

# **Basics of Business Engagement**

**Innovations in Employment Supports**

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**Table 1. Summary of Strategies Used by ESPs in our Sample**

<b>Developing and Maintaining Relationships</b>		
<b>ESPs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in business networks (i.e. Chamber of Commerce)</li> <li>• Host employer open houses</li> <li>• Organize employer recognition events</li> <li>• Maintain electronic database to track employer contacts</li> <li>• Send thank-you cards and holiday cards</li> <li>• Maintain contacts with employers after job has ended</li> </ul>		
<b>Pre-Employment</b>	<b>Job Placement</b>	<b>Post-Placement</b>
<b>ESPs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patronize local businesses</li> <li>• Network with former employees</li> <li>• Network with colleagues (including other agencies)</li> <li>• Research the company and conduct informational interviews</li> <li>• Identify shared interests/develop personal connections</li> <li>• Try to meet with CEO or other key personnel (i.e. hiring manager, HR staff)</li> <li>• Learn and use business language</li> <li>• Sell the benefits of hiring people with disabilities</li> <li>• Suggest variety of work experience options (i.e. part-time, shared job, internships)</li> <li>• Provide information on tax credits &amp; financial incentives</li> </ul>	<b>ESPs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe the workplace environment ; Look for positive office culture and diversity</li> <li>• Conduct cold calls; timed appropriately to meet with employers and key personnel</li> <li>• Persist in contacting businesses; wait for staff turnovers</li> <li>• Take a personal approach to employers (ex: complimenting someone on their appearance; search for personal commonalities)</li> <li>• Emphasize employee's support network</li> <li>• Address employer's disability-related concerns and need for disclosure</li> <li>• Assist with accommodations</li> <li>• Present a solution to an identified business need (ex: high turnover)</li> <li>• Prepare employer for job coaches' role</li> <li>• Job develop for generic vs. specific jobs</li> <li>• Provide testimonials</li> <li>• Sell agency &amp; services</li> <li>• Sell person with disability</li> <li>• Look for new businesses</li> <li>• Look for small businesses</li> </ul>	<b>ESPs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up/assist with job coaching</li> <li>• Remain accessible and available</li> <li>• Facilitate natural supports</li> <li>• Assist with job termination (if required)</li> <li>• Provide ongoing support for identifying workplace accommodations and supports</li> <li>• Problem solve around employee performance problems</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Employer Perspectives on the Employment Process**

<b>Developing and Maintaining Relationships</b>		
<p><b>Employers want:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information/clarity about scope of agencies' services, supports</li> <li>• Information on the benefits to the business' bottom line</li> <li>• Attract broader customer base</li> <li>• Meet the needs of growing global and diverse markets</li> <li>• Recognition as being socially responsible</li> <li>• Education, preparation and training (informal learning) that is timely with focus on real workplace activities</li> <li>• Access to experts and trusted, credible sources of information/data related to disability employment (i.e. cost of accommodations, the laws/equal opportunities, tax incentives)</li> </ul>		
<b>Recruiting</b>	<b>Hiring</b>	<b>Advancing</b>
<p><b>Employers value:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attaining visible top management commitment</li> <li>• Demonstrating how applicants add value to the business</li> <li>• Using testimonials to document performance</li> <li>• Demonstrate how the applicant will adding value to the bottom line</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employers value:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of applicant performance</li> <li>• Testimonials from other senior personnel regarding hiring issues</li> <li>• Employees with previous work experience</li> <li>• Disclosure information that is credible and linked to accommodations and performance</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Party assistance / support (e.g., job accommodations, customized solutions)</li> <li>• Hiring solutions, not hiring needs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employers value:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance with performance appraisals &amp; assessments</li> <li>• Follow-up communication</li> <li>• Coaching and support for supervisors</li> <li>• Reducing staff turnover</li> <li>• Return on investment</li> <li>• Information/resources on disability policies and accommodations</li> </ul>

## HUMAN SERVICE TO BUSINESS LANGUAGE

HUMAN SERVICE TERMINOLOGY	BUSINESS TERMINOLOGY
Community Rehab Program/Org. Mental Health Program/Org.	Employment Agency Employment Services Organization
Clients, Consumers, "My people"	Job Candidates            Job Seekers Human Resources        Applicants Potential Employees    Talent/Talent Pool
Job Coach, Job Developer	Recruitment Specialist, Employment Consultant
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	Employment Counselor or Career Counselor
Supported/Community Employment Services	Employment Services
Job Development	Recruitment Assistance or Assistance finding applicants/employees, Assistance with sourcing candidates, Assistance with hiring/staffing, Assistance with talent acquisition efforts
Job Analysis	Identifying job tasks and functions
Vocational Assessment Community Based Assessment Situational Assessment	Determination of work skills and career interests Job Shadowing Internship (or short-term internship) Work Experience
Job Matching	Matching skills, qualifications and "fit"
Job Placement Placing People	Assisting employers/businesses to find quality/qualified candidates (employees)
Job Modification Assistive Technology/Devices Job Accommodations Reasonable Accommodations	Tools/strategies to help an employee perform their job Enhancements to help employee productivity ("accommodation" is not the most favorable term in the business world)
Universal Design	Modifications that can benefit everyone (employees, customers, etc.)
Job Carving/Customized Employment	Job Restructuring, Streamlining duties (businesses see these as accommodations)
Job Coaching	Post-hire follow-up services, Retention Support
Social Integration	Opportunities meet/interact with co-workers
Natural Supports	Training and co-worker support offered by the employer
Job coaching, job counseling, modifications, intervention, site visits, fading, follow-along	Job Retention Services and Support, Ongoing consultation and support
The Employer, My Employer, Placement Sites, Assessment Sites	Name of Company
Assistance with finding candidates, support through the hiring process/orientation, connecting with co-workers, support learning tasks/processes, support with acclimating to work environment and culture, support routine evaluation and feedback on new employee performance	Supporting the company with the onboarding process

## PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Understand your organization, its placement goals, and other performance objectives. Know its target industries, employers, and jobs—and what you can offer.
- Know what your organization expects of YOU, including its goals for your performance and how your performance will be monitored and measured. For example:
  - Number of job orders from new and/or repeat employer customers you generate
  - Number of job seekers you interview
  - Number of job seekers you place
  - Number of job holders you place who are employed for 30, 60, 90, or 180 days
- Find out what employers think of your organization—the good news and the bad. Know how your organization answers objections to hiring its job seekers. Arm yourself with statistics and testimonials that will convince employers to do business with you.
- Develop and internalize your own sales pitch. Don't appeal for jobs on a humanitarian basis. Emphasize the services you can provide. Use business language, not agency jargon.
- Research likely employers: those who can benefit most from your services and those who can provide the most benefits to your organization. Decide who to contact first and who to approach later.
- Identify the most effective way to make an initial contact: by telephone, letter, email, or in person.
- Schedule a block of time to make specific calls or visits.

*Job Development Essentials: A Guide for Job Developers*, Laura Wyckoff, Carol Clymer, pg. 14

## **EDUCATING YOURSELF**

### **LEARN THE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF YOUR AGENCY**

- ▶ Read every scrap of written material about your organization, including its history, mission statement, staff and participant training materials, reports to key funders, marketing brochures, the organization's newsletters, and relevant articles in local newspapers.
- ▶ Talk with your manager, fellow job developers, and the job seekers to learn about what your organization does, who it serves, and how.
- ▶ Glean statistics that demonstrate successful placements. Memorize success stories.

### **UNDERSTAND ITS STRATEGY**

- ▶ Understand the organization's strategy for marketing itself to employers.
- ▶ Know which industries, employers, and jobs it targets.
- ▶ Understand how your organization describes its work to job seekers, funders, and employers.

### **COMMIT TO ITS GOALS**

- ▶ Understand your organization's goals and its performance. Know how many people it places each month, quarter, or year. Get a handle on recent placement rates, retention rates, new employers, and repeat customers served—or other performance measures.
- ▶ Know what the organization expects of you: how many employers you are expected to contact, how many job orders or placements you are expected to generate daily, weekly, or monthly.
- ▶ Offer your input on goal setting.

### **KNOW YOUR PART**

- ▶ Find out how job development is coordinated; for example, find out who contacts which employers.

- ▶ Know which employers your colleagues are working with and never poach on their territory. Let them know which employers you are contacting.
- ▶ Know how job development relates to other parts of the organization, for example, intake, training, case management, support services, or administration. Know what you should do to make this relationship work smoothly.

### **THINK AHEAD**

- ▶ Anticipate objections that employers may have to hiring your job seekers or to doing business with your organization. Plan how to meet these objections with accurate information and evidence of past success.

*Job Development Essentials: A Guide for Job Developers*, Laura Wyckoff, Carol Clymer, pg. 15

## ***Determining NEEDS, Offering SERVICES***

✓ *“How does your company recruit?”*

✓ *“What’s most difficult about hiring for your entry-level positions?”*

✓ *“Is your company having a high level of turnover in your hourly wage jobs?”*

✓ *“What are the most common reasons for terminating employees?”*

<b>As you listen, ask yourself</b>	<b>Then say something like this</b>
How can my organization fit in? How can I make the current process work better for this employer?	<p><i>“We’d like to be one of those employment agencies that send you referrals. Our service may, in fact, be better for you because it is free, and our referrals are prescreened to meet your specific requirements.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p><i>“Having current employees refer others is obviously a good way to recruit people who can work well together. I’d be sending you team players too—they’ve demonstrated that during their training.”</i></p>
How can I make this easier for this employer?	<i>“I’d like to talk with your shift managers and get a good idea about who they want to hire. That way when I send people, you’ll know they’re a good match.”</i>
How can I help solve the problem?	<i>“As you know, people are more likely to stay when they know what they are doing and feel good about it. One strategy we’ve found effective is to offer a workshop to managers on communication style. Is that something that might interest you?”</i>
How can I set reasonable expectations while assuring the employer I can help?	<i>“Well, I can’t guarantee that my referrals won’t slip up now and again, just as you’ve described other employees doing. But my folks have been consistently on time during training and they’re ready to work. However, if you have a problem with someone I send, call me and I can help work it out.”</i>



# Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project

## Q&A on CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

### Informational Interviews

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The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Employment of People with Physical Disabilities conducted a series of focus groups with recognized national experts and implementers of customized employment. The objective of this qualitative research was to develop a description of customized employment that agencies can use when supporting individuals with disabilities. Twenty-eight professionals representing national experts and implementers of customized employment participated. The calls were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify themes associated with customized employment implementation. The research provides insight into the practices that are associated with customized employment that facilitate integrated employment outcomes. This “Customized Employment Topics” focuses on informational interviewing as reported by these participants. ◆

#### Question: What is an information interview?

Answer: An informational interview is a business term that is being used to describe an essential element of customized employment. The purpose of an informational interview is to learn about a potential career. It is an information seeking process. An individual who wants to learn more about a chosen field identifies people who are willing to talk about their careers or jobs. When used as a customized employment practice, the focus is on getting to know a business in a similar way that discovery focuses on getting to know a job seeker.

Informational interviews are informal conversations with people who work in the area or career of interest. They may help the job seeker and the employment specialist learn more about how the person’s interests and skills may meet the needs of business. One focus group of implementers discussed how informational interviewing can guide people who support the job seeker to focus on a specific individual’s interests. When asked how customized employment differs from other approaches to finding people with disabilities a job, one participant in the group stated the following: ◆

*I think that the way we approach employers is completely different.... this whole approach of informational interviewing and not assuming you know what an employer does.... but actually getting in there and learning about businesses.*

#### Question: How do you identify businesses where you can conduct informational interviews?

Answer: Businesses are selected, because they represent a specific job seeker’s interests or “vocational themes.” In other words, a business is selected for an informational interview based on what was learned about a specific job seeker during discovery. Discovery considers who the individual is first, and then businesses are identified where informational interviews can be conducted. Typically, job developers have approached job development by canvassing businesses to find available jobs. Then, they review the individuals on their caseloads and decide who might be interested in that type of work. One participant described this by saying the following: ◆

*[Informational interviews are] really focused on [a specific] person and their interests. Because what we’ve found when we used traditional job development was that, you know ..... they would then pick the person at the top of their list that they viewed as having the most skills, and that person always getting the job.....So by using this process, it’s really about that person and gathering information that’s going to benefit that individual job-seeker versus did I find a job here that I can plug somebody into.*

## **Question:** What are vocational themes?

**Answer:** Vocational themes are areas of interest for a job seeker that guide a job search. They should be broad such as a transportation theme versus cars, which facilitates brainstorming more broadly on possible businesses to target. A list of places where people work in the community that have an interest in a specific theme is then generated. One participant stated: ◆

*So these themes are general ideas not really specific. They are broad in nature, and with those themes in mind you go through the process of brainstorming a list, of ideally for each theme,....places for where there could be something, not specific job duties, but where there may be some kind of work along the lines of the person's skills and strengths.*

Social capital is a way to identify businesses on behalf of a specific job seeker. Social capital are resources acquired from interactions between people or networks of people. Employment specialists may use their own social capital to identify businesses and should not forget that the family and friends of the job seeker have social capital as well. This extends to coworkers within an agency or other social networks that people belong to in their communities. These connections create opportunities to learn more about potential work within businesses. Two different participants in the focus groups described using social capital in this way: ◆

*One of his themes is culinary, cooking, and we've done some things with him. ....I have a friend whose father owns a food truck..... So, I reached out to my friend and I asked him if it would be OK if I brought \_\_\_\_\_ by to meet his father, it's an informational interview.... and it was just me happening to know someone who had something. So that is social capital.*



*I went to one church [where] I happened to know the pastor, [and] started talking about this woman's interest ....talking about what she can do, very slow, data entry...She drove her electric chair by joy stick but not very well so she kind of needed very large halls and to not bump into people and things. Anyhow, the pastor identified that they were in the process of transferring all the information onto the computer of their history. He didn't care how quickly it went, but he needed it done....unbeknownst to me, she went to that church and the pastor remembered her. She got hired.*

## **Question:** Do you have any suggestions on how to conduct an informational interview?

**Answer:** Think about an informational interview as a conversation with an employer to learn more about the work that is done at the business. The employment specialist is not going into the business to ask about available jobs. The goal is to gain information on the types of work that employees complete in order to determine if a specific job seeker's vocational goals potentially match the business. Two different participants in the focus groups described an informational interview this way.

*One We avoid the whole:  
I'm here for a job discussion and just get to know the business better.*



*Working with employers [is] a very different approach. It begins from the idea that.....I want to learn about your business. Not, I'm here, because I want you to hire somebody. So you're going in some sort of sense talking about the unknown. I don't know what I'm going to find. You are on a mission to learn and so then with that approach you gather information.*

Developing a set of questions to guide the conversation can be helpful. Questions should be open ended requiring a response from the individual using information that he or she has. In contrast, closed ended questions are ones that can be answered with "yes" or "no", which usually do not facilitate a conversation. However, it is not recommended to use a checklist of questions by going down the list and writing down the answers. This type of exchange may inhibit the conversation. Take a few notes on what is discussed if needed but pay attention to the conversation rather than writing down everything that is said. The following table provides some suggestions for questions. Employment specialists should modify these using their own words so that the discussion flows naturally. ◆

**What are you the most proud of in your business operations?**

**What keeps your business operating smoothly?**

- Probe questions:
  - Can you think of anything that would improve the workflow in your business?
  - Are there times of day when the workflow does not go smoothly? What would improve the situation?

**Is there a product or service that you would like to provide that you aren't currently?**

- Probe questions:
  - What is limiting/keeping you from providing \_\_\_\_\_ (state the product or service)?
  - Do you have a target date for when for providing \_\_\_\_\_ (state the product or service)?

**What is innovative about your business?**

- Probe questions:
  - Who is leading the innovations?
  - What resources do you need to continue \_\_\_\_\_ (state the innovation that the employer has described.)

**How are you making improvements at your business?**

- Probe questions:
  - Who is leading the improvements?
  - What resources do you need to continue \_\_\_\_\_ (state the improvements that the employer has described.)

**What plans do you have to grow your business?**

- Probe question:
  - What is your biggest barrier to growing your business?
  - How can the barrier be removed or reduced?

**What are the stressors that you or your employees are experiencing?**

- Probe question:
  - Can you think of ways that the stress could be reduced?

**Question:** Do you have any other ideas on how to prepare for an informational interview?

Answer: Employment specialists can learn about a business in many different ways before conducting an informational interview. Obviously, if someone has recommended a company, then asking that person questions about the business operations is a good idea. Researching information online is also another way to learn more about the business's products or services. Appearing interested and knowing something about the company before going there can make everyone more at ease in an unfamiliar situation. In addition, an employer may be impressed if the job seeker and employment specialist can discuss the business in a knowledgeable way. One participant talked about how he/she liked to learn more about a business before conducting an informational interview. ◆

*Before I do my informational interview, a lot of times I like to go in kind of as a secret shopper, to actually go in as a customer if possible. I think the businesses always appreciate you buying their goods or using their services. Also, it really kind of gives me an idea of what's going on in the business and if there are maybe places where they could improve..... I would know it first hand and be able to talk about that in the informational interview or to ask questions about those specific tasks that maybe I didn't see getting done or that needed more attention.*

**Answer:** Sometimes moving from learning about a business to additional job site observations or job development occurs naturally. The employment specialist might ask if the job seeker can come in to observe or participate in a work experience. An employer may be willing to have the job seeker shadow an employee who is completing work that the person may be interested in doing. Once the employment specialist learns about the business operations, he or she can make suggestions on how a specific job seeker may contribute to the workplace. If there are no opportunities in this particular business, employers may be able to recommend other employers or workplaces where job development could occur. Three different participants described this by saying the following: ♦

*Just going out and spending time together with employers, or potential employers. And much of the time we end up having an employer actually offer to do a job shadow community-based work assessment.*



*So, we found an employer where we were able to do an informational interview, and the employer was highly responsive. So we went in, and we spent about an hour getting advice and hearing about the industry and hearing what was new. And, things went really well. Then, we asked if we could bring this gentleman back for what we talked about.....and get his hands dirty.*



*And, so you have some details [and] come to the point there is a match. Then, you are able to negotiate in a way that presents this win-win strategy, which is this: “I see you have this need, and this person could help you fill this need. Let’s talk about how that could work.” It comes from a position equally beneficial to everybody involved. You could only get there by beginning with learning all about the employers your first step is one of being open gathering information not one of I am here to find a job.*

## Resources

3 Steps to a Perfect Informational Interviewing:

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-steps-to-a-perfect-informational-interview>

Informational Interviewing -- <https://career.berkeley.edu/Info/InfoInterview>

Social Capital -- <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/socialcapital.asp>

Employer Engagement Strategies and Effective Job Development: A Multidimensional Approach -- Presenter: Nancy Brooks-Lane -- <https://pd.vcurrctc.org/training/webcastDetails.cfm/358>

## Acknowledgments



Visit us at: <https://drrp.vcurrctc.org/>

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## WHAT BENEFITS DO YOUR PROGRAMS HAVE TO OFFER EMPLOYERS?

<b>1.</b> An ongoing pool of pre-screened applicants
<i>Need(s) met:</i>
<b>2.</b> The ability to facilitate a strong job match (based on candidate assessment and job / workplace analysis)
<i>Need(s) met:</i>
<b>3.</b> Assistance with recruiting / sourcing of candidates at no cost
<i>Need(s) met:</i>
<b>4.</b> Cost savings from reduced turnover in entry level positions
<i>Need(s) met:</i>
<b>5.</b> Assistance with solving unaddressed problems
<i>Need(s) met:</i>
<b>6.</b> Assistance and support with training a new hire
<i>Need(s) met:</i>

<p><b>7.</b> Consulting on job site accommodations, job carving, job restructuring or job creation</p>
<p><i>Need(s) met:</i></p>
<p><b>8.</b> Assistance with updating employee training (new role/ responsibilities) and with employee relations issues</p>
<p><i>Need(s) met:</i></p>
<p><b>9.</b> Support with writing or updating a job description</p>
<p><i>Need(s) met:</i></p>
<p><b>10.</b> Customized training on topics such as disability awareness, accommodations, natural supports and the ADA</p>
<p><i>Need(s) met:</i></p>
<p><b>11.</b> Access to tax credits when candidates are hired as well as assistance with paperwork required</p>
<p><i>Need(s) met:</i></p>

# Job Coaching Services and Benefits to Businesses and People with Disabilities

December 2007

Virginia Board for  
People  
with Disabilities

Many individuals with significant disabilities who have been unable to secure employment or to maintain employment have achieved employment success by securing services from a Job Coach. Job Coaching services have been so successful in working with people with significant disabilities many community programs such as welfare to work, Veterans, older workers, transition, and others have begun to utilize the talents and skills of job coaches.

One unique arena for job coaching services has been the Americans with Disabilities Act. Employers are asked to examine possible accommodations to assist their efforts to recruit and hire people with disabilities and a potential accommodation available to them often is job coaching services. Some businesses have started offering co-worker job coaching as well as reaching out to community programs in an effort to advance the employment of people with disabilities people on the worksite.

## KEY POINTS

### What is a Job Coach?

A Job Coach is known by several professional titles such as employment specialist, job trainer, job consultant, and staffing specialist. He or she may come from a variety of backgrounds to include teaching, rehabilitation, or business and be responsible for assisting an individual with a disability in obtaining a job by creating a positive job match; maintaining a job through on-site assistance and other workplace supports; and advancing careers with career development. In many cases the job coach will spend time at the workplace to learn the job duties and industry standard and then assist the new employee to build proficiency over time.

### What are Job Coach Services?

Job coaches do a variety of duties in the course of assisting someone both on and off the job site. Below is a list of duties for a typical job coach.

- ◆ Gathers assessment data and assisting the person with a disability to develop a list of interests and potential skills.
- ◆ Gathers employment information by doing job analyses at business sites in order to match a person with a position.
- ◆ Provides one to one training on a job site.
- ◆ Provides job retention services to the employer and person with disability.
- ◆ Maintains evaluation data for performance reporting.

### Who do Job Coaches Support?

Job Coaches supports both the individual with a disability as well as the employer. These are the primary customers for a job coach. However, they will interact and provide consultation services to parents, community funding agencies, other community support programs.

## What supports do Job Coaches provide?

Supports will vary from person to person and it is the role of a job coach to provide some or all of the following supports for an individual.

- ◆ advocacy
- ◆ identification of interests and skills,
- ◆ identification of possible accommodations
- ◆ job development and marketing services to businesses
- ◆ one to one on site job coach to model behaviors and provide actual job training
- ◆ provide on-going job follow-up and retention services

## Who pays for Job Coach Services?

Funding sources of supported employment services are varied. Many programs who employ job coaches have been approved to be a vendor of services for the state Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. In addition, Mental Health & Mental Retardation state and local programs will provide funding for Supported Employment services to community rehabilitation providers. Programs such as Medicaid Waivers, Social Security Work Incentives and foundation funds are also available for use in funding job coaches.

## What questions do Businesses have regarding Job Coaches?

Businesses have many questions for job coaches. Some of the typical questions a job coach can expect to be asked by a representative from a business are:

- ◆ Who pays for the time and services of a job coach?
- ◆ Who is liable if a job coach gets hurt at the work site?
- ◆ How long will the job coach be on-site?
- ◆ Can the agency provide a background check on the job coach?
- ◆ What is the person's disability?
- ◆ How will I train a person with a disability?
- ◆ How can I accommodate a person with a disability and is it expensive?
- ◆ Who can help me with the cost of an accommodation?
- ◆ What happens if the person is not successful here at the job?

Job Coaches can expect to hear these as well as other questions from employers and should be prepared with answers.

## What are the benefits to Businesses who utilize Job Coaches?

Businesses want to know if they invest in a program which offers training from a job coach will help to increase their bottom line and productivity. Hiring people with disabilities is an investment for an employer as it is with their recruitment and hiring of all personnel. Therefore it is important to share the benefits with the employer. Here are some!

- ◆ Job Coaches reduce the time it takes businesses to locate workers by giving the business access to a pool of pre-screened candidates.
- ◆ The up-front work of a Job Coach will complement the screening and hiring process of the business.
- ◆ Training and staff support from the Job Coach will dovetail with the style of the company. The job coach will ensure this continues until the new employee is completely up to speed.
- ◆ Job Coaches can assist with the identification of other accommodations for the company and be a resource for their diversity efforts.
- ◆ Job Coaches can assist the employer with possible tax credits such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Disabled Access Tax Credit for small businesses.
- ◆ Job Coaches will be at the business to provide on-going supports and job retention services.

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

- ◆ [http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh/vocrehab\\_manual/08-38\\_Job%20Coaching.htm](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh/vocrehab_manual/08-38_Job%20Coaching.htm)
- ◆ <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/careertransition/crtnjobc.htm#job>
- ◆ <http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/fsds/ada/jobcoach.html>
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#2

Quick  
Facts

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# Realities of Hiring People with Disabilities: Myths & Facts -- Problems & Solutions

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Many businesses ask, and are concerned about the cost of hiring someone with a disability to work in their company. There are many misconceptions on this issue and this fact sheet will allow you to have information about the realities of hiring someone with a disability.

## Myths & Facts

**Myth:** It is expensive to accommodate workers with disabilities.

■ **Fact:** Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network have shown that 59% of accommodations cost nothing, and 36% said a one time cost was involved with a medium cost of \$500. Findings from ODEP JAN Study (9/30/2018) "Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost High Impact"

**Myth:** Most employers think it is difficult to provide accommodations to workers with disabilities.

■ **Fact:** The majority of employers who had made accommodations found that the median cost of the accommodation was \$300. Benefits included retaining a valuable employee and increased productivity.

**Myth:** Employees with disabilities will use more sick leave and won't be as productive as other employees.

■ **Fact:** Employees with disabilities have the same absentee and sick rates as non-disabled employees. Industry reports consistently rate workers with disabilities as average or above average in performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility to demands, attendance and safety.

**Myth:** Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thus making them a bad employment risk.

■ **Fact:** In 2010, Hernandez and McDonald found that job performance was similar for employees with and without disabilities working in health care, retail, and hospital-ity. Brooke and colleagues (2018), in a review of the employment records of 139 individuals with autism, found that 104 achieved stable long-term employment, with a majority of those receiving only minimal long-term support.

## Problems & Solutions

**Problem:** An assembler for a furniture manufacturer has spinal degeneration, uncoordinated gait, and balance difficulties. The limitations involve walking, carrying materials, and balancing.

■ **Solution:** Installing a plywood platform to raise part of the work station, suspending tools from the ceiling to balance their weight and using a cart to move assembly parts. Cost: \$200



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**Problem:** A greenhouse worker with an intellectual disability has difficulty staying on task and knowing when to take breaks.

■ **Solution:** At no cost to the employer, a job coach provided initial training. The worker then set reminders on his phone to stay on task and indicated break time. He also carried a set of laminated cards which showed the basic list of tasks to be completed. Cost: \$50

**Problem:** A worker with traumatic brain injury (TBI) is employed at a bank, processing checks and other transactions. Items must be numbered and placed into a sorting matching tray in a special manner. The problem is periodic confusion due to memory loss and weakness in one side of his body.

■ **Solution:** A job coach/trainer supplied by the rehabilitation agency assists in special training in task sequencing, and equipment is adjusted to accommodate weakness. Cost: \$0

**Problem:** A computer service technician with cerebral palsy loses function of the lower extremities. The job related problems include bending, stooping, balancing, and getting underneath the mainframe equipment to perform needed repairs.

■ **Solution:** An automotive repair creeper is purchased and modified with back support to enable the employee to slide easily under the mainframes. Cost: \$30

**Problem:** A radio broadcaster/announcer who is blind needs to read the AP wire news desk material.

■ **Solution:** The employer connected a Braille printer to the incoming news service, and installed a switch to move from regular printed material to Braille. Cost: \$1,700

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## Helpful Hints

### Get executive commitment

- Having commitment from the top sends a clear message to senior management about the seriousness and business relevance of this issue. Also, top-down commitment will reinforce the desired outcomes and assist in conveying the expectation of cooperation, involvement and commitment on the part of senior management and their staff.

### Incorporate disability into existing diversity committees

- This group is usually composed of a vertical and horizontal cross-section of the organization and can help analyze assessment data and make recommendations to top management.

### Design relevant, interactive applicable training

- The purpose of good training is to not just increase awareness and understanding about disability, but to also develop concrete skills that employees can use. Starting with awareness training and advancing to knowledge training and training that builds specific skills is common.

### Ensure integration

- Integrate the concepts, skills and results of your disability efforts into the fabric of the organization.

### Partnerships

- There are a number of organizations that can assist your company in the successful integration of people with disabilities into your workforce.

If you have questions  
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