



## Job Description of a Sector Partnership Convener

### Role Summary and Responsibilities

The convener plays an essential role in keeping a sector partnership on track and moving forward to accomplish the goals of the businesses in the partnership. The convener is the backbone of the sector partnership, providing administrative, project management, and facilitation support to keep the partnership focused and productive. It is essential that the convener is highly action-oriented, but also a collaborative and disciplined team player.



### What Does a Convener Do?

- **Coordinates**
  - Schedules and sends out announcements about upcoming meetings.
  - Arranges logistics of meeting locations (ideally at business locations) and refreshments.
  - Arranges planning calls with business leaders and key support partners to develop agenda and plan for partnership meetings.
  - Holds partners accountable to accomplishing tasks within established timeframe
  - Have plan to distribute meeting invitations, summaries, and communications in timely fashion
- **Communicates**



- Serves as the primary point of contact for both business leaders and public partners for the sector partnership, acting as an information hub to connect and network partnership participants.
- Keeps track of the partnership's written action plan, distributing updates after full partnership or action team meetings.
- Coordinates with other partnership participants to distribute regular updates on partnership activities and progress.
- **Connects**
  - Recruits support partners to help advance partnership priorities. In the early stages of a sector partnership, this means identifying the public partners to attend and observe the launch meeting and setting expectations appropriately. Once the partnership has identified priorities for action, it means working with business leaders to pull in and engage additional support partners to help implement partnership priorities. For example, if the partnership is focused on outreach to high schools, the convener would work with partners in local school districts to identify the right points of contact within the targeted high schools.
  - Spreads the word about the sector partnership among public partners, encouraging them to actively participate and use the partnership as the “shared table” to collaborate with employers from the targeted sector.
- **Facilitates**
  - Strong facilitation is critical in helping business leaders identify common priorities, develop a shared agenda, and translate ideas into action. The convener facilitates partnership meetings without pushing an agenda; their role is to keep meetings productive, focused and on-task.

**Tip:** Ideally, you have an industry champ who can send out partnership updates directly to their peers. If that doesn't work, it's okay to send them on behalf of business leads. The e-mail itself can come from the convener's e-mail address, but start the e-mail off with, "On behalf of Jane Smith, Manufacturing Sector Partnership Co-Chair." That helps ensure you send the message that the partnership is business-led. This rule also applies to all Committee updates and requests.

### What Does it Take?

There is no single organization that is best positioned to convene a sector partnership. Across the country, successful sector partnerships are convened by Workforce Development Boards, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, Industry Associations, or Community Colleges. Many regions also



choose to identify two organizations to co-convene the partnership, assigning staff from two organizations to work together to convene a partnership. Whatever the arrangement, it's important that the convener has the following characteristics:

- **Trusted:** The convener must be trusted by businesses and public partners to serve as a neutral convener. They must be willing and fully trusted to set aside organizational interest for the interest of the partnership.
- **Facilitative:** The convener ensures the partnership stay focused and action-oriented, helping the group identify goals and practical steps that can be taken to achieve results. That doesn't mean that the convener pushes an agenda; instead, it means that the convener helps facilitate the group to discern shared priorities and action steps. It's important that the convener is able to strike this balance: supporting the group without directing it, and pushing for action without pushing an agenda.
- **Process-Oriented:** The convener is a champion of the next gen sector partnership model and process. The convener must have a strong enough understanding of the business-driven table that the sector partnership is working to achieve and champion the process to get there. It's particularly helpful if the convener sees their role and the sector partnership as a better way of doing business, rather than a special initiative or project.

### Roles & Tasks Through the Life Cycle of a Sector Partnership

- **Preparing to Launch**
  - **Role:** Ensure that all public partners are committed to the model and actively working towards the launch by recruiting business champions, setting launch date, sending invitation, and preparing logistics for the day of.
  - **Tasks:**
    - Work with other partners to recruit business champions who sign the invitation letter and host the first meeting
    - Work with others to build invitation list of business partners as well as public partners
    - Establish date and location for launch meeting
    - Draft two invitations: one for businesses and one for public partners, both signed by business leaders
    - Work with business champs to distribute invitations via email and/or snail mail
    - Follow up invitation with calendar invitation
    - Order any refreshments for the day-of
    - Work with business champions to send reminder emails



- Encourage business partners to have 1:1 conversations with invitees to encourage them to attend
- Make 1:1 phone calls, spread the word, and gain commitments for attendance
- Ensure the team has materials for launch: sign in sheet, table tents for names, markers, blue sticky wall or post-it notes
- **Launch:**
  - **Role:** The convener is the point person for the meeting going off without a “hitch” and also has positioned the public partners to be active listeners prepared to interpret industry priorities and develop responsive solutions as a team.
  - **Tasks:**
    - Ensure team sets up the room, has printed name tags, facilitation tools in place
    - Ensure someone is taking notes
    - Facilitate discussion to help the group identify shared opportunities, priorities for action, and make a call for champions.
    - Draft summary of launch meeting.
- **Organizing the Aftermath:**
  - **Role:** Help the partnership move from ideas to an action plan, forming business-led action teams around each priority area.
  - **Tasks:**
    - Distribute launch meeting summary within one week
    - Work with business leaders to organize first action team conference calls within 2-4 weeks of launch
    - Facilitate follow up conference calls and draft updated action plan based on the results. Share draft action plan with business leaders for their feedback.
    - Schedule next in-person partnership meeting and work with business champions to identify a location
    - Distribute invitations to the second in-person meeting to business leaders and public partners.
    - Begin to identify public partners that can be helpful in supporting the partnership’s priorities.
    - Ensure public partners are kept up-to-date on partnership progress by sharing updated action plans.
- **Sustaining and Evolving:**
  - **Role:** Provide ongoing project management and administrative support to the partnership, ensuring that action teams are adequately supported with public partners who are actively helping to implement



industry priorities and keeping a regular rhythm of partnership meetings (ideally quarterly) and communications.

- **Tasks:**
  - Bring in public partners to industry-led action teams to support implementation.
  - Keep action plans up-to-date in order to track progress, identify needed support, and communicate successes.
  - Regularly schedule action team and full partnership meetings.
  - Work with other partners to ensure the partnership has a sustainable support of administrative and staffing support, leveraging and braiding funding as needed.



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The Next Gen Sector Partnership staff, a team of four independent consultants—Lindsey Woolsey, John Melville, Francie Genz and Emily Lesh— collaborate to make the Next Gen sector partnership community of practice possible.

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