Creating a Culture of Excellence in Your Organization

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What does “excellence” look like in an organization that provides employment services for people with disabilities?
Warming Up (Part II)

What are some barriers and challenges to achieving excellence in employment in your organization?
The Diversity Partners Mission

The current path for job seeker with disabilities

Diversity Partners

The ideal path for job seekers with disabilities
What employers told us...

We would rather pay a lot for something we know is going to be good than get a bad time waster for free.
The Bottom Line

• A Transcen, Inc. technical report found a disparity between what employers say they want and what job developers are doing.

• 80% of employers surveyed found the most persuasive recruitment strategy is demonstrating how job developers address the BOTTOM LINE.

-Simonsen, Fabian, Buchanan, and Luecking, 2011
What Is Diversity Partners?
The WHY

1. Employment service professionals are the bridge

2. The bridge needs repair

3. Together, we will repair the bridge
What’s our process?
A Basic Premise
“But they don’t understand what we do!”

- Frontline Employment Service Professional
The Synergy

Organizational Leadership

Frontline Staff
“The Toolboxes”

Leadership
• Focused on planning and strategies
• Organizational structure
• Facilitators guides
• Conversation guides
• Action planning tools

Frontline
• Videos
• Worksheets
• Case Scenarios
• Assessments
• Discussion guides
• Resources
Frontline Toolbox
21 learning modules in 6 topical areas

1. Getting to Know the Jobseeker
2. Preparing the Jobseeker for the Workforce
3. Understanding Disability at Work
4. Building Relationships with Employers
5. Sustaining Relationships with Employers
6. Navigating Complex Systems
Leadership Toolbox
5 Topical Areas

1. Work and Disability: Past, Present, and Future
2. Serving Job Seekers with Disabilities
3. Leveraging your System: Engaging Your Service Network
4. Partnering with Employers and Business
5. Building Organizational Capacity: Enhancing Effective Structures for Learning, Culture and Change
The tendency of organizations to revert to a kind of "regression to the mean" tends to blunt the kinds of penetrating truths that are needed for progress.

-Michael Kendrick, 2001
Scenario: Discussion Questions

1. What approach to change did the organization take?

2. What impact did the organization’s mindset have on staff and people receiving services?

3. What is the impact of the organization’s decisions?
Scenario 1: *Status Quo Services, Inc.*

*Status Quo Services, Inc.* has been operating a sheltered workshop that employs people with disabilities for decades. New referrals have declined as a result of impending rules regarding integrated settings for employment, and new rules limiting the use of subminimum wage under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Worried about a decline in enrollment and revenue, the staff and leadership at *Status Quo* have been assuring workshop employees and their families that they will continue to fight to keep the doors open. They point out that it is still technically permissible to operate a workshop and pay less than minimum wage, and they will make sure that the workshop is still an option for people with disabilities in their community.

They’ve decided to put off discussions about what a workshop transformation might entail, and instead have focused their energy on creating policies to ensure that they will be able to be technically compliant with all state and federal laws, while continuing to employ people in the workshop at sub-minimum wage.
Scenario 2: Employment Solutions

Employment Solutions began shifting their services away from segregated, facility-based models several years ago, closing their sheltered workshop in 2005. They knew that research and information about the best outcomes for people with disabilities all pointed to the need for greater community integration.

When their state began a shift toward “Employment First” policy goals for people with disabilities several years later, and federal regulations regarding integrated settings for people with disabilities began to change, Employment Solutions was ready. Over the years, staff who previously worked in segregated programs had been retrained to provide community-based supports, and some developed expertise in competitive integrated employment.

Staff welcomed the opportunity to develop new skills, and felt empowered to help design and initiate new programs, like a community-based day habilitation program in which all participants were actively working on goals related to skills for employment.
Key Concepts (frontline module 6.1)

• Frontline Staff as **Street-Level Bureaucrats**: Key players in the implementation of new policies and regulations

• *Can make or break* change processes in an organization

• SLB happen when organizations make choices about how to structure programs and staff make choices in their everyday work that impact the quality and availability of services

• **Fixed vs. Growth Mindset!** Our mindset related to change can make the difference between moving forward, getting stuck, or giving up

Leadership Topic

Creating Excellence in Serving Job Seekers with Disabilities
Defining Expectations

A job seeker who works with my organization can expect...?
Setting the stage for success

• Raising Expectations of staff, providers, family members, employers, and ourselves!

• Aligning the job seeker’s expectations
Defining expectations...

• How do funders define success?
• Are middle class/living wage jobs encouraged?
• Are job seekers being educated about the local marketplace & job-driven opportunities?
• How are services defined?
What is the “Charity Model” of Disability?

• Message it sends: People with disabilities deserve our pity

• People with disabilities are *victims* who *suffer* and are *afflicted*

• Creates a culture of caretaking and “custodialism”
The importance of training staff:

• The Importance of Social Capital
• Approaching the Topic of Disclosure
• Requesting and Negotiating Accommodations
• Jobseeker Engagement
• Apprenticeship and Training for People with Disabilities
Leadership Topic

Partnering with Employers and Business

✓ Effective & Sustainable Partnerships
✓ Paths to Success For Jobseeker With Disabilities
Building & Sustaining Effective Business Partnerships

*Other than job placement*, what knowledge and skills can you/your organization offer to employers? How else do you add value to a business partnership?
Reality Check

The job of an employment service professional is to understand business needs and offer solutions.
Why do employers want to work with you?

• Access to talent who can meet their organizational needs
• Information on how disability might impact work
• Assistance with identifying potential accommodations for their employees
• Realizing the benefits of an inclusive workforce
Leveraging Business Partnerships to Include PWDs:

• Build pathways and create pipelines of talent including PWD to meet workforce needs.
• Offer work-based learning, internships and on-the-job training opportunities.
• Partner on job-driven training programs by guiding curriculum, integrating hands-on work experience and fostering industry sector opportunities.
The importance of training staff:

• Assessing Employer Needs
• Perception is Reality: Building your professional identity
• Industry and Sector Expertise
• Enhancing Your Value to Employers
• Partnership & Business-led Coalitions
Leadership Topic

Building Organizational Capacity: Enhancing Effective Structures for Learning, Culture and Change

✓ Organizational capacity building
✓ Planful growth and development
✓ Strategies to support growth and development
What is Capacity Building?

• improving organizational systems, structures and activities

• enhancing an organization’s ability to achieve its mission

• sustainability over time

• thriving against competitors

Adapted from National Council of Non-Profits, 2016
Capacity building ...

• Is an investment in the future of the organization
• Helps to ensure ownership, improved organizational services, and a sense of common purpose
• Increases capacity to respond to change, solve problems, and learn
The Diversity Partners Mission

The current path for job seeker with disabilities

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Moving Forward: The Ideal Pathway

What skills must an organization—and its staff-- develop in order to enhance its capacity to serve job seekers with disabilities and employers?
Status Quo Inc. will...

...understand employer needs and the specific requirements of certain industries

...lead with talking about talent instead of leading with work incentives

...look beyond individual placements to build sustained relationships with employers

...help staff gain the skills they need to successfully engage with business

...engage with industry at the local and regional levels

...be proactive—instead of reactive—by planning ahead and embracing change
Now, Later, Never

Name one thing you can do **NOW** to Make a Difference!
The Diversity Partners Team at Cornell is available to help you...

• on demand
• with targeted training events
• to work intensively with your organization
Register now at

www.buildingdiversitypartners.org
Contact Information

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