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# National VR-Business Network

**Kathy West-Evans**  
**CSAVR Director of Business Relations**  
**Region VI**  
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# The Big Picture for Public VR

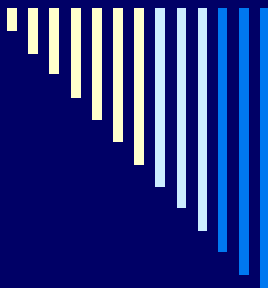
- Perceptions, Reality and Politics
- Reactive vs. Proactive Position
- Shrinking Resources
- A “Consolidation” Environment
- Perceptions Become Reality
- Who Controls VR’s Message?



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# 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.



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# VR Customers and Stakeholders Working in Collaboration

- People with disAbilities
- Employers
- Service Delivery Partners
- Educators
- Referral Sources
- Parents and Advocates
- VR Staff



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# Who is a 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**

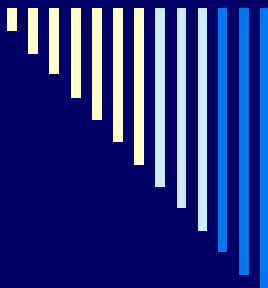
**Dual Customer  
Vocational Rehabilitation**



# VR as a Customer Driven System

## Internal Challenges and Opportunities

- ❑ **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**
- ❑ **Controlling our own Message**
- ❑ **Marketing**
- ❑ **Return on Investment (ROI)**
- ❑ **Proactive vs. Reactive**



# 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



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# 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



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# National Employment Conference

- **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 Bank of Commerce**



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# National Employment Conference

- **Oklahoma One-Call System**
- **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**
- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
- **University of Alabama at Birmingham**
- **Washington Mutual Bank**
- **West Corporation**



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# VR Business Customers

- ❑ VR has a history of relationships built on TRUST
- ❑ VR has long-term relationships with business
- ❑ 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 has access to multiple community resources



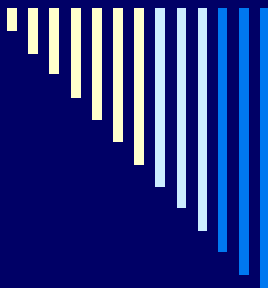
# Dual Customer Approach: Benefits to Business

- ❑ Long-term relationships built on a foundation of trust
- ❑ VR services are customized to business needs
- ❑ The VR system is national and can deliver quality services across state lines
- ❑ Opportunity for a seamless process or system of interaction from state to state
- ❑ Easy access to a talent pool
- ❑ No “layers” of contact - single point of contact !
- ❑ VR is responsive to the business customer
- ❑ VR understands the concept of company culture
- ❑ VR staff are qualified, they are value added resource partners



# VR – Business Services

- **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**



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# 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.
- ❑ **State VR agencies** will have a national system for sharing employment resources, best practices and business connections.
- ❑ **VR consumers** will have access to national employment opportunities and career development resources.



# 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



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# 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



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# 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



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# 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
  - PWIs
  - RCEP consortium
- 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
  - CRPs
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Business Leadership Networks (BLN)
  - Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM)
  - 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



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# Elements of the Online Network

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



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# 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**



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# Marketing

- The Branding Team
  - Naming the Network
  - Logo
  - Register
- Website Development
  - Domain name



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# Marketing

- Success Stories and Testimonials
- Return on Investment Data
- *Investing in America*
- Launch and Launch Button Awards
  - Wachovia PR
- Boston Globe – Microsoft Connection



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# Marketing Via Networks

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



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# Business Development

- CSAVR Surveys: existing and targeted relationships
- Hyatt Partnership – Florida, D.C., MD, VA
- Mid-Atlantic Business Summit – Bank of America, Delaware
- ACCESS
- Federal Partners – OPM, USPS
- BLN Partnerships



# Business Development

- AstraZeneca
- Compass Group
- EchoStar
- H & R Block
- Holiday Inn
- Hyatt
- Microsoft
- Nordstrom
- OPM
- Philips
- Qwest
- REI
- Safeway
- Starbucks
- USPS
- Wachovia
- Walgreens
- Wal-Mart



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# Business Development

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



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# Training and Technical Assistance

- 20 training sessions across the country
- 1:1 technical assistance
- Regional employment teams
- Database of VR Experts
- Annual Point of Contact meetings
- IRI Prime Study Group
- Resource sharing



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# Evaluation and Evidence Based Best Practices

- University Partners
- NIDRR Grant
- Work in targeted areas
- Evaluating best practices



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# Other Partners and Collaborators

- AHEAD
- SRC
- BLN
- CANAR
- RCEP Consortium
- NRA
- PWI
- AAAS/Entry Point



# 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



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# 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

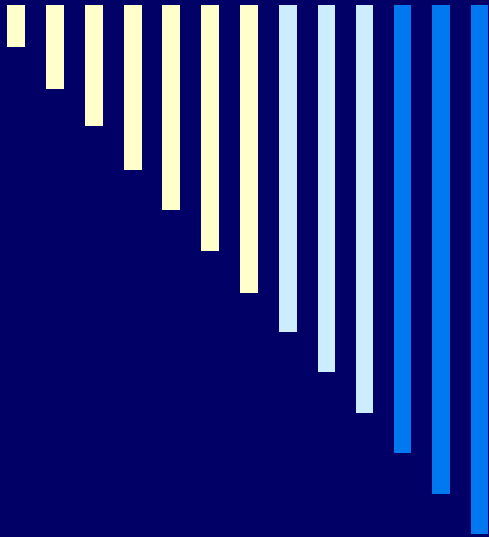
- Designated point of contact current
- Respond to inquiries from the network
- Work with CSAVR Director of Business Relations to develop:
  - Coordinated approach to working with business
  - Business profiles and accounts
  - Best practices and resources
  - Success stories and testimonials



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# 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



**Kathy West-Evans**  
**Director of Business Relations**  
**CSAVR**

**206.999.9455**

**[kwest-evans@rehabnetwork.org](mailto:kwest-evans@rehabnetwork.org)**

**[www.rehabnetwork.org](http://www.rehabnetwork.org)**