

The Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research (KTER), housed at the American Institutes for Research, presents

Business Outreach Training

Module 1: Recognizing the Importance of Business Relationships

KTER•CENTER
Knowledge Translation for Employment Research



From Research to Practice

- Modules will present research findings, followed by the voice of the practitioner.

Research

- Studies from academic and practice settings
- Case studies

Practice

- Experience from the field
- Context to create a balanced perspective



Recognizing the Importance of Business Relationships

Research

Research: Importance to Candidates



- Engaging with businesses increases likelihood of returning individuals with disabilities to work.¹
- Establishing a relationship with a business predicts likelihood of hire.²
- Having a positive business-vocational rehabilitation (VR) relationship directly benefits candidates.

Research: Importance to Businesses



- Businesses value personal relationships.³
- Businesses consider their confidence in the VR employment specialist when making hiring decisions.⁴
- Businesses must find the VR employment specialist to be trustworthy and professional.⁵

Research: Importance to VR



- Stronger relationships provide better information about placement opportunities.⁶
- There is a mandate to cultivate demand-side, dual-customer approaches.⁷
- Implementation of WIOA^{7,8}
 - Training and technical assistance (TA) on employment of individuals with disabilities
 - Working with business on opportunities and awareness
 - TA on accessible recruiting, hiring, and retaining
 - Available support for accommodations and hiring

Recognizing the Importance of Business Relationships

Practice

Practice: Dual Customer Strategy⁹

- **What:** Builds on demand-side approach of acting as consultants to businesses⁶ to treating businesses as customers, just as people with disabilities are customers⁷
- **When:** 2004 after National Employment Conference¹⁰
- **How:** Feedback from business roundtable
- **Why:** Create opportunities, career paths, and the doorway to success for people with disabilities



Practice: Goals¹¹

- **Goal 1:** Focus on understanding business needs, not “selling” a service
 - Business relations versus job placement

VR-Business Relations Goals¹¹

Goal 1: Focus on needs over selling



Practice: Goals¹¹

- **Goal 2:** Build relationships and trust

VR-Business Relations Goals¹¹

Goal 1: Focus on needs over selling

Goal 2: Build relationships and trust

Practice: Goals¹¹

- **Goal 3:** Understand business needs
 - Business versus employer
 - Understand needs across lines of business

VR-Business Relations Goals¹¹

Goal 1: Focus on needs over selling

Goal 2: Build relationships and trust

Goal 3: Understand business needs

Practice: Goals¹¹

- **Goal 4: Develop a strategy with a business**
 - Identify where support is needed
 - Build a talent pipeline
 - Develop learning opportunities
 - Support upward mobility
 - Focus on retention

VR-Business Relations Goals¹¹

Goal 1: Focus on needs over selling

Goal 2: Build relationships and trust

Goal 3: Understand business needs

Goal 4: Develop strategy

Practice: Goals¹¹

- **Goal 1:** Focus on understanding business needs, not “selling” a service
- **Goal 2:** Build relationships and trust
- **Goal 3:** Understand business needs
- **Goal 4:** Develop a strategy with a business

VR-Business Relations Goals¹¹

Goal 1: Focus on needs over selling

Goal 2: Build relationships and trust

Goal 3: Understand business needs

Goal 4: Develop strategy

Recognizing the Importance of Business Relationships

Conclusion

Summary

- Relationships with businesses are important to:
 - Candidates
 - Businesses
 - VR agencies
- Dual-customer strategy benefits VR agencies and businesses
- Relationships with businesses are vital to VR goals and implementing WIOA



Thank you!

You have completed Module 1!

References

- 1 Trotter, S., Minkoff, K., Harrison, K., & Hoops, J. (1988). Supported work: An innovative approach to the vocational rehabilitation of persons who are psychiatrically disabled. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 33*(1), 27–36.
- 2 McDonnall, M. C., & Crudden, A. (2018). Predictors of employer attitudes toward blind employees, revisited. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 48*, 221–231.
- 3 Schriener, K. F., Greenwood, R., & Johnson, V. A. (1989). Counselor perceptions of employer concerns about workers with disabilities and employer-rehabilitation partnerships. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 33*(2), 140–150.
- 4 Simonsen, M., Fabian, E., & Luecking, R. G. (2015). Employer preferences in hiring youth with disabilities. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 81*(1), 9–18.
- 5 Lexen, A., Emmelin, M., & Bejerholm, U. (2016). Individual placement and support is the keyhole: Employer experiences of supporting persons with mental illness. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 44*(2016), 135–147.
- 6 Gilbride, D., & Stensrud, R. (1999). Demand-side job development and system change. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 42*(4), 329–343.

References (Cont'd)

- ⁷ Haines, K., Soldner, J. L., Zhang, L., Saint Laurent, M., Knabe, B., West-Evans, K., . . . Foley, S. (2018). Vocational rehabilitation and business relations: Preliminary indicators of state VR agency capacity. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 48(2018), 133–145.
- ⁸ Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. (2014). P.L. 113–128, July 22, 2014, 113th Congress. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf>
- ⁹ Business Roundtable at the National Employment Conference, Washington, DC, 2004.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. (2004). *Annual report fiscal year 2004: Report on federal activities under the Rehabilitation Act*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/rsa/2004/rsa-2004-annual-report.doc>
- ¹¹ West-Evans, K. (2014). *VR's work with business and employers: The rehabilitation act and WIOA*. Presentation at the Council of State Agencies of Vocational Rehabilitation, Fall 2014 Conference, Arlington, VA.

 www.kter.org

 kter@air.org

 4700 Mueller Blvd, Austin, TX 78723

 800.266.1832

The contents of this presentation were developed under grant number 90DP0077 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.