

Practical Strategies to Employment Development for People with Disabilities

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Challenges

- To begin with, I will like to hear some of the challenges that you face in connecting people to employments.

Focus

- The focus of this presentation is to hopefully provide some practical solutions to some of the challenges we face in connecting people to employment.
- I will do this by focusing on what employers want and how we can use that to our advantage.

Our Role as Job Connectors

- ◉ We need to see ourselves as salesmen/women and our goal is to sell the individuals/ students to companies. (not literally sell them, but sell their gifts and talents)

Networking

- ◉ Networking is extremely important when looking for job.
- ◉ Develop contacts---families, friends, neighbors, classmates, associations— anyone that can help generate job leads.
- ◉ Contact everyone you know---you might be surprise who they know.
- ◉ Bring it up in conversations with friends that you are trying to network.

Patronizing Local Business

- ◉ For example, even though I go to other stores to buy some of my foods, I go to the Italian center shop which is very close to my house.
- ◉ Local enterprise care more about their community because they live here as well. They are more likely to hire people with disabilities than companies like Superstores.

Research the Company/ Buisness

- Before going in to meet someone from the company, research them: Discover as much information about them as you can. Look at:
 - Company's website
 - Look at company's LinkedIn
 - Social media—Facebook, twitter, etc

Identify Shared Interest

- What does your organization have in common with the company? You should be able to find out these information when you are doing your research.
- For example, if a company said that one of their goal is creating a diverse work force, that might be something that you have in common with them.

Meet with Someone Important

- As you can see, the steps build on one another.
- After finding out what you have in common with the company, then you can call to ask if you can meet with.
- Hiring manager
- Or CEO if it is a small business

Sell Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities

- ◉ Return on investment---Businesses that hire people with disabilities turn social issues into business opportunities.
- ◉ Lower cost, higher revenues and increase profits.
- ◉ Marketing—people with disabilities and their allies are more likely to buy from companies that meet their needs.

Sell Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities

- Innovation—employees who have disabilities bring unique experiences that transform workplace which enhance products and services.
- For example, wall green needed to think of a creative ways of building their plants because they have people with different levels of abilities.

Variety of Work Experience

- Employers are looking for people who are flexible. As such, you have to present them with variety of job options.
- Full time
- Part time
- Permanent part time
- Shared Jobs

Observe the Culture

- You want to look at the culture of the business that you are looking to connect your students to. Is it going to be a good fit for the student? Is the student a good fit for the business? We look at things like: values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors shared by people in the organization.

Address their disability concern

- Many employers might say “we’ve already hire people with disabilities and it was unsuccessful and they are not going there again”
- Here is where your research comes in again.
- Tell them that: you have looked at all the requirement for the position and that the individual is able to complete their duties if hired.

Address their disability concern

- Let them know that if there is something that the individual can't do, that you will also be with them to help them with that.
- Let them know if there is any adjustment that need to be made, there is services that they can access for grants.

Present a solution to a need in the company

- How will hiring this individual benefit the company? Work around the company—find out what is not getting done in the company. Present your student as a solution for those things.
- For example, we know that in most restaurants, no one likes to do dishes. Is your student someone that love doing that type of job?

What employers want

- How will the individual add value to their organization? Remember that it is all about profit for businesses.
- Show them what experiences/skills the individual have relate to the position. Don't just tell them--- bring in a letter of recommendation from previous people they've helped, worked for or volunteered with.

What employers want

- Tell them about specific experiences that shows that the individual have some skills.
- For example, If I know that someone has a lot of experiences working in school volunteering, I will try to connect as much of those skills to the new job that we are trying to find.

Maximize relationship

- We want to stay in contact with these businesses to learn about the specific needs of the company. We need to constantly be thinking about how we can add value to the businesses.
- For example, if a company has a high turnover rate, we can show them experiences that shows dependability.

Senarios

- Emily works as a dining room attendant in a local fast-food restaurant. She greets customers, removes trays, and keeps the dining room clean and neat. Emily has a job coach, but the restaurant's assistant manager taught her to do her job. The restaurant's regular customers speak to her every day and ask about her when she misses work. The district manager knows her by name and has featured her in local advertising campaigns. When asked about this, the district manager says, "Emily represents the message our company wants to send to the customers in this area—friendly, courteous, hardworking employees."

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- Charles is a young man with autism who has worked as a courtesy clerk for a grocery store in his neighborhood for the past 3 years. When he first started this job, he had a tendency to ask customers extremely personal questions while taking their groceries to their automobiles. By the end of his second day, six different customers had registered complaints and his job seemed in jeopardy. However, the store manager himself had a brother with autism and as a result was sensitive to Charles's situation. For the next 2 weeks, the manager and a job coach spent 2 hours with Charles each day, modeling appropriate interactions with customers and introducing him to his co-workers. As a result of the manager's intense involvement, Charles survived his shaky start and became a "model employee," a favorite of the customers and co-workers alike.

References

- ◉ <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/251/251.pdf>
- ◉ <http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/content/addressing-any-employer-concerns>
- ◉ <http://www.worksupport.com/research/viewContent.cfm/198>