

The Perfect Fit

Serving Veterans with Significant Needs and Employers to Create the Ideal Career Match



Strategies to engage veterans with significant barriers to employment, and to determine their ideal skills, qualifications, and conditions of employment

Outline and Learning Objectives

- Engagement: How to build rapport and connection with a veteran career seeker.
- Assessment, understanding, and planning: Best practices to understand veterans with complex barriers to employment.
- Development: Transforming connection and understanding into a plan for employer outreach and job development.
- Employer service delivery strategies that both meet the needs of businesses, and cultivate opportunities for veterans.
- The impact and importance of community-based partnerships, particularly with American Job Centers.

Engaging Veteran Career Seekers with Significant Barriers

Possible realities for the veterans we serve

- Homelessness
- Substance abuse
- Mental Illness
- Disability/Dual Diagnosis
 - Service connected/
non service connected
- Felony Conviction
- Aging
- Young
- SSI/SSD Claims Pending
- Active Benefits to Balance
- Spotty Employment History
- Debts
- Requires Transportation

A New Perspective on Job Readiness.

- Redefine what we mean by “job ready”.
- Meet people “where they are”.
- Recognize skills and strengths derived through survival.
- Allow flexible measures of success on a “slow entry ramp”.
- Recognize the difference between intent to work and capacity for employment.

Is “RJ” Ready to Work?



- I served in the military
- I have been homeless for five years
- I have schizophrenia and have a drinking problem right now
- Did some time a few years back on a burglary charge
- For money I panhandle at the corner of 6th and del Sol from 8-10, then I move to 22nd and Cantina from noon-2. After that I collect bottles and cans.
- I'm not ready to work full time
- I don't know where I'm going to sleep tonight
- I am an inventor. I have an invention that will stop planes from falling out of the sky.
- If the Mayor can spend millions building a new city hall he should be able to give us money to help us get jobs and a decent place to live.

Building Rapport (1)

- The first 30 seconds: Creating a neutral opening that gets you in dialogue.
 - “Thank you for coming in to see me today. I know that it could be a potential hardship to make it here due to transportation and I appreciate you being on time and having the documents we need to review with you.”
- Asking effective questions that engage the other person.
 - “I see that you have been unemployed for five years. You must have been through a lot in that time. Tell me about some of the positive experiences you’ve had during this time.”
- Taking the emotion out of difficult messages.
 - “As you may know, employers look for appropriately dressed, well groomed staff. Talk to me about any challenges you might have at this time that would stand in the way of your preparation. I will include this in my notes should you need any resources or assistance with obtaining proper clothing or other resources.”

Building Rapport (2)

CANDID: It consists of a formal, structured process that takes the same message you intended to deliver, and phrases it using techniques that help the other person accept your message head-on without getting defensive. Because it makes it easier to be candid with people, it is called the CANDID approach.

- **C**ompartmentalize the message to create a neutral opening.
- **A**sk questions based on the other person's response.
- **N**ormalize the situation.
- **D**iscuss the details—factually and neutrally.
- **I**ncentivize the outcome.
- **D**isengage from the discussion.

Why *do* people change?

Client motivation is the only true path to change.

Client motivation is greatly influenced by the provider – *For Better or Worse.*

Motivational Enhancement Therapy

- Seeks to evoke Veterans' own motivation for change.
- Client centered although planned and directed.
- Veteran sets his/her own goal.
- Elicit from Veteran self motivational statements.
- Veteran is the agent of change!
- **NOT CONFRONTATIONAL!**

Motivational Interviewing (1)

- Motivational interviewing is a client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence.
- Working with clients to examine and resolve ambivalence about behavior change is its central purpose.
- It's the Client/ Patient who develops and considers arguments for behavior change.
- The counselor is directive in pursuing this goal.

Motivational Interviewing (2)

- Motivation to change is elicited from the client, and not imposed from outside.
- Its not coercion, confrontation, persuasion, reward and punishment.
- It's about identifying and bringing to bear the client's own values, goals and attitudes on creating behavior change.
- In fact, one of the biggest differences between MI and other techniques is that it's the client who verbalizes the need for change rather than the counselor.

Motivational Interviewing as an Engagement Technique

- Embraces and promotes change in a person, in our case moving from unemployment to employment.
- Meets a person “where they are at” (stage of change) and asks them not only why they want to move from unemployment to employment but how they plan to achieve this (focused goal setting).
- Is action oriented in practice as service provision and resources are always focused on achieving the employment goal.
- Serves as as a natural and continual “readiness assessment” based on self determination.

Counselling Techniques

- Counselor/ Health care providers do:
 - Listen for ambivalence in patient's own words
 - Reflects back negative and positive aspects of behavior AND of changing behavior
 - Supports client self-efficacy:
 - Points out strengths
 - Points out previous successes
 - Acknowledges difficulties of changing behavior
- Counselor/ Health care providers do not:
 - Create resistance by lecturing & arguing w/client
 - Tell the client what to do and why it's best for them.

Assessment, Understanding, and Planning: Best Practices to Understand Veterans with Complex Barriers to Employment

Elements of Assessment

- **Background:** Learn about the person's background and interests-help them self-identify what matters to them.
- **Strengths:** Gain an understanding of what the person has demonstrated skills at and is gifted in.
- **Personality:** Understand the person beneath the symptoms; and what type(s) of environments and people with whom s/he prefers to interact.
- **Obstacles:** What has in the past or currently gets in the way of this person to achieve what s/he thought they would achieve in their life?

Goals of an Assessment

- Create a connection
- Gather factual and anecdotal information
- Explore strengths and gifts
- Identify personality traits
- Confer with the job-seeker about obstacles
- Review current routines and community contacts
- Elicit aspirations and dreams
- Develop a personal profile

RJ: Assessment and Next Steps



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What's Next?



- What Questions do you Want to ask RJ?
- What Assessments might you Perform?
- What else do you want to know, and how would you seek to find it out?

Veteran-Centered vs Traditional Assessment Methodologies (1)

Traditional Assessment

- What job skills do you have?
- What job barriers?
- How long have you been clean and sober?
- Do you take any psychiatric medications?
- Will you agree to attend MH or SA treatment and counseling as a condition for enrolling in our program?
- Do you have any physical limitations?
- Do you need to satisfy any probation or parole requirements before you can work?
- We will first begin with some standard aptitude and interest tests to look for a good job match
- Before we try to place you in a job, you will need to attend a pre-vocational program for a few weeks
- Here are a list of jobs we have available- which ones seem to interest you?

Veteran-Centered vs Traditional Assessment Methodologies (2)

Veteran-Centered Assessment

- Can you tell me about what you do now to make money? What kinds of skills does that require?
- What types of jobs have you had in the past?
- What was the best thing and the worst thing about those jobs?
- Do you have friends who work at a job? What do they do?
- Do any of those jobs appeal to you and why?
- When are at your very best?
- What seems to get in the way each day?
- Do these same things get in the way in the work that you do now or jobs that you have had?
- If you had to describe your strengths-what would they be?
- If you could think of any jobs that could use someone with your strengths-what would they be?
- Would you like to talk with someone we worked with here about their job or visit their place of work?

Development: Transforming Connection and Understanding into an Actionable Plan for Employer Outreach and Job Development



What is Employment?

What is a Career?

Elements of Fit

EMPLOYEE FACTORS

- Hard Skills
- Work Style
- Soft Skills
- Income Needs
- Career Aspirations
- Work/Life Balance and Needs

EMPLOYER FACTORS

- Management Style
- Benefits Offered
- Work Environment
- Career Track
- Schedule Demands
- Place Demands

RJ: Thinking About Fit



- Prefers a Flexible/Part Times Schedule
- DOES NOT want 'Off-Site'/Telecommuting Work
- Wants to Work With his Hands, but Not Purely Repetitive Work
- Has Veteran Friends/Acquaintances who used to be Homeless, but now are Employed
- Attends Church when he is Able, and when he can get a shower on Sunday Morning
- Shows us early for his meetings with you to drink coffee and read the newspaper in the waiting area.

Employer service delivery strategies that both meet the needs of businesses, and cultivate opportunities for veterans



What Are the Challenges of Engaging Employers?

Common Challenges of Engaging Employers

- Competition/Scarcity Mentality
- Lack of Information/Understanding about How to Engage
- Misunderstanding of Benefits in Engagement
- Lack of Resources
- Differences in Language (Business/Military)
- Misconception of Served Populations



Why Do Employers Engage with Workforce Programs?

Common Reasons Employers Get Involved

- Support for Veteran Hiring Initiatives
- Well Informed Around Value of Support Services
 - Recruiting Services
 - Reduced Cost of Training
 - Valued partnership

Employer Engagement Strategies

- Know Your Available Resources
- Be Proactive in Deciphering Business Needs
- Create Industry Sector Snapshots
- Show the Value of Your Services

Available Resource Examples

- American Job Center (AJC) Finder
- Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing Veterans or HIRE Vets Medallion Award
- Hiring Our Heroes (HOH)
- My Next Move for Veterans
- National Labor Exchange (NLx)
- State Job Banks
- US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics
- US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship
- US Department of Labor Office of Federal Contractor Compliance (OFCCP)
- US Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service
- US Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division
- US Small Business Administration
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)



What other resources do you use to build your business services strategy?

Resources to Decipher Business Needs

Research the following information:

- Company Website
- Press Releases
- Products
- History
- Names of Executives
- News Appearances
- Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Representative Information

Deciphering Business Needs



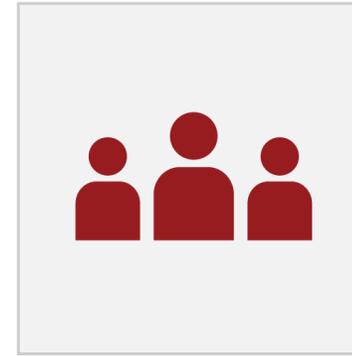
Measurable
Job Skills



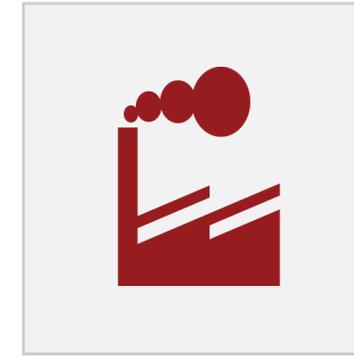
Salary



Benefits



Workforce
Demographics



Facility Tour



What challenges have you encountered trying to decipher business needs? How did you overcome those challenges?

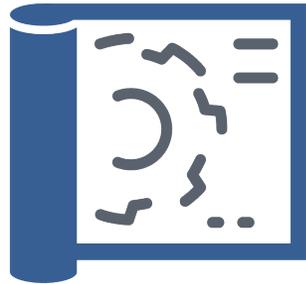


- **What does the term “industry sector” mean to you and your organization?**
- **What are some major industry sectors?**

Industry Sector Examples Include:

- Architecture and Engineering
- Arts, Design, and Entertainment
- Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
- Business and Financial Operations
- Community and Social Services
- Construction
- Education and Training
- Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
- Food Preparation and Food Service
- Healthcare
- Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
- Legal Services
- Life, Physical, and Social Sciences
- Management
- Media
- Office and Administrative Support
- Personal Care and Service
- Protective Services
- Sales
- Sports
- Technology
- Transportation

Industry Sector Snapshots–Construction Example



Note how the construction industry sector can include a variety of **occupation categories** such as: planning, plumbing, labor, estimating, equipment operation, and project management. Different skill sets are needed for different occupations within each occupation category.



**How can you share industry sector snapshots
with key stakeholders?**

Create Customized Industry Sector Snapshots

Create industry sector snapshots customized for your service delivery area. For each sector, include information such as:

- Typical Occupations
- Career Pathways
- Skills
- Growth Potential
- Key Resources



Exercise: Strategies for Assisting Businesses

You contact a local foundry business not yet working with your agency. You ask a few questions to gain understanding about their business needs. The foundry manager explains that they are thinking about moving out of state since they have been struggling to keep workers. The manager says the environment is the main issue preventing worker retention as it is “hot, loud, and dirty.” The manager hopes to find a larger resource pool out of state. How can you assist this business?

What are possible strategies?



Exercise: Strategies for Assisting Businesses (2)

Possible strategies include:

- Work with the business to develop customized recruitment services
- Assist the business with layoff aversion strategies to reduce veteran unemployment
- Promote credentialing and licensing opportunities offered by the business
- Share information about transferrable job skills and training that make veterans exceptional employees
- Inform the business about their obligations to recruit and hire qualified veterans



How do you show businesses they will receive a return on their investment by working with your AJC?

Business-Based Value Propositions

When crafting your value proposition, consider:

- Unique benefits of working with your AJC
- Advantages of working with your AJC over other options
- Key values upheld at your AJC

Develop and implement the following strategies to foster a long-term relationship with businesses and help build your partner database:

- Establish a business services team within your office
- Make regular contact with high-worth businesses
- Join local professional organizations
- Hold job workshops for local employers
- Host hiring events
- Make business awards
- Network with other veteran representatives
- Prepare an AJC employer handbook
- Emphasize compliance

Map Assets

- Create an employer handbook mapping the assets available through the AJC
- Create social media pages for your AJC and veteran program postings
- Promote programs through media, if allowable
- Speak at various business group meetings in your service delivery area



What are some AJC assets?

Asset Examples Include

- AJC Resources
 - Federal Bonding
 - Job Order Postings
 - Screen Candidates
 - Candidate Testing
 - Interview Space
 - Conference Space for Training
 - Aptitude Testing
 - Labor Market Information (LMI)
 - Rapid Response (WARN Act)
 - WOTC Information
- What are some AJC assets?
 - Government Required Posters
 - Veteran Priority of Service
 - Access to Veteran Representatives
 - Information for Worker's Compensation
 - Veteran Hiring Process Information
 - Military Spouse Employment Partnership Information
 - HIRE Vets Medallion Program Information
 - USERRA Information
- Training Programs
 - Funding for On-the-Job Training
 - Funding for Incumbent Training
 - Apprenticeship Information
 - DoD SkillBridge Program Information
 - Funding for Individual Training Assistance



What other strategies do you use to assist businesses?



The content in the above section was drawn from NVTI's Advanced Business Services course. This course will pilot June 11-13 and will soon be available.

The impact and importance of community-based partnerships, particularly with American Job Centers



Exercise: Partnerships for Assisting Businesses

A large food processing facility that sits on the border of three states calls your office. They are in desperate need of production workers and have had to turn down work because of the labor shortage. The facility contacted you first and has not communicated with the other states yet.

- What are some potential partner programs that could help the plant?



Exercise: Strategies for Assisting Businesses (3)

Potential Answers Include:

- Work to get the facility's jobs on the National Labor Exchange (NLx) freeing up their staff
- Host on-site career fairs at the local AJC
- Work with the local community college to develop training specific for this business
- Connect the facility with Registered Apprenticeship programs
- Stay in touch with the facility to assess the effectiveness of your efforts



In what ways might you partner with local government, local media, and educational institutions?



Supporting Data



How might you partner with neighborhood resources including clubs, fire and police departments, lodges, faith organization, and other small-scale resources? How is this different in rural locations?



Supporting Data (2)

Call to Action

- Identify and Share Two New Resources to Better Serve Veterans and Employers
- Share Best Practices, Ideas, Resources, and Questions in the NVTI Community of Practice: Making Careers Happen for Veterans
 - Obtain access to the Community of Practice by emailing studentservices@nvti.org