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Metro Exhibit Corporation Finds Success in Partnering with Lewis University

Metro Exhibit Corporation (MEC) is a one stop shop for trade shows, museum installations, and custom rental exhibits to purchasable properties. Upon moving to Romeoville in June of 2016, one of the first things owner Brian Phebus did was to reach out to Lewis University and their career services department. "I just started networking with them to see where our needs may align: where they may have students and where I may need help," explained Phebus. "Lewis invited me to come see their marketing and business program and I invited them over here to see what we did and how we may be able to partner."



The result of that initial partnership was New Business Development Associate Erica Swanberg. "I was invited to some career fairs at Lewis and came away with a lot of resumes," recalls Phebus. "Some of the professors at Lewis highly recommended Erica, so it made my job simple." Swanberg was one of the marketing students who pitched ideas to companies like MEC during a design competition. That, combined with her resume and professor recommendations landed her the job. It also proved to Phebus the benefit of partnering with local schools. "We have an aging work force and I've been a firm believer in training the next generation," he said. "Lewis University and Joliet Junior College were both extremely responsive. They returned calls and emails and invited me to career fairs. I had a stack of resumes from both of them that were pretty overwhelming. They've got some really good students."

After the success in finding Erica, Metro Exhibit Corporation furthered their partnership by becoming a sponsor of the Sales Excellence Program at Lewis University. Lewis knew they had a lot of graduating students who needed to find that first sales job, so they put together the program as a way to prepare motivated students for post-college life in the world of sales. To do this, they partner with area businesses who come in and discuss different aspects of selling. "Each partner has different sales experience and sales needs," says Swanberg. Businesses like MEC teach students what they do, give them a tour of their facility, allow them to shadow employees, and see the sales process first hand. The course utilizes presentations and mock interviews to give these future sales people a strong polish.

Then it's the business' turn to benefit. "The partner companies can select the individuals in the class that they want to do an actual interview with and possibly hire," notes Swanberg. "During the class, they've seen the students come into their companies and interact with their employees. They've seen this person in action and how they do." The businesses also get to compare themselves to the other partners in the program. "You come in and see where other companies are with their sales program and where you should alter things in your company. It's kind of re-informing you about how to change and structure your sales process."

Whether you're a large business or a small business, looking for sales help or help of another kind, reach out to Lewis University, Joliet Junior College, and Rasmussen College and see how you can partner with them. Take advantage of the sizeable labor pools right here in town. You may just find your next star employee in your own backyard.