31

So that way the kids are hearing

5:34

it directly from the person they're going to be working for.

5:39

So it sounds like you're kind of like the the connector here.

5:44

Sounds like the employers

5:45

on their own have not been able to bridge that gap.

5:49

Obviously, the young students

5:52

without the guidance haven't been able to bridge the gap.

5:54

What are the what's the solution

5:56

that you're providing for both ends of the spectrum there,

6:00

the employer and the student.

6:03

Well, Darrell, I don't know if you remember being 18.

6:06

I barely remember it at this point,

6:08

but when I graduated high school,

6:10

I won't say I just I barely knew what I was doing.

6:15

Right.

6:16

I mean, the thought of leaving high school, excuse me.

6:18

And and finding a job would have been incredibly daunting.

6:23

And it was daunting.

6:24

It was a daunting for me when I got out of college.

6:28

So we want to remove that, uh, blockage from their lives.

6:34

We want to make it easier for them and the employer side.

6:39

They don't have the manpower or the resources

6:42

to really create

6:44

a an effective outreach program for their company.

6:48

So we just do it for them.

6:50

So we are doing what they had wanted to do

6:54

and what they talked about in their meetings,

6:56

but they can't do.

6:59

Well, tell me what you do do.

7:01

Because, you know, I remember even in high school

7:03

and even when my son was in high school,

7:06

there was career day, you know, where, I guess parents would

7:10

come and talk about what they do and things like that.

7:13

That's a certain form of education, but it looks

7:16

like you all get way more in depth than this.

7:18

What's your process like?

7:21

Well, the process we start with the client.

7:23

We start with the company that

7:25

is looking for entry level employees.

7:29

And we come up with a plan based on what those positions are

7:35

and what that career trajectory would look like.

7:40

Then we start reaching out to high schools within a 20 miles

7:45

or so of that particular plant or their company,

7:49

and we start to investigate what type of students do they have,

7:52

what kind of CTE programs do they have?

7:56

Are they do they have students

7:58

that are looking to go into the workforce.

8:01

Most guidance counselors will tell you,

8:03

oh, we have 95% of our students who go to college,

8:07

but that's not really accurate.

8:09

And if they a lot of kids who do go to college,

8:11

over half the kids who do go to college are out of college

8:14

before the end of the second semester.

8:17

So we then start investigating with these counselors.

8:21

And then we we start handing out information to students,

8:25

letting them know the careers that are available to them.

8:29

And then we start setting up speaking engagements.

8:34

And what we do is we bring the the worker,

8:37

the person who's actually doing the job.

8:39

We bring that person into the school

8:42

and let them talk to the students directly

8:44

and answer questions.

8:46

Then when that's finished, when a student shows interest,

8:49

they come through our portal.

8:51

They take an assessment that, uh, kind of checks their skills,

8:55

their values and their, um,

8:59

Uh, abilities and their personality.

9:02

And then if they fit the criteria,

9:04

then they move on to an interview.

9:06

And the great part about that is

9:08

that both the student and the employer

9:10

know going in that they're a person who's a good fit.



9:16

Tell me.

9:18

What do you how do you even start with 18 year olds?

9:23

Let's just say on average, 18 year old graduating high school.

9:27

How do you even start with them? About resumes?

9:30

About interviewing?

9:32

What what are the tips?

9:34

How do you prepare them for that process,

9:37

whether it's going to be with that particular company

9:39

or just how to learn in general, how to take that on?

9:45

Right.

9:45

That's a great question, Darrell.

9:47

And we that is something that we

9:49

work very hard with because it's hard to be responsible

9:52

when you're 18,

9:53

when you've just graduated from high school,

9:55

uh, you're, you know,

9:57

you're feeling is I want to go out there,

9:59

I want to I want to, you know, play around.

10:01

I want to party. I'm not necessarily tied into

10:05

the idea of what it takes to get this job,

10:08

but they know that they need to get to work.

10:11

So we have a process where we connect with them

10:15  
when they come into our our portal,  
10:18  
and we get them to understand this is what you need to do.  
10:23  
And in a way,  
10:24  
you almost have to treat it almost like a, you know,  
10:28  
an a drill sergeant type of way, where you say,  
10:31  
here are the steps.  
10:32  
These are the steps you need to follow.  
10:35  
And if you follow them,  
10:37  
then there's a possibility that you'll have great success.  
10:40  
And it starts with here's a resume.  
10:43  
Here's where you can find resume templates.  
10:45  
Here's where you can find ways to write a resume.  
10:48  
You know, I think the thing that is most difficult  
10:51  
for young people is understanding that, you know,  
10:54  
being the captain of the football team is actually  
10:57  
a great thing to have on your on your resume.  
11:00  
It shows responsibility, leadership.  
11:02  
It shows the ability to follow orders.  
11:04  
You know they don't, but they don't understand that.  
11:06  
And so we help them understand  
11:08  
that the things they did in school  
11:10  
and the things they did as volunteers

11:11

and all the other stuff actually looks great on a resume.

11:16

So tell me this.

11:18

So we're talking about the resume.

11:19

We're talking about applying the next stage

11:23

for a young person is interviewing.

11:26

I think I was a little cocky when I was 18 years old,

11:30

but at the same time, in the face of an adult,

11:33

I probably got mush mouth.

11:36

How do you what advice do you have for young people

11:40

when it comes to like doing initial interviews

11:44

and getting used to that, and good at that.

11:47

Yeah, that's a that's

11:49

the probably the hardest part of the entire process.

11:53

Uh, we just talked to them

11:54

about being themselves, being honest, being open.

11:58

And, uh, not worrying about being perfect.

12:03

And, uh, you know,

12:05

the idea of being the smartest guy in the room.

12:08

Uh, it's important for, you know,

12:10

young men and young women to ask questions and to open themselves

12:15

up to just giving straight answers.

12:19

You know, be yourself. I mean,

12:21  
the hardest part is helping them to understand  
12:25  
that even if they go in and give the perfect interview,  
12:27  
they might not get the job.  
12:30  
And that disappointment is hard  
12:32  
to is hard to handle at that age.  
12:34  
So that's another thing that we work with them on,  
12:37  
is just understanding that you might have to do  
12:40  
five interviews to get the perfect job,  
12:42  
but it will come eventually.  
12:45  
Steve, this is all great.  
12:46  
I want you to stay right where you are.  
12:48  
We're going to continue  
12:49  
this conversation after a few helpful tips.  
13:53  
Once again, we're talking with Steve Abrams,  
13:55  
the co-founder of Career Day.  
13:58  
So, Steve, this is all fascinating  
14:01  
in terms of what you're providing  
14:04  
and this advice that you're giving to students.  
14:07  
What's the track record like?  
14:09  
How how has this gone and what have beenen  
14:12  
some success stories that have come out of your your,  
14:16  
your work with putting high schoolers

14:19

together with with organizations?

14:22

Oh, it's been an amazing journey so far.

14:26

I mean, it's a great lesson in entrepreneurialism

14:29

because we've we've been we've had to pivot twice over

14:33

the course of the five and a half years.

14:35

And we landed on this particular model about a year,

14:39

a little over a year ago, and it really took off.

14:43

Um, we've had several clients now.

14:46

We've placed a couple of students.

14:49

Um, one of them was at a dairy out in City of Industry,

14:55

and this person was such a great candidate.

14:59

actually had three job offers on top of the one that he got from,

15:05

um, from us.

15:06

Um, we've, you know,

15:08

we are talking to a lot of different,

15:10

uh, organizations,

15:12

uh, labor unions have been jumping on board.

15:15

Um, everybody the school counselors love it.

15:18

I have yet to run into anybody who has said,

15:21

yeah, I don't really see a need for that.

15:24

You know,

15:25

ever since Amy Klobuchar in the 2016 debate said we need

15:27

more less MBAs and more plumbers,

15:30

this idea has really taken off.

15:32

Wow.

15:33

I can really I can really hear the service y'all are providing

15:37

just by being that educational place there for these students.

15:42

And as they go through your program,

15:43

or it sounds like even they got lots

15:46

of things that start to cook for them outside

15:48

of your program because

15:49

of what you're providing and the education.

15:51

I want to pivot a little bit. Now I'd like to ask about.

15:56

So let's say these high schoolers do land.

16:01

Uh, talk a little bit about because I think I saw

16:04

another statistic on your website that said,

16:08

uh, most young people will stay an average of nine months.

16:13

Now, for someone to actually have a career,

16:16

they kind of need to stick around.

16:18

They kind of need to advance things like that.

16:20

How how is that challenge met by either your organization

16:26

or what advice do you have for

16:28

young people or employers about keeping,

16:31

keeping keeping them on?

16:34

Right, Darryl?

16:35

Well, that's we do two things in relation to that.

16:39

Uh, the the great thing

16:41

about the career and technical education pathways

16:45

and finding students who are in specific CTE pathways.

16:50

So if we have a client who is a manufacturing company

16:53

and we go to a high school that

16:54

has a manufacturing CTE pathway program,

16:58

then you know

16:59

that the student who is coming out

17:01

of that program is interested

17:04

in the work that's going on at that company.

17:07

So one of the reasons

17:08

why people stay for such a short period of time is they're like,

17:11

oh, well, this pays really well. I think I'll take it.

17:13

And then they realize

17:14

that they're working in the freezing cold,

17:16

you know, bending metal.

17:17

And they're like, gee, I wasn't expecting this.

17:20

I'm out of here.

17:21

But if you have someone from the right CTE pathway,

17:25

they already know what to expect.

17:27

The second thing we do is we when we bring that worker who is

17:31

already doing that job in front of the students,

17:34

they're getting a really clear picture of what the work is.

17:37

So everybody's eyes are wide open

17:39

when they walk into that first day of work.

17:42

And, you know, if you have a good fit

17:44

and you have someone that's interested in what the work is,

17:47

they're going to stay.

17:48

And then we also let them know that there's a strong

17:51

that there's a very strong career path,

17:55

you know, upward career path if they

17:58

stay and put in the work at this company.

18:02

So it sounds like your process then helps

18:06

ensure a stickiness for the young person.

18:11

Um,

18:12

are there particular challenges that the employers have

18:16

to deal with when they're bringing in young people,

18:20

um, who are kind of maybe fresh to the,

18:22

to the workforce,

18:23

even if they have been kind of CTE qualified.

18:27

Right. Well, most people leave a job.

18:32

Uh, statistic I read was that eight out of ten people who



18:35

leave a job say they're leaving because of the manager.

18:38

It's not because of the work. It's not because of the company,

18:41

but it's because of the person who's their direct supervisor.

18:44

So that type of, uh, situation is compounded by

18:49

somebody who's right out of high school.

18:51

That person is not going

18:53

to really have the experience or the wherewithal to be able

18:59

to handle somebody who is a tough supervisor

19:03

or they don't get along with.

19:04

So that's really the biggest problem.

19:06

The rest of it is the other one is more money.

19:09

You know, a lot of students will come in a lot of people on this.

19:12

But again, it's the same problems you have

19:13

with with people who are 18 or 20 or 48.

19:17

Right.

19:18

They take a job and then six months later,

19:19

somebody offers them a job with more money

19:22

and they're going to take it.

19:24

But from a standpoint of keeping those people happy,

19:28

when those people come in to you pre-qualified,

19:31

and they come in to you with an understanding,

19:35

they're going to stay. Now, of course,

19:37

we haven't been around long enough to really have a full,

19:40

um, you know,

19:41

statistical representation of what that is.

19:44

But from what we're seeing, the people who are taking

19:46

the jobs are very happy to get started.

19:51

Yeah. And it sounds

19:53

like if the companies are partnering with you

19:55

and they're investing in your service,

19:58

They obviously would want to nurture and make sure

20:01

that they provide.

20:03

You know, the best environment or whatever that they can.

20:06

But like you said,

20:07

you can't always tell who someone's boss is going to be.

20:11

What advice? And again,

20:13

you're speaking from your career that has many years,

20:17

you know, underneath it.

20:18

But in your work with these young people,

20:21

what advice would you offer for advancement.

20:27

Like how does one advance? How does one, you know,

20:30

make a place for themselves in an organization?

20:35

Well, I think, um, you know, I've been on,

20:38

on in many different worlds, uh, you know,

20:40

the entertainment industry,

20:41

it's really about personalities and networking.

20:44

Um, in some of the other industries that I've been in,

20:48

you know,

20:49

there's also the sort of mastery or the becoming technically a

20:53

technically adept at whatever it is your job is.

20:58

And I think it really comes down

20:59

to making yourself indispensable.

21:01

Making you that person that in your boss's mind,

21:05

it's like I really couldn't see doing this job without Daryl.

21:10

Like, he has become so good at what he does.

21:12

He has such a great attitude

21:14

that if I had to lay off every other person in this department,

21:18

the one person I would want to keep would be Daryl.

21:21

Well, hopefully my producer feels that way.

21:24

Um, but so.

21:27

So tell me then, um, in terms of someone, uh.

21:34

Well, one thing I want to hit on,

21:36

though, is you talked about networking

21:37

because in the entertainment industry,

21:40

that's like the golden key, right?

21:43

A lot of people come out of high school

21:45

and again, you know,

21:46

they're good at social media and they're, you know,

21:49

bold and everything there.

21:50

But sometimes when it comes to interacting with people,

21:53

there might be, you know, some more advancement to get

21:56

used to interacting with interacting with people?

21:58

Talk a little bit about what should young people

22:02

actually begin to learn and know about networking?

22:07

The first thing is put your phone down

22:10

and leave it down and go out in the world.

22:15

Join organizations, join clubs, um, go to coffee shops,

22:20

get out there

22:21

and have conversations with people.

22:23

Um, I think it's something that needs to happen early and often.

22:27

I think that, um,

22:29

trying to create a connection based on your love

22:33

of crazy TikTok videos is not going to get you very far.

22:37

You have to be able to you need

22:39

to learn how to ask questions and listen.

22:43

And that is the single biggest part of networking that I think,

22:47

uh, today's young people are not learning.

22:52

Yeah I agree.

22:54

Um, I even speak to MBA programs about that

22:56

because they're mostly still young as well.

22:59

What is it that one gains out of that though?

23:02

If you can like if some

23:04

if a young person is watching this right now

23:06

and they hear go talk to people and ask questions,

23:09

how is that actually impacting their career?

23:15

The smartest guy in the room, the smartest girl in the room,

23:19

in my experience,

23:20

is not the one who's doing the most talking,

23:22

but doing the most listening and being able to listen,

23:26

being able to collate what you're hearing in your mind

23:31

and, uh, turn that into ideas and solutions

23:36

for problems is a critical attribute to have.

23:41

And it's a great part of networking,

23:43

because when you're talking to people

23:45

and you're discussing different situations,

23:48

being able to take in what they're saying

23:53

and help them find solutions makes you indispensable.

23:58

Got it.

23:59

So it's really the code word here is be indispensable

24:03

both in your work that you're currently doing as well as

24:08

become indispensable with the the people around you.

24:12

Um, so what? We've got about a minute left.

24:18

I want to kind of give you an opportunity, number one,

24:21

to just share kind of your final golden pieces of wisdom,

24:25

as well as make sure you tell us the website

24:28

where if people would like to find out more about Career Day.

24:32

Well thanks, Darryl. This has been great, by the way.

24:34

I really appreciate you inviting me to come on the show.

24:37

Uh, I think if I were going to say one thing,

24:41

uh, to a young person, it's, uh, have courage, take the leap.

24:48

And don't be afraid to follow

24:51

what your heart is telling you in this particular moment.

24:56

It's okay not to go to go to college.

24:58

It's okay to go find a job.

25:00

It's okay to strive and to push yourself and just take it.

25:06

Take your time and let the job grow on you.

25:09

So many people get into work and they do six months,

25:13

or they do the nine months

25:14

and they don't really let themselves settle in.

25:17

So I think that would be

25:18

the greatest advice I would have for a young person.

25:22

And, you know, to be open to whatever the possibilities are.

25:26

And as far as Career Day,

25:27

we'd love to hear from students and employers.

25:30

And you can find us at Career Day.

25:35

Me, me will remember that because it's all about me.

25:40

That's definitely what a student day.

25:42

Me. Thank you Steve.

25:44

Really appreciate your time today.

25:45

Thanks for being of service to students and employers

25:48

and doing the work that y'all are doing.

25:51

Thanks, Darryl. You too.

25:52

Thanks for watching Job Hunt LA. I'm career guy Daryl Gurney.