Work Inspiration Case Study: National Australia Bank

1. Pilot Name and Location
The National Australia Bank (NAB) pilot was located in their Melbourne headquarters.

2. Lead Employers and their Purpose
NAB is a leading Australian financial institution and corporate organisation. Supporting prosperous communities is seen as a responsibility at NAB. A crucial part of that commitment is to focus on those in the community that have ties to the education of young people. NAB is the founding corporate partner for Work Inspiration in Australia, and as such, was keen to pilot the program within its own organisation. NAB intends to use the pilot as a means of refining its plans to roll-out the program across its organisation.

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As a major employer and as an organisation with a high corporate social responsibility profile, NAB sees great sense and value in truly inspiring young people to think about their career pathways and bridge the gap between school and work.

3. Students and Schools Involved
Twelve students of mixed ability levels from two high schools participated in the pilot program. One of these schools was located in a low SES community. Due to sickness on day 2 and 3 only nine students completed the three-day pilot program.

4. Partnership Brokers and Evaluator
The NAB took responsibility for the evaluation of its own pilot program.
5. Pilot Summary
The three-day program comprised a mix of visits to three CBD sites, special challenges occurring within and outside the bank premises, group sessions in which students were able to talk about their own career interests and aspirations, conversations with NAB 2032 Graduate Program staff and other NAB personnel as well as a film making project. Student presentations about what they had learnt were made to all NAB personnel who had been involved and they presented the movies that the students had produced on iPad minis whilst participating over the three days. This three-day program sought to engage students through a range of settings and challenges. For example, one such challenge was for students to interview five strangers about ‘what success means to them’ and then incorporate their findings into their movie and feedback presentations to NAB personnel. Previously NAB had conducted a series of internal workshops and meetings for staff to input into the design of the pilot. In particular, NAB sought to engage younger staff, including recent graduates in this process of planning, given they would have a stronger connection to young people. NAB Education staff who had been recently involved in the development of the WI initiative were able to gain insights from their involvement. This informed the design of their pilot.

6. Key Successes and Success Factors

- The student evaluations revealed that 80% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their experience had:
  - Helped them to think about their careers
  - Inspired them with the range of options
  - Leant how careers develop

- Increased awareness of different options for future work
- Increased their motivation to do well at school.

"Meeting new people and getting some of their experiences, from what they thought to do, before they were in the work they now do."

"Finding out about all the different careers, and if you work hard enough, you can achieve your goals."

- The teacher strongly agreed that all these aspects were achieved, whilst the two NAB employees felt that the program had been a worthwhile experience which had inspired students in their career development.
- Whilst four students stated no preference, four students agreed (three strongly) that they would recommend WI over traditional work experience.
- Students enjoyed meeting NAB employees, and they were keen to learn from their career experiences and to find out about career opportunities. Two students felt that it could have gone for longer and one student would have preferred more than two schools to be involved.

- Further refinement may occur, for one or two students would have appreciated even more challenges and variety – this may stimulate further innovation for not only NAB, but for any other headquarter office that hosts a WI program for students. Such office-based pilots will also benefit from thorough school based selection procedures – are students participating to explore a career in the banking industry or in a related modern office environment? Can one program meet all these expectations?

- One integrated theme or topic of challenge for the students to analyse and comment on throughout their WI may be ‘How the world of technology and human creativity comes together’. The creative use of technology and the familiarity of young people to film and to social media used in the NAB pilot can mirror, even reinforce this theme of the modern office. As WI engages more corporate headquarters and large offices, such learnings will be particularly valuable for those lead employers.

7. Key Learnings
For next time: local application

- NAB will consider involving a larger pool of students in one program and integrate a stronger team or peer support approach to delivery. The career conversations and mentor matching can further be enhanced by the structuring of the students in pairs or small teams.
- NAB will continue to expose students to a base’ for the program’s duration.
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8. Special Feature

- The movie making aspect of this pilot is worthy of special mention. Not only did students enjoy the activity, they produced some insightful presentations on the last session of day three. Each student received a copy of their film as a record of their experience. If school teachers are more engaged in future programs, they could use the films as a resource for further reflection, and connect the workplace learning to their own career planning, and to their school career education programs.
- Making movies reflects the idea of an office being a hub of technology and human creativity. Using technology such as the iPad is consistent with young people’s strong familiarity with media as a means to acquire and communicate information, ideas and views on platforms such as social media.
9. Recommendations to National Partners

The WI campaign will be targeted to major corporations. Some of these businesses will respond to that invitation by conducting a pilot in their headquarters, generally an office setting. Bringing an office alive as an exciting and engaging learning place requires creative thinking. NAB’s was just one of the fourteen pilots that had to deal with such a challenge. To achieve this goal, WI should consider developing a concise resource pack of creative ideas for such corporations – the NAB experience can help to shape that pack!

10. Reflecting Upon the Evaluation

NAB has conducted a valuable pilot that is rich in learnings – especially for other WI projects and pilots located in a headquarters. The success of such a pilot is vital, as it is likely to strengthen the commitment of that large corporation to a future roll-out. Although a Partnership Broker helped NAB to access students from one school, NAB did not have access to a Partnership Broker or an equivalent resource to monitor the pilot, capture the rich learning and act as a critical partner.

The recommendation regarding the production of such a resource pack by the national partners may enable NAB staff and teachers, and perhaps two to three student representatives, to reflect and build upon this case study, and help them shape the resource for office-based WI pilots – a resource that can then be positioned on the WI website.