

**Training and Supporting Employer and Community Engagement:  
Developing Long Term Partnerships**

Dale Verstegen

1

**What you will learn today:**

- Establishing an employer and community engagement process that reframes the way we market our job candidates and our services
- Using a Discovery Process that informs the job and community development process
- Engaging Employers and other community organizations through outreach and networking that leads to long term partnerships
- Identify employer and community organization needs & possible opportunities for those we support
- Presenting those we support and the services we offer as adding value to an employer's operation
- Tracking employer and community engagement activities

2

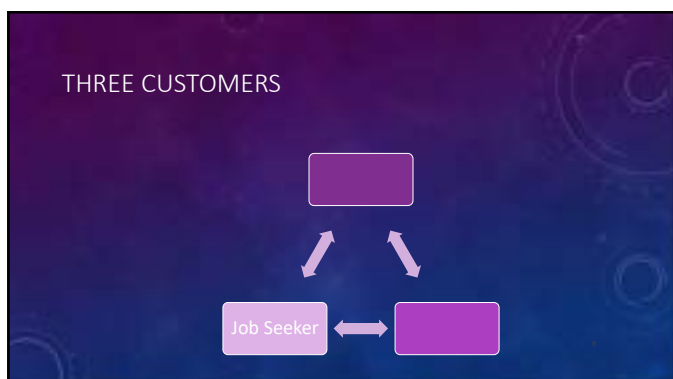
**Navigating the Landscape**

**THE BUSINESS OF DOING BUSINESS WITH BUSINESS!**

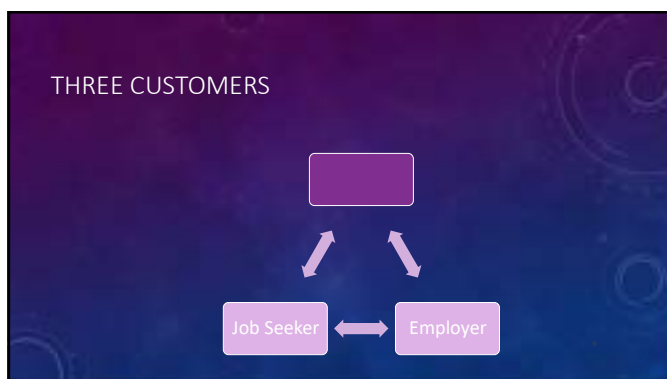
3

**TWO WORLDS**

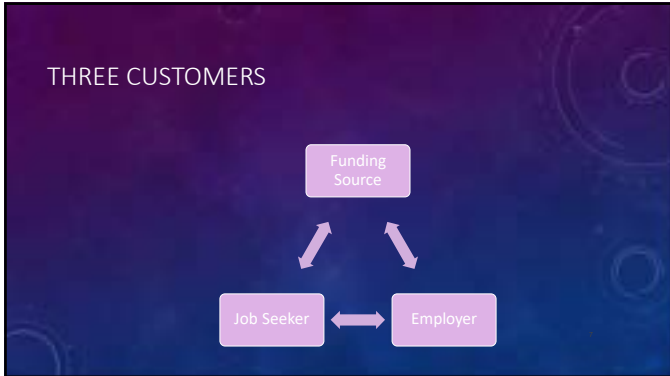
4



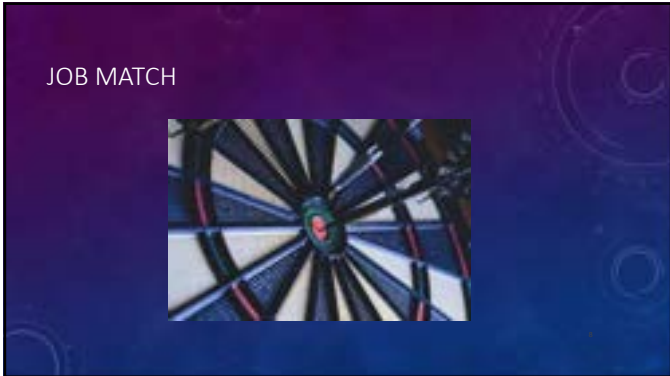
5



6



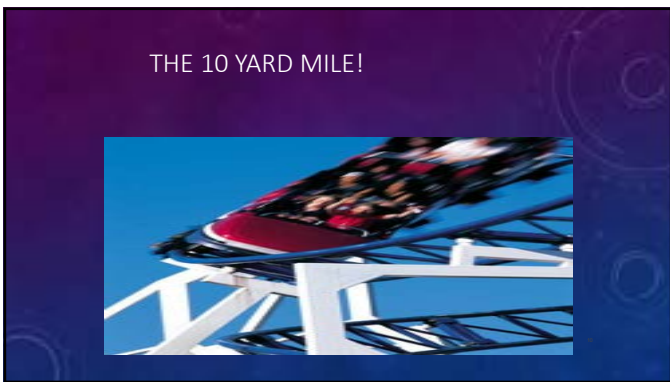
7



8



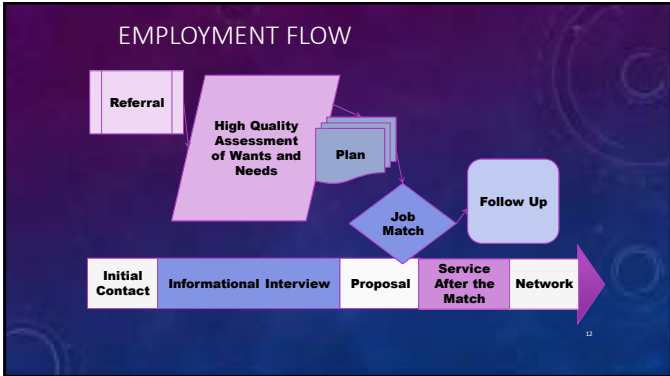
9



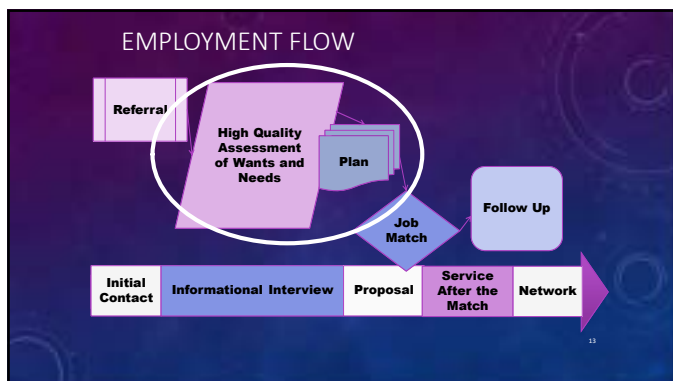
10



11



12



13

## Discovery Process

Building a Profile to Target Employment or Community Options

14

### Discovery is a Different Approach

- An individualized, qualitative process that results in a narrative description, a *Jobseeker Profile*
- It is not comparative- or evaluative. It is not a test
- It explores ideas based on job seeker's input- not a pre-determined curriculum
- Looks at the job seeker's skills and passions and what business would value these attributes
- It does not happen at a desk in a conference room. It is an active, engaging process

15

**Exposure Proceeds Interest.  
Interest Proceeds Motivation.  
Motivation Proceeds Action.**

16

### The Purpose of Discovery

- Generate new ideas for employment
- Explore these new possibilities
- Clarify abilities/skills/support needs
- Identify themes and potential employment options
- Create a profile of the job seeker to target potential employment options/settings
- Helps a job seeker to *imagine the possibilities, and see him/herself as a worker- an engaging, empowering process*
- It is the "means to the end"- keep it simple, make it quick

17


### Tour the Neighborhood, Talk with Friends and Family

- Take a walk with the person – Where do you go? Who are your friends? What do you like to do?
- What do you do at home? Chores? Fun?
- Identify potential sites/activities for "doing something together"
- Identify additional people to interview
- Any ideas for local employment?
- Look at accessibility/transportation options



18

### How would you start a conversation with this young man? (Use open questions)



19

### Identify Interests and Values

Family & friends  
Animals  
Independence  
Culture/heritage  
Financial security  
Music/art  
Sports  
Spirituality  
Patriotic

- Identify passions
- What comes up again and again?
- Reoccurring themes vs. a specific instance
- Remember "Exposure Proceeds Interest"

20

### Employment Planning Meeting

- Have the job seeker share his/her discovery information/profile
- Brainstorm potential employment situations, settings, job tasks that match preferences and skills- What "work" could the job seeker do? Where would this happen? Is self-employment, micro-business a desired path?
- Venn diagrams are a great tool to get the group "out of the box" and keep them focused on the job seeker

21

### Employment Planning Meeting (cont.)

- Collect ideas on poster paper- Identify 10-15 local employers/businesses to explore
- Put them on wall- have team members walk through- writing names of potential contacts from their personal networks.
- After the meeting summarize ideas and targeted employers/businesses to an *Employment Planning* document (**Job Development Plan**) to share with the job seeker and their team.

22

### Job Development Plan

- Summarizes ideas generated from process
- Identifies key characteristics and clarifies individual's employment goals, desired hours, other logistical concerns
- Outlines next steps and person responsible
- For those who wish to proceed with a specific type of job or "negotiated position" the report should identify specific employers/businesses to research and approach (As part of Venn process, we list 10 to start)

23

### Building Business Relationships

You never "close" a sale, you open a long-term relationship"  
-Dennis Waitley

24

### What do Employers Value and Need?

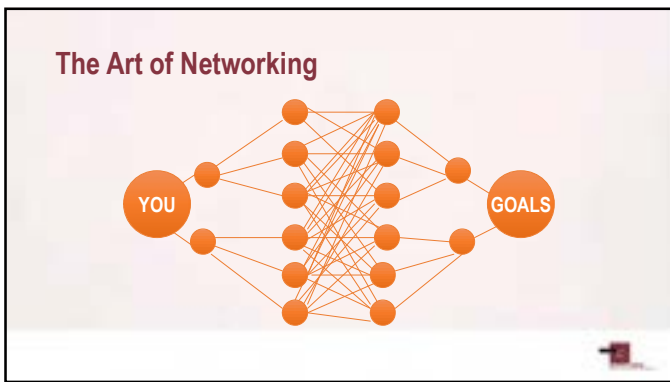
- Motivated employees who are excited about their work.
- Candidates with skills sets that can add value to their workforce.
- Business solutions that improve the company's productivity and/or workflow.
- Reliability/dependability
- Availability/flexibility
- Productivity/Quality (Owens, 2007)

25

### Everyone is a job developer!

- Everyone in your agency– set up a white board
- The Job seeker's personal network should also be tapped
- Find "warm" contacts– no more cold calls
- Professional services – doctors, chiropractors, banker, plumber, barber, how many do you know?
- Personal associations – religious, political or business affiliations, how many do you know?

26



27

### Employer Engagement

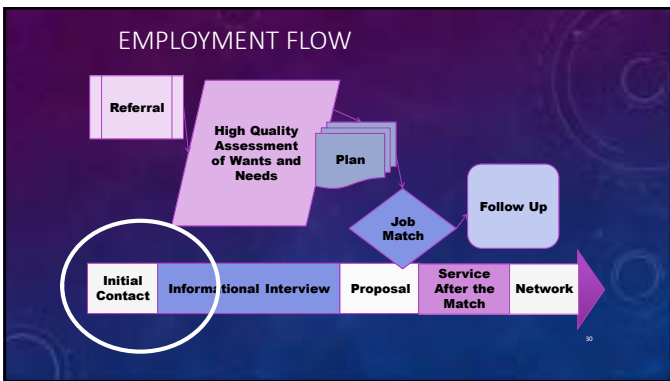
Reframing how we approach and partner with business

28

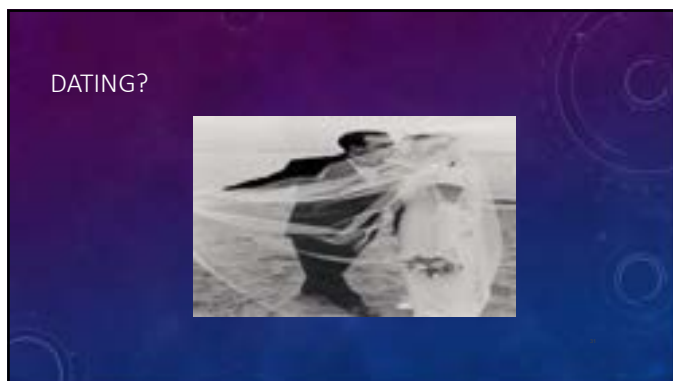
### The Old Way to Job Develop

- Looking for easiest jobs to find (high turnover, low pay)
- Selling "disability" (i.e. "Hire the Handicapped", "Untapped labor pool", "give'em a chance")
- Emphasizing quotas, tax credits, OJT or other stipends
- Cold calling, carpet bombing and job stuffing
- Focusing on just the job seeker, not the business  
"Social service" vs. "employment service"

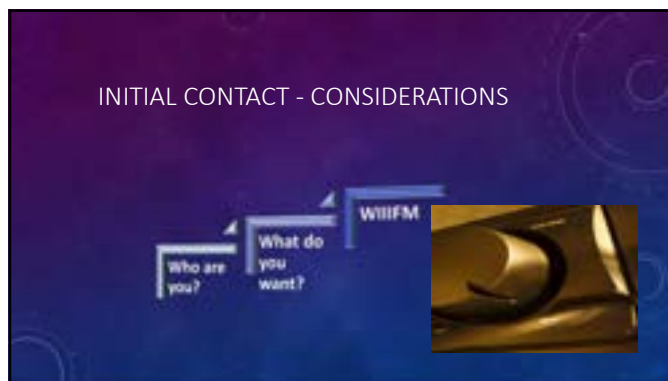
29



30



31



32



33



34



35



36

### What do employers WANT to hear from us?

We represent...

- Motivated employees who are excited about working
- Candidates with skills sets that add value to their workforce.
- Business solutions that improve the company's productivity and/or workflow.

37

### Goal of Informational Interview

Do you want any

I'd like to learn more about your company

38

### How do you get in the door?

Do not lead with "disability"

A good opening line...

"I work with job seekers interested in your industry. My Friend, Mary Smith, said you are an expert in the field and might be able to help me."

- Make your initial request easy...  
"Can I come and see what you do and talk to you about the skills sets needed to work in this field."
- Elevator Speech for your organization.  
"Who are you with? What does your organization do from the perspective of an employer?" (Do NOT sell disability)

39

### Informational Interviews

Talk to employers, learn about their businesses

40

### Informational Interviews: Focus is on the Business/Industry

- The conversation is NOT about "the job seeker"
- Gain an understanding of the work flow processes, "set-up/button-up" roles, essential skills and workplace culture
- Opportunity to check your "pre-conceptions"
- It is also an opportunity to build a relationship and sense of trust with the employer
- Identifying challenges (workflow issues, staffing needs,...)
- Is this a "prospect" for your candidate? (Can your candidate can solve problems or add value?)

41

### Networking and Informational Interviews

- Find a contact (warm vs. cold) - have coffee/lunch
- Determine who is the right person/right department
- Ask open questions. Remember this is a conversation, not an interrogation- and it is definitely not a sales pitch.
- The conversation is NOT about "the job seeker"
- Gain an understanding of the work flow processes, critical roles and "set-up/button-up" tasks, essential skills and workplace culture
- Leave your pre-conceptions at the door- be ready to be surprised

42

### Connect with Targeted Business

Research the companies you targeted for your job seeker:

- Identify key products/services
- Critical positions (Who are the “rain makers”?)
- Look at company culture and values
- Is the company growing? Merging? Shrinking? Start-up? Trends in the industry?
- Who are their competition– what sets them apart?
- Recent events? (good and bad)
- Who might you talk with?

43

### Informational Interviews

- Foot in the door
- Low pressure
- Chance to make a great first impression
- Start of working relationship
- Uncover possible opportunities

44

### Look for Issues/Challenges

- Possible ways to improve workflow
- Customer /employee complaints
- Log jams/backlogs/ long lead times/Waiting
- Unassigned, but critical tasks
- Burn-out or high turnover
- Managers or key staff pulled away from core tasks
- Workflow fluctuations
  - Rush times, crunch times, seasonal fluctuations, sporadic- but important tasks that are not getting done

45

### Ways to improve processes and “workflow”

What is the product (or service)?

- Are there ways to make product faster?
- Are there ways to make product cheaper? Save money?
- Are there ways to increase the number of customers served or improve customer service?
- Are the customers (and staff) happy?

\$.80 to keep a customer, \$3.00 to make a new one

46

### Is it a good fit for your Job Seeker?

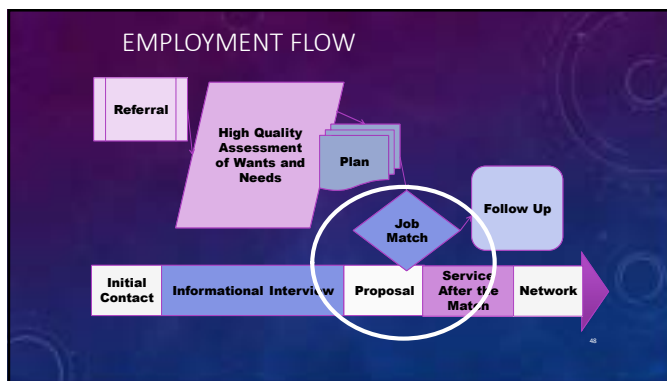
Possible scenarios:

- Not right – keep the connection “percolating” by proposing other services such as worksite tours, job shadows or disability awareness training
- It’s perfect! Needs, Environment, matches skills and interests – It’s time to write a proposal and talk jobs

Regardless, always send a thank you!!



47



48



## Negotiating Opportunities

Presenting a Proposal with business solutions/services and job candidate

49

49

## The Employer Proposal: Facilitating the Hiring Decision

- Greetings and Recap of your meeting
- What you observed about the employer's labor needs and potential benefits to the employer
- Requirements of the targeted job
- Applicant's skills & ability to meet job requirements
- Employment Services that would benefit the employer (i.e.: placement and job coaching services)
- Close and next steps

50

50

## Present Your Ideas/Solutions with a Potential Task List

- Translates the job seeker's *Features to Benefits*
- Based on employer's needs and your candidate's skill set
- Helps an employers to focus on job tasks- not job postings or existing positions
- Demonstrates how a person with disabilities can be can add value to their workforce

51

51

## Effective Tasks Lists

- Gets the employer thinking--and talking about tasks (vs. job postings)
- Speak the employer's language
  - Use employer's jargon and organizational terms
- List specific job tasks (doing what for whom?)
  - not general statements like "file", "photocopy"
- List most important tasks (needs) first
  - Which tasks will have the greatest impact?

52

52

## Benefits for Employers

- Cost effective way to improve work flow and reduce waste
- Supports core staff so they are able to concentrate on key aspects of their positions
- Productive, dependable, loyal employees
- Reduces recruitment and training costs for support positions
- Diversifies the workforce
- Leverages resources of employment service to assist with orientation and training of the new employee.
- Expertise and resources for managing disabilities in the workforce

53

53

## "We're not hiring" to "When can he start?"

- Our candidates had skills and attributes the employers valued
- Both candidates were extremely interested in the business
- Job developer identified needs and presented a cost effective solution to the employer's problems
- Job developer helped the employer to understand how to utilize the candidates' skills and accommodate their disabilities

54

54

### Negotiation is successful when all agree to...

- What tasks need to be done
- What tasks the individual can do
- What hours the individual will work
- Production requirements
- How much the individual will be paid
- What accommodations and supports will be necessary
- The benefit to the business

55

### Meet Ivan

**What his file told us:**

- Cerebral Palsy
- Limited fine motor skills
- Nonverbal
- Limited academics
- Good attendance
- Uses an electric wheelchair
- Limited computer skills
- Needs assistance with personal care

**What we discovered:**

- Active guy, likes to be busy- goes out a lot
- Beautiful smile, very friendly, good sense of humor
- Learning to use augmentative communication device
- Good driver- safe
- Can count, do simple math and read familiar words
- Loves sports, especially the Packers and Bucks

56

### What's a good job for Ivan?

Use VENN diagrams to target employment settings based on candidate's unique characteristics.

57

### Informational Interview: A Visit to Marquette University

- "We have 5 basketball courts that need to be wet mopped multiple times a day."
- "University cleaners have other priorities and don't really like to do this job."
- "We have a lot of alum who come to play ball and are complaining about the condition of the courts."
- "Student workers turn over too quickly and cleaning the courts takes some skill."

58

### Ivan, the Human Zamboni

Marquette University's Recreation Centers

Works 3x a week:

- Wet mopping 5 basketball courts
- Keeping score for intermural volleyball and basketball games

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMzfrGPF1Ts>

59

### Why was Ivan Successful?

- Ivan has skills (or attributes) the employer valued and a passion for the business
- Job developer used personal networks to find a "warm contact"
- Job developer found an employment setting and job tasks that matched Ivan's skills and interests, and minimized his disabilities
- Job developer was able to demonstrate how hiring Ivan would add value to the business and address an issue.


60

### Lessons Learned

- Hiring is a business decision– position must add value to the workforce
- Participate in business groups
- Network! Build relationships
- Develop employment proposals
- Follow-up with all employers all the time
- The employer “buys” you before they “buy” your candidate

61

### TOOLS – Employment Process featuring:



- Job Development Plan
- Informational Interview Form/Questions and Job Skills Inventory
- Employer Proposal Letter

62

### Tracking Job Development Activity



63

### Organize: Job Bank

Develop a Job Bank to organize employer information. The job bank will help you:

- Keep employer information organized.
- Provide information to build a working relationship.
- Update the employer’s business needs as they develop.

**Entries in the Job Bank**

1. Information on contact person at the business.
2. Details about the company (goals, concerns, needs, openness to hiring people with disabilities).
3. Communications (what contacts have been made & next steps in communication).

64

### Contact



**Dale Verstegen**  
daleverstegen@gmail.com



65