

# The NET: Providing Award Winning Customer Service

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# The Big Picture for Public VR

- Perceptions, Reality and Politics
- Reactive vs. Proactive Position
- Shrinking Resources
- A “Consolidation” Environment
- Perceptions Become Reality
- Who Controls VR’s Message?

# Creating an Opportunity from the Challenge

- Creating and controlling our own messages
- Defining our customers
- Understanding what customers are asking for from the VR system
- Developing a customer driven system and service delivery strategies
- Defining our own niche through the values and feedback of our customers.

# Who is our Customer?

## What does that mean to VR?

- People with disabilities – funding
- Employers – outcomes
- It's based on their needs, not ours
- When their needs are met,  
our needs are met
- Creating a customer service environment
- It's about relationships – do they like you,  
trust you and have confidence in you?

# Consumer

# Employer

## Vocational Assessment

- ✓ Medical
- ✓ Psychological
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Legal
- ✓ Assistive -  
Technology
- ✓ Independent Living
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Vocational
- ✓ Individual Plan for  
Employment
- ✓ Career Planning
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Ongoing Supports

## Needs Assessment

- ✓ Staff Education
- ✓ Job Site Analysis
- ✓ Job Match: (KSAs)
- ✓ Technical  
Assistance
- ✓ A.T./Rehab.  
Engineering
- ✓ Reasonable  
Accommodation
- ✓ Financial  
Incentives
- ✓ Retention Services
- ✓ Customer  
Outreach
- ✓ Product  
Development
- ✓ Ongoing Supports

**Employee  
Employer**

**Dual Customer  
Vocational Rehabilitation**

# How do we know what customers with disabilities value?

- Satisfaction surveys
- State Rehabilitation Councils
- Public Meetings
- Involvement in the legislative process
- State Independent Living Council
- Community based disability organizations

# Customers with disabilities tell us they value:

- VR Counselors that they trust as a partner in the assessment and planning process
- Empowerment
- Informed choice: options and expectations
- Self-determination
- Careers
- Independence
- Support systems at the local level

# Dual Customer Approach: Benefits to Consumers

- Career opportunities....not just job placements
  - part of the upfront planning
  - Informed choice
  - internal “champions”
  - corporate culture
  - benefits & inclusion
- Upward mobility opportunities
  - life-long learning
  - mentors on site

# How do we know what our business customers value?

- VR has a history of working with business at the state, regional and national level
- VR has conducted surveys with business customers
- Business has participated in the planning and training in regional and national employment conferences
- CSAVR conducted a focus forum with business

# The VR History with Business

- 1970-80's – individual state agencies, PWIs
- 1988 Multi-State Marketing Conference, Michigan
- 13 VR agencies: Alabama, Colorado, D.C., Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas – General and Blind, Virginia – General and Blind, Washington
- Region IV Model

# National Employment Conference - 2004

- AirTran Airways
- American Red Cross
- Bridges, Inc.
- Cellular One / Western Wireless
- CVS/Pharmacy
- GEICO
- General Motors, Inc.
- infoUSA
- Intel
- The Kennedy Center
- Lenske's Clamping Tools, Inc.
- Manpower, Inc.
- Marriott, Inc.
- Motor World
- Miami University
- Microsoft Corp.

# National Employment Conference - 2004

- National Bank of Commerce
- Oklahoma One-Call System, Inc.
- On Our Own
- Principal Financial Group
- Raytheon Company
- Safeway, Inc.
- Social Security Administration
- SouthTrust Bank (Wachovia)
- Starbucks Coffee Company
- State of Delaware
- SunTrust Bank
- United States Army

# National Employment Conference - 2004

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Washington Mutual
- West Corporation

# One Company Approach: Benefits to Business

- VR has long-term relationships built on TRUST
- The VR system is a national network delivering services across state lines through single points of contact
- VR network has access to local resources
- VR has direct access to qualified applicants
- VR staff are uniquely qualified and provide a variety of value added services to business
- VR services are customized to business needs
- VR is responsive to the business customer
- VR understands the concept of company culture
- VR services are cost-effective...tax payer dollars at work in the business community

# VR – Business Services: What our Customers Value

- **Pre-Employment**
  - **Training**
  - **Internships**
- **Human Resources**
  - **Recruitment & Promotion**
  - **Benefits & Compensation**
  - **Accommodation Assistance**
- **Development & Training**
- **Diversity**
- **EEOC/Affirmative Action**
- **Employee Advisory Services**
- **Assistive Technology**
- **Information Technology**
- **Retention Supports**
- **Labor Relations**
- **Legal & Compliance**
- **Risk Management**
- **Marketing & Outreach**
- **Contracts**
- **Facilities**
- **Customer Service**
- **Product Development**
- **Financial Supports**

# The Bottom Line for Business Customers

- To work with the national VR network through a single point of contact
- The foundation of the network must be:
  - Trust
  - Responsiveness
  - Deliverability
  - Consistency
  - Quality
  - Sustainability

# VR as a Customer Driven System

## Internal Challenges and Opportunities

- **One Company Approach**
- **Dual Customer**
- **People with disabilities and Business**
- **Business vs. Employers**
- **Careers vs. Jobs**
- **Employer Relations and Business Development or Placement and Job Development ?**
- **Qualified vs. Job Ready**
- **Marketing - Controlling our own Message**
- **Marketing – Proactive vs. Reactive**
- **Return on Investment (ROI)**

# National VR – Business Network 2006 CSAVR Work Plan

## Vision Statement

To create a “one company” approach to serving business customers through a national VR team that specializes in employer development, business consulting and corporate relations.

## Customers

- 1) Business (public, private and non-profit employers)
- 2) State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
- 3) Vocational Rehabilitation consumers

# National VR – Business Network 2006 CSAVR Work Plan

## Benefits by customer category:

- **Business** will have direct access to the qualified candidates and support services provided by State VR agencies on a national basis.
- **VR consumers** will have access to national employment opportunities and career development resources.
- **State VR agencies** will have a national system for sharing employment resources, best practices and business connections.

# The Strategic Plan

- Develop a customer driven strategic plan that will serve as a roadmap for the VR-Business network in defining the goals, objectives, products, services and the priorities of the network.

# CSAVR Strategic Plan VR- Business Network

Strategic Plan Based on Customer Needs:  
1) Business; 2) VR Agencies; 3) Consumers

Communication Strategy

Marketing and Outreach

Business Development

Training and Technical Assistance

Evaluation and Evidence Based Best Practice

# Customer Needs Assessment

- CSAVR Focus Forum
- The National Employment Conference
- CSAVR Employment Committee
- State Rehabilitation Councils
- 2005 Point of Contact Meeting
- Interviews with Business
- CSAVR Surveys

# Building the Internal Communication Infrastructure

- Developing the vision across VR
- A presence in every region
- Presentations to VR leadership
- Work with regional employment teams
- Work with the IRI Prime Study Group
- Employment Committee – Protocols
- Communication Network with VR  
Designated Points of Contact

# Communication Plan

- Internal communication network
- Evaluated online system options
- Microsoft – software, licenses, legal and technical assistance
- Develop a current distribution list of VR designated points of contact
- CSAVR Website – Business Relations
- CSAVR News Updates – Business Relations

# Elements of the Online Network

- **Contacts/ Connections**
  - **VR – designated points of contact**
  - **VR websites**
  - **Partners: PWI, DBTAC, RCEP, etc.**
- **Marketing Resources**
  - **Marketing Plans**
  - **Marketing Materials**
    - **Brochures by audience (business, consumers, others)**
    - **Videotapes by audience**
    - **CD/DVD by audience**
    - **Presentations (e.g. Power Points) by audience**
    - **Annual Reports**
- **Other materials**

# Elements of the Online Network

## ■ Training Packages

- Disability Awareness
- Disability Specific
- Employment Laws (ADA, FMLA, Workers Comp, etc.)
- Customer Services
- Diversity
- Assistive Technology
- Universal Design
- Other

# Elements of the Online Network

## ■ Success Stories

- Business
- Consumers
- Other

## ■ Testimonials and Quotes

- Business
- Consumers
- Other

# Elements of the Online Network

- Partnerships (brief overviews and features)
  - Projects with Industry
  - Community Programs and Centers for I.L.
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Business Leadership Networks (BLN)
  - Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM)
  - University partners
  - Other
- Events (brief overview, who to contact)
  - Award programs
  - Job Fairs
  - Others

# Elements of the Online Network

- Specialized Services or Programs for Business
  - Retention (e.g. Alabama)
  - Business Consultation (e.g. ND)
  - Assistive Technology (e.g. Nebraska)
- Mentoring VR-VR
  - Chat Room
  - Discussion Board
- Staff Training and Development
  - Training Packages used with internal VR staff
  - Written materials
  - Recommended trainers or programs

# Elements of the Online Network

- Business Profiles
- Employer Account System (VR internal)
- Job Seeker Profiles

# Business Profile

- **Company Overview**
- **Corporate and Business Locations**
- **Job Descriptions**
  - **Skills Sets**
  - **Company Culture**
  - **Salaries, Benefits**
  - **Work Schedules, Hiring Trends**
  - **Training and Career Opportunities**
  - **Links to Job Openings**
- **Hiring and Accommodation Process**
- **VR Connections**

# Marketing

- CSAVR News Updates
- CSAVR Website – Business Relations
- Brand Identity - Committee
- The National Employment Team
  - The NET
  - [thenetworks4u.org](http://thenetworks4u.org)
- National Network Intranet/Internet
- The Marketing Plan

# Marketing

- Success Stories and Testimonials
- Return on Investment Data
- *Investing in America*
- Launch and Launch Button Awards
  - Microsoft and Wachovia PR
- The NET Profit Awards
  - Hyatt and Safeway
- Press: Business Wire, Boston Globe, Radio, HR Executive Magazine

# Safeway Press Release

**“We appreciate the recognition and are proud of our longstanding partnership with the vocational rehabilitation agencies, which continue to be a valuable hiring resource. These are among our most productive employees, and we intend to build on this important program as a way of raising awareness and supporting the employment of people with disabilities.”**

**Steve Burd, Chairman, President, CEO  
Safeway, Inc.**

# Business Development Strategies

- Business relationships in multiple states position VR as a national resource for qualified applicants and business services. They set the stage for development of the corporate relationship.
- Targeted development – based on the vocational goals of VR consumers
- National Business Forums
- National Advisory Board

# Business Customers

- AstraZeneca
- Bank of America
- Compass Group
- Convergys
- CVS/ Pharmacy
- EchoStar
- H & R Block
- Hyatt
- IBM
- Merrill Lynch
- Microsoft
- US Office of Personnel Management
- Nordstrom
- Phillips Medical
- Qwest
- Raytheon
- REI
- Safeco
- Safeway
- Starbucks
- Target
- TD Banknorth
- USPS
- Wachovia
- Wal-Mart

# Business Development

- Self-Employment: Abilities Fund
  - State policies
  - Grant
- Perspectives Conference – Federal Employers
- USBLN Conference

# Training and Technical Assistance

- Training sessions across the country
- 1:1 technical assistance
- Resource sharing
- Regional employment teams
- Database of VR Experts
- Annual Point of Contact meetings
- IRI Prime Study Group
- The NET Staff Development Team

# Evidence Based Best Practices

- **ESSRTC – Employment Service Systems Research and Training Center**
  - Hunter, Hofstra, Drake, Syracuse, Consortia for Employment Success
- **Intranet – Collect best practices and validate through research model**
- **Internet – Feature best practices**

# Partners and Collaboration

- Abilities Fund
- AHEAD
- CANAR
- COSD
- Hands on Education
- NRA / ARAN
- New Editions – RSA Grant
- PWI
- RCEP Consortium
- SRC
- USBLN

# Network Protocol and Expectations

- What can business expect from the National VR-Business Network?
- What are VR agencies promising to deliver as members of the network?
- Marketing VR as “one company”
- The credibility of the national network – delivering on our commitments

# Network Protocol and Expectations

- Responsiveness – time sensitive
- Understanding the needs of business
- Technical assistance and consultation
- Market the company to consumer
- Provide qualified applicants
- Follow-up and support to business

# Network Protocol and Expectations

- Designated point of contact current
- Respond to inquiries from the network
- Work with CSAVR Director of Business Relations to develop The NET:
  - Coordinated approach to working with business
  - Business profiles and accounts
  - Best practices and resources
  - Success stories and testimonials

# It's All About Relationships

- “All things being equal, people want to do business with their friends.”
- “All things being not quite so equal, people **STILL** want to do business with their friends.”
  - Jeffrey Gitomer
  - Little Black Book of Connections

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