

The NET: The National Employment Team

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NET Working: VR & Business Partnerships

Region 7 Employment Conference

September 2007

Why The NET?

- 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
- Developing a national identity as a valued partner and resource to business customers

The NET 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.

Who is our Customer?

What does that mean to VR?

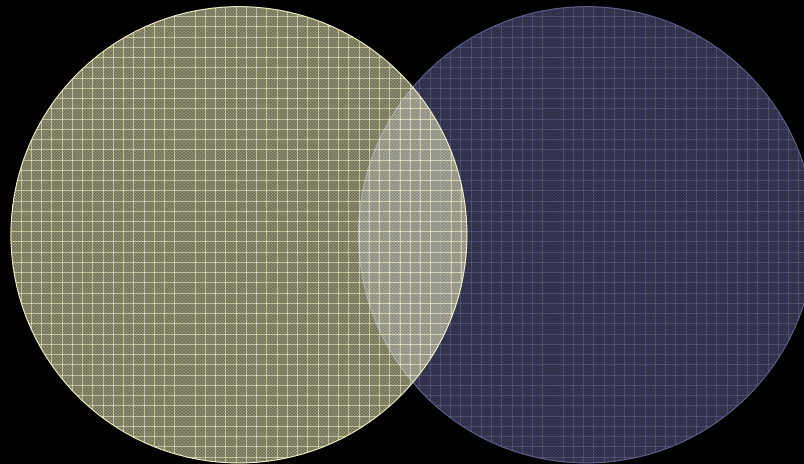
- People with disabilities – funding
- Employers – outcomes
- It's based on their needs, not ours
- When their needs are met,
our needs are met
- Creating a customer service environment
- It's about relationships – do they like you,
trust you and have confidence in you?

Vocational Rehabilitation: Dual Customer Model

Consumer

Vocational Assessment

Medical
Psychological
Social
Financial
Legal
Assistive Technology
Independent Living
Education
Vocational
Individual Plan for
Employment



Business

Needs Assessment

Employment Needs
Job Site Analysis
Recruitment and
Applicant Referral
Staff Education
Technical Assistance
A.T./ Rehab. Engineering
Reasonable Accommodation
Financial Incentives
Retention Services
Customer Outreach
Marketing

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 (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

CSAVR Employer Focus Forum

- WIMCO – Ohio
- Washington Mutual – WA.
- Intel – Oregon
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield – NH
- The Southern Company – AL
- CellularOne – WA.

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

Expectations of VR Business Customers

- Easy Access to the VR Network
- Trust
- Responsiveness
- Deliverability
- Consistency
- Quality
- Sustainability

Working with a Business

- Business vs. Employer
- Understanding the Company as a Whole
- Business Needs: local, multi-state, national
- Multiple Points of Entry
- Matching VR services to Business Need

The Range of VR Services as Defined by our Business Customers

- **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**

Marketing Support

Nordstrom - Marketing

YOUR BEST WEEKEND COMPANIONS ARE VACATION-READY PIECES THAT MIX WELL WITH OTHERS AND INVITE YOU TO RELAX.

Call 1.800.621.2600

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 Model**
- **Business vs. Employer**
- **Careers vs. Jobs**
- **Business Relations vs. Job Development**
- **Qualified vs. Job Ready**
- **Marketing - Controlling our own Message**
- **Marketing – Proactive vs. Reactive**
- **Deployment of VR Resources**
- **Return on Investment (ROI)**

National VR – Business Network 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) Vocational Rehabilitation consumers
- 3) State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies

National VR – Business Network 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



Customer Needs Assessments

- CSAVR Focus Forum
- The National Employment Conference
- CSAVR Employment Committee
- State Rehabilitation Councils
- Point of Contact Meetings
- Interviews with Business
- CSAVR Surveys
- Evaluation Strategies

Building the Internal Communication Infrastructure

- Developing the VR “one company” vision
- Support of VR leadership
- Capacity in every state and region
- Developing the VR training tools
- 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 for SharePoint
- Intranet– development, access & training
- Develop a current distribution list of VR designated points of contact
- CSAVR Website – Business Relations
- CSAVR News Updates – Business Relations

VR-Business Network Online

The screenshot shows the VR Business Network website in Microsoft Internet Explorer. The browser window title is "VR Business Network - Home - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://portal.rehabnetwork.org/default.aspx". The website features a blue header with the CS AVR logo (Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation) and a navigation menu with items: Home, Training, Resources, Best Practices, Contacts and Connections, News and Events, and Business Services and Con. Below the header, the main content area is titled "VR Business Network Home" and includes a search bar set to "All sources". The page is divided into several sections: "Home" with a list of menu items (Training, Resources, Best Practices, Contacts and Connections, News and Events, Business Services and Consultation), "Actions" with an "Add Listing" link, "News" featuring a headline "Microsoft Donates Software" with a sub-headline "Microsoft donated approximately \$31,000 worth of software in support of the VR Business Network.", "Events" with two entries: "32nd IRI : VR - Business Partnerships" (dated 5/1/2006 8:00 AM) and "Perspectives on Employment of Persons with Disabilities Conference" (dated 12/6/2006 8:00 AM), and "Links" with "Email Kathleen" and "CSAVR Webs" links, and an "Add new link" button. The browser's status bar at the bottom indicates "Trusted sites".

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
- IBM Project – Massachusetts Pilot

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: Internal and External

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

Marketing Via Networks

- Consumers – VR
- VR – VR
- VR – Business
- Business – VR
- Business - Business
- Targeted Marketing
- What are we Marketing?
- Developing a National Marketing Strategy

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.
- Setting the stage for development of the corporate relationship – leveraging existing relationships and developing new connections.
- Targeted development – based on the vocational goals of VR consumers
 - National Business Forums
 - National Advisory Board

Business Customers

- Adecco
- AstraZeneca
- Bank of America
- Compass Group
- Convergys
- CVS/ Pharmacy
- Deloitte
- EchoStar
- H & R Block
- Hyatt
- IBM
- Merrill Lynch
- Microsoft
- U.S. OPM
- Nordstrom
- Phillips Medical
- Qwest
- Raytheon
- REI
- Safeco
- Safeway
- Spaulding/ Partners Hospital
- Starbucks
- Target
- TD Banknorth
- USPS
- Wachovia
- Walgreens
- Wal-Mart

Business Development

- Self-Employment: Abilities Fund
- Home based Employment Options
- Perspectives Conference – Federal Employers
- USBLN Conference
- RSA Contract: Business Forums
- Rural Business Development Strategies
- Veteran's Administration

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 VR Peer NETWORK 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
- SHRM
- 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

- Easy access for business
- Responsiveness – time sensitive
- Understanding the needs of business
- Technical assistance and consultation
- Market the company to VR consumers
- 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

The NET: Positioning VR with Customers Nationally

- Access to the resources of the national VR system delivered at the local level
- VR works effectively with business customers
- VR is uniquely positioned as a national resource of qualified applicants and business services
- VR brings and keeps talented employees in the workplace
- VR as a solution for business
 - The Safeway experience

The Power of the National Message

- Easy access to a national network of 80 VR agencies supported by 24,800 specially trained staff in coordination with their community partners
- A national budget of \$2.7 billion invested in meeting the employment needs of business through the training, employment and retention of qualified workers
- VR worked with business across the country to employ 206,700 qualified VR applicants in 2005
- Return on Investment data: state and national

VR Customers and Congress Impacting the Big Picture

- April 2005, Congressional Breakfast hosted by John Stanton, CEO Western Wireless, CellularOne and T-Mobile International
- August 2007, Congressional Testimony of Beth Butler, former VR consumer and current VP of Wachovia Corporation

Excerpt from Butler Testimony

- **Clearly, a relationship with VR is a lifelong journey. My relationship with VR remains strong. As an HR professional, I now collaborate with the National VR - Business Network to ensure other business leaders and people with disabilities have access to the same valued resource that can turn dreams and aspirations into reality.**
- **As far as a return on investment, I am the ultimate return on investment and now remain committed to helping others live the American Dream in achieving a quality education, supporting a family, having a career, owning a home and living independently and inclusively in the community. I understand that the return on investment in Alabama, one of the VR programs I was served by, is \$20.69 for every dollar invested in my rehabilitation. From a banking and finance perspective, that is an excellent return and a great investment of taxpayer dollars.**

It's All Built on Individual 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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