**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Sharpening Your Job Development Efforts**

**Are You Doing What Employers Want and Need?**

**Tuesday, October 27, 2015**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Murrieta, CA*

BRIAN KEATING: Welcome, everyone, for joining our "Sharpening Your Job Development Efforts" webinar. Like I said, go ahead and type into that chat window where you're at, your location, your organization, and how many are joining you if you happen to be in a group today.

Also we are going to be taking questions over the phone, but you can type in questions or comments into that chat window at any time as well and we'll be monitoring that. So feel free to type into the chat. And again, we encourage you to participate over the phone when we're ready to open up the phone line and invite you to unmute your line.

So without any further ado, I want to turn things over to our moderator, Caroline M. Hertel.

Caroline is from the Division of Strategic Investment with the Employment and Training Administration, Office of Workforce Investment with the Unites States Department of Labor. Caroline, take it away.

CAROLINE HERTEL: Great. Thanks for that introduction, and welcome everyone. We're really excited to have you on the line to hear from our presenters today, and we have John Rakis and Mike Lawrence from Coffey Consulting. And I can turn it over to them; they're going to lead us through a great presentation today. So thanks again, and we're really happy to see so many people on this afternoon.

JOHN RAKIS: Thank you, Caroline. Welcome everybody. Now at this point in your grant, you probably are focusing much of your attention on job placement as participants complete their training into the workforce. So now is a great time to reflect the note strategy that you're using for job development. Look at the ways to enhance those efforts and maximize your success.

So here's what you can expect to get out of today's virtual chat. We're hoping that you'll be able to sharpen your pre-employment, job placement, and post-placement strategies. And we're hoping also to strengthen your relationships with employers by using strategies that they value. I managed a nonprofit for more than 10 years, federally funded. I know what it feels like to be in those last – the last year, or the last months of a project when you're trying to maximize those placements, and you're looking for everything you can do to make those connections with employers and to make them stick.

So I'll have to share with you some tips that I've learned over the years. But I'm really hoping as well to hear from you. I'd like to know what has worked for you, what tips you can share with your fellow grantees, and what hasn't worked for you. What have you tried that didn't work? So we'll have opportunities during this chat to share, and I hope that you take advantage of those opportunities.

So let's take a look at today's agenda. We're going to look at three phases of the job development process. We're going to determine and discuss the strategies that are being used by grantees in the job development process in the context of what employers want and need. We're going to discuss the use and value of employer surveys. So I hope if you're using them you'll be able to share how it's worked for you. And we're going to share some tips for job development.

Well, job development is more than placement. Your employment services should address both the supply side of participant's interests, needs, and barriers. And the demand side, what employers want or need. Our focus today will be on what employers want and need, because it's this time in your grant you'll most likely address the supply side issues. Take a look at research that has been done in the area of job development.

And at present, there are only a handful of research articles on job development practices, and most of these involve programs that served persons with disabilities. But some valuable information can be gleaned from this research, and we want to share that with you today, and have a conversation around those findings.

There are three phases in the job development process. And job developers typically divide them into pre-employment, job placement, and post-placement. Employers see these phases a little bit differently, from another perspective: recruiting, hiring, and advancing. And the research informs us that job developers and employers value different things in the job development process. So we're going to look at those things by doing a poll and having a discussion around each of these phases.

So let's start with our first poll. All of these strategies belong to the pre-employment phase of the job development process, and we'd like you to select three strategies you value the most in your pre-employment activities with employers. You can choose three.

MR. KEATING: All right. And the way to vote in the poll is to go ahead and click the boxes on the screen of the window that just came up. So please go ahead and click three boxes, just choose three strategies that you value the most in your pre-employment activities with employers. And thanks for doing that. I see many of you are – go ahead and click in those boxes. Go ahead and make three choices now.

And while you finish that up, I'll turn things back to John to comment on what we're seeing so far.

MR. RAKIS: We're seeing that a lot of people network, and that's one of the most effective ways of people connecting with the world of work. I know that it's been true for me, and during my job search and during my career. And I think that holds true for the participants that we train. So many of you really value networking with employers, getting out there, meeting people. And many of you – 60 percent or so – value demonstrating how the applicant will add value to the bottom line. I'm kind of glad to hear that, and you'll see why in a few minutes.

Let's take a look at what employers value. They value – the items in bold, by the way, are what the research tells us employers value. So it's not as much networking, but demonstrating how participants add value to the business, providing testimonials that document performance, and demonstrating how the applicant will add value to the bottom line. Now many of you chose the last item, and that's what employers value. I think we all know that employers want to know, how is this going to help my bottom line? What am I saving by doing this?

So I'd like to know how you demonstrate that the employer will add value to the bottom line. How do you make the case to employers, that they add value to their business? What do you do? We'd like you to unmute your phone and share what you've done in the past.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. And the way to unmute your phone line is to press \*6 on your telephone keypad. So \*6 will unmute your phone line. Please do that now if you have a verbal question or comment to respond to what we just said. And you can also type into the chat, but we highly encourage you to unmute your phone line. Again that's \*6 to unmute your phone.

MR. RAKIS: I know that in the past what I've done is actually monetized the benefits. Does anyone do that? Would anyone like to share how they do that? Has anyone actually calculated what you save employers? Or do you have another way of demonstrating the value you add to the bottom line? I know when employers see dollar signs that always gets their attention, especially if you can demonstrate that you'll save them $1,000 in their recruitment costs, or $2,000 or more.

MS. : Well – this is Susan Thomas (sp). Our program is OJT. So it pretty well sells itself if you can walk in and say, hey, look, we're going to be giving you wage, subsidy to do the new hire training they should be doing anyway. You know what I mean? So that's a huge incentive right there.

MR. RAKIS: Do you ever multiply the number to show people? In other words, if you hire one person you'll save this amount, and if you hire five, you'll save this amount.

MS. : Oh, yeah. Yeah. I have a large employer that has taken 84 people, and it's over $1 million. And that already – (inaudible) – eyebrows.

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. I read an OJT program – I didn't do that many OJTs, but I had a little chart that said if you hire one – it went up to 10 people, I think. And this way they can see the numbers. And I think once they saw 20,000 (dollars), $30,000, that always got their attention. Have you ever done anything to demonstrate how you can save the recruitment costs?

MR. : This is Tony (ph) from Lorain County Community College.

MR. RAKIS: Hey, Tony.

MR. : I know the Department of Labor, there's a tool they announced, and I don't have the link in front of me, but it actually breaks down advertising costs, recruiting, interviewing, all that time it puts it into a monetary value so you can save the company X amount of dollars in recruitment, interviewing, and so forth. And I don't have that link. I'm looking for it as we speak. And if I find it, I can send that out.

MR. RAKIS: That would be great, because you can share that right online at this point. And if not, during the session, we'll dig it up and we'll share it post the virtual chat.

MS. : Well, and the other thing is is that beyond just what we used to call in industry cost per hire, which is search fees, advertising, whatever. You also have all the time that the employer has to take to screen the candidates. And if you've already done some pre-screening, or you're working in an occupation where they're coming out of a training program and they have a credential beyond what the usual person applying for the job has, there are a lot of dollars attached to that as well.

MR. RAKIS: It's totally difficult calculating those costs, and sometimes you can just do a ballpark figure. But to the extent that you can, or you can ask them, what does it cost you to recruit somebody? Because not many employers have calculated that.

MS. : It's not hard to calculate. Because the thing is you can look at an average salary per person doing the recruiting, you can hear how many hours it takes, multiply. And the other thing is is that with OJT or registered apprenticeship, which we also do, people are more likely to be loyal to the employer and there's a huge cost of turnover that you avoid. And every time a job turns over it's 1.5x salary. That's a lot of money.

MR. RAKIS: And that's usually calculated as well.

MS. : Correct.

MR. RAKIS: But with OJT, one has to be very, very careful obviously because you want to show them how it can save the bottom line, but you don't want them to get the impression that they're just – they're doing it just for the money, that there has to be some – really some good training that – and what they're being paid for is the extraordinary cost obtaining this person who may not have the requisite skills to get the job right off the bat.

MS. : Exactly. And very often, look, it can be a sellers market if you're in an occupational category where there aren't enough experienced people. Then the employers say, well, OK, I'm going to have to train my own. You guys start doing one in some of our hospitals right now.

MR. RAKIS: Did you ever do anything to document their performance in terms of your pre-employment engagement with them, or something that would demonstrate to the employer that while not only will this person be good if you provide the on the job training, but we know that they've had a great track record in the past, and this is what they've done in the past.

MS. : Well, we did that with people coming out of a training program. We have a license practical nursing school, and if somebody has shown themselves to be really high-grade, very dedicated, very team-oriented, all the right stuff, certainly we're going to mention that.

MR. RAKIS: I love telling stories sometimes. I think you can tell people – employers fact, like X percentage of people were successful in our OJT placements. But if you're placing one person in with an employer and you can demonstrate to them through a story that they did something really wonderful on their past job, or they were tops in their class, or they really did well on their tests or exams, or they were the valedictorian, and so on and so forth. That could really have an impression on that they won't forget, and that I think is a nice way to document performance.

Well, thank you very, very much for sharing. We're going to do another poll now. And Mike is going to lead that, Mike Lawrence, Mike.

MIKE LAWRENCE: Thank you, John. I appreciate it very much. That was a great presentation. I want to thank everybody for their comments, testimonials, and everything seemed to work well. Now we're going to talk about what kind of strategies do you value most in your placement activities with employers. There's a list there you can see, and all these strategies fall into place to make – into the placement phase of the job development process. We'd like you, again, to look at the three strategies you value most in those placement activities. I see someone mentioned hiring solutions, personal approach.

MR. KEATING: OK. Just like last time, you can choose more than one, so please choose three strategies by clicking three boxes from these options. It looks like many of you are doing that now, so please make sure you make three choices. And I'll turn it back to the team to comment on what we're seeing so far.

MR. LAWRENCE: Solutions, those are good. I was a workforce director for 23 years, certainly looked at all these – I work in a rural area. John worked in the middle of New York City. I worked in a rural area, and we had to find ways to contact business. And we had to almost always rely on OJT because we didn't have very many schools to benefit from, so we had to find ways to make on the job training work. So our interest with employers was really a way to – was really important to us. I think with your personal approach, persistence, and contacting business, hiring solutions. Certainly good.

I would like to, again, as the research shows, we're going to look at these strategies and see what was most important to our employers. So let's take a look at those strategies valued by employers. Again, those are in bold and those are in italics. You can three keys ones the research shows that provide evidence of performance, provide employees with previous work experience, and look at hiring solutions. At the same time, there are others that we had looked on that were certainly important to us, such as the personal approach and persistence in contacting business. Not that they don't work, those are what the employers said were the most valued.

So I guess we'd like to know, again, what do you do, and –

MR. RAKIS: We left the slide presentation on the screen.

MR. KEATING: Yeah. We actually moved to the open –

MR. LAWRENCE: Actually we see the –

(Crosstalk.)

MR. KEATING: Yeah. We've got a couple, so the first one that we wanted you to respond to is, what do you do to demonstrate and how participants add value to the business.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thank you, Brian. And again, we'd like to hear from you. You have some great ideas for what works in your community, and what you'd do with the hiring solutions, provide evidence of applicant's performance, hiring solutions, work experience. What have you found works for you?

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. Yep. And so you can respond to this chat, this open chat question by typing into the chat window, which as we mentioned, is taking up the majority of your screen right now. And you still have the ability to unmute your phone line if you'd like to give us verbal feedback. And the way to do that again is to press \*6. So \*6 will unmute yourself. Go ahead and let us know that you're on the phone with us. And then when you're done, \*6 will remute your line as well. So we see somebody is typing in that chat, but we'd love to hear from your as well. It sounds like somebody might be unmuting as we speak.

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. Please do unmute. It's much easier I think to speak on the phone than type away. I know one of the things that I did to demonstrate how participants can add value to their business was to do one page case studies, which featured successful program graduates, and what they did on the job, and how they saved the employer money. And one or two of those had graduates who worked their way up the ladder in the organization starting out as an OJT, and then eventually becoming a manager in the organization. So those one-page case studies with the person's photo really got their attention and was easy to read.

Did anyone do anything similar to that with – in their placement efforts, these either case studies, or perhaps video interviews, or something that tells a story about successful outcomes in the past? I see Chris (ph) is typing in. Explain to the employer how the employees – (inaudible) –the line with the job the business is trying to fill through resumes and letters of reference. OK. Chris, would you like to elaborate on that? We're getting some other people typing in as well.

Debbie (ph) just typed in, currently featuring participants in a business journal insert in our local paper. Oh, excellent. Debbie, how did you get that to the local paper? Anything that you did special, did you have a press release?

MS. : Yes. We have a good relationship with our local newspaper, and given their apprenticeship announcements and some other local press that we have. We were contacted in advance to understand that they were writing a business journal focusing on manufacturing one of our target sectors. And they asked us what we'd like to do. And we said we'd like to feature several of our participants in the companies that we work with. So we think that's a pretty neat effort.

MR. RAKIS: So not only will employers read that in the local paper, but you can copy that then distribute either one page or maybe put a link to it on your website. Have you done either of those?

MS. : Well, it hasn't come out yet. We are expecting it within the next 10 days to be published. And presumably, it will come out great, and absolutely we'll get all the mileage out of it we can.

MR. RAKIS: And how did you develop that relationship with the press?

MS. : By making sure that when we had press releases, or had announcements, that they were informed and being available when they called, and making sure that companies and educational institutions also who might be called for things that we're helping them with that we're all – they would have our contact information as well. Strong partnership.

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. One has to be proactive.

MS. : You do. Yes. You can't – we went apparently for quite a few years without doing press releases. And the only thing that would be picked up of course would be major federal grants, like this one, but that's not enough to make sure that employers understand what you do.

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. It's not uncommon for agencies when they get a grant to assure press release to announce it. But then they may not – and subsequent press releases during other milestones for their grant. And we did a bulletin on – which is on the Workforce3one website on how to write an effective press release. So for those of you that haven't seen it, I urge you to take a look at it. I'm glad that it's worked for you, Debbie. And I think that everyone needs to be getting involved with the press, establishing those relationships. It doesn't happen overnight.

MS. : No.

MR. RAKIS: But once you have a relationship, it can be very, very valuable. Well, I look forward. And perhaps you can share that link when that story comes out. I would love to – we would all love to see it, I would imagine.

MS. : Will do.

MR. LAWRENCE: Susan, I see that you – to do an annual publication and feature stories, and that's part of your literature package. Could you tell us where that literature package goes? How does it get distributed and what's its impact?

MS. : Yeah. Well, basically we have a number of things in there. There's a little brochure that describes the program. There's a fact sheet that gives sort of all what the reimbursement rates are and things like that. There is a one page document for participants. And then there is our most recent, what we call year-end review. And then if there's anything special, like last October, a year ago, we were at the DOL as one of three organizations presenting on apprenticeship.

So we do a write-up of the special events, and all of that is distributed in nine different places. If we do a mailing to employers, like we do quarterly in mailing, trying to drum up new business.

If we go to a special events, if I have an industry partnership meeting; you know what I mean? We're constantly trying to get the work out. Sometimes we send the materials electronically. Other times it's physical paper.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yeah. I would urge – I've had the pleasure of working with Susan in the 1199-C group for a good while. So I would just say if you haven't had a chance to look at her webpage and stuff, we will get that published at some time for free to look at. It's certainly worthwhile to see how broad that is.

MS. : And I'm happy to share all these things with everybody. I mean, why not; right? Just let me know.

MR. RAKIS: Employer testimonials are so, so important, because employers relate to each other, and they see if you can feature those on a website, that can make a huge difference as well.

MS. : Yeah. And we have that in the – right in the brochure. There's a picture of one of our major employers with one of the employees. And, again, it shows a partnership; you know what I mean? It's the idea of the manager and the employer together I think is good.

MR. RAKIS: And using a photo really makes it personal.

MS. : Oh, yeah.

MR. RAKIS: Employers like to see that. Actually employers feel good about it as well, the ones that you're working with, because that's like three – (inaudible) – for them. If they know that that brochure is going out all over the city, then everyone hears their name, and that's no-cost advertising.

MS. : Exactly.

MR. RAKIS: Any other thoughts or comments on how participants – on how you can demonstrate and add value to the business, participant side?

MS. : Hi, this is Janell (ph), and I'm terribly sorry. I would like to be – (inaudible) –more, but we're having a storm here, and I just lost the computer. I still have you on the phone, though.

MR. LAWRENCE: We can hear you fine.

MS. : Yeah. My phone –

MS. : Where are you located?

MS. : We're in Pasco County; New Port Richey area, Florida.

MS. : Oh, OK.

MS. : Yeah. And so my computer went down, but I'm still – as of right now, I'm still online with you, so I apologize. I'm listening, though.

MR. LAWRENCE: OK.

MS. : OK. I'm back off.

MR. KEATING: Any other callers?

MR. LAWRENCE: That's great. How about, John, I'll turn it over –

MR. RAKIS: We have – Gary Gonzalez posted something about getting the word out, which is the bulletin on news releases, news releases and press releases. So if you haven't had a chance to read that, we urge you to download it. It's a simple, very quick guide for getting your word out. And many of you I know have public affairs offices that you're affiliated wit, or community college or college. Typically they do it. But what I've found from experience is that if you're in a big organization, and I've worked in big organizations as well, but if you take it through the first draft of a press release, your public affairs office will much appreciate that. And they will be more likely to polish it up and get it out.

If you ask them to draft the press release and give them some facts and figures, it may take them some time. So learn how to draft the press release if you're in a larger organization, and then share that directly with your public affairs office, and you'll have the best chance, I think, of getting the word out. And that's with any press release. And you really do need to target to reporters that are on the business beat or on the employment and training beat in your community. So should I move to the next slide?

Fantastic. So now we have another poll. And all of these strategies fall into the post-placement phase of job development process that what happens after the – (inaudible) – sale. We'd like you to select three strategies that you value the most in your employment activities with employers and your post-employment activities.

MR. KEATING: All right. And I do want to, again, remind folks you're choosing three strategies, so click three boxes of the choices that we're giving you. It looks like you're doing that now. So we'll go ahead and –

MR. RAKIS: So remain accessible and available are very important to you. I think that's – and then after that reducing – making a case to reduce staff turnover and problem solving around employee problems or issues to a lesser extent then demonstrating return on investments. Moving up now is providing follow-up coaching and assistance, providing follow-up services. But remaining accessible and available seems to be taking the lead here followed by providing follow-up communication.

OK. Now that those results are in, let's take a look at what employers value. Providing follow-up communication, reducing staff turnover, and demonstrating return on investment. This is what some of the research has told us.

So while it's important to provide follow-up coaching and assistance, what they're most interested in is the follow-up communication that you have with them, how do you reduce their staff turnover, and/or reducing their staff turnover, and demonstrating a return on investment. Let's have a discussion around this. What do you do to provide follow-up communication? How do you demonstrate return on investment? How do you help reduce staff turnover?

MR. KEATING: All right. We're bringing up that open-ended question now, so we'd love to get your thoughts about how you provide follow-up communication. Again you can go ahead and type that right into the chat window, but we still are entertaining your phone comments and questions. So, again, feel free to type it in if you like, but we'd also love to hear you. \*6 to unmute your line. It also remutes. So feel free to jump right in if the phone line is open, or if you'd like to open your line, it's just \*6.

MR. RAKIS: One of the tips that I could provide on providing follow-up communication, so I always would ask the employer, or have my staff ask the employer in advance, how do you prefer we communicate, how often do you want to have communications with us. What's the best way to reach you? What time is the best way to reach you? What is the best time to reach you? So that you don't interfere with their business, and you provide them with the level. What – and we have a question from Brian, "What do you do to provide follow-ups?" Sorry. Reading Brian's (type ?).

So you're just knowing what's the best time to communicate, and then making sure that you do it at the time that's convenient to the employer and doing it in the best – in the way that they prefer. It might be by e-mail, or it might be by telephone, or it might be by site visit, depending upon the nature of your relationship with the employer.

So Aki (ph) – am I saying that correctly, Aki? To call is the – or the best way to e-mail. (Inaudible) – if that's what employers prefer. It's – I would prefer calling, because it's more likely to get feedback from the employer. And once again, you have to know when to call and how often to call. And Aki is typing in some more.

MR. LAWRENCE: I would think it depends on your relationship with that employer. I think Susan talked about one employer that has 84 placements, so that would be a major group that you would probably pay more – pay some attention to as opposed to other people, but all are important. Certainly there's reasons to have various kinds of communication.

MR. RAKIS: I think Aki is saying – e-mail (inaudible) office, we need to trace the contact from my boss. OK. That's follow-up services. Are these – your boss wants to see that you have demonstrated it.

Well, to the company that has 84 employees, that OJT placements, I imagine it would be a real challenge to maintain the level of content that you need to track the progress for each of those employees. I would love to hear how you do that with 84 employees. I know that when – I never did more than 10 or 12 or 15 I think at a time, and that was a challenge at times. I imagine that there are different supervisors that they're working with, so you may want to reach out directly to each supervisor. That might make it easier.

But still, it's important to not only provide the follow-up communication, but demonstrating how they reduced that turnover if that's possible, or demonstrating a return on investment, which we've got to keep reminding people of. It's not something that they – you got to demonstrate it actually. Does anyone do a follow-up that involves demonstrating how you've benefitted the employer over time? Has anyone used that technique, or featured it, perhaps, in a story that you've done for the press or for you website or for your newsletter?

MR. LAWRENCE: John, this is Mike. One of the tips we used to do is we used to follow-up on that, particularly if somebody advanced into a supervisory role, or up in the management in a small business that was an entry-level hire. We used to feature them as where are they now, two years later and stuff. We found that very impressive to both the employers as well as other job seekers.

MR. RAKIS: Greta (ph) just typed in, as your profit exceeded your expenses. Greta, what do you mean by that? I mean, in other words do you ask that of the employer, or do you demonstrate that, these profits, from your involvement with this organization or her organization? She's typing.

MR. KEATING: And Greta, if it's easier to jump in on the phone, go ahead and press \*6 on your phone. And that goes for everyone by the way.

MR. RAKIS: Once again, this is a good opportunity for, I think, post-placement for doing a case study, demonstrating the value that you've had the employer demonstrating the return on investment, perhaps demonstrating how – if this can be demonstrated that you've actually reduced staff turnover for a particular employer. It doesn't have to be a lengthy case study, but it could just be a paragraph or two where you just document that before our involvement, the employer's turnover was this, and after our involvement, here's how the employer's turnover grew. OK.

I mean, Greta has indicated how the company improved after the 84 hires. Are they all still working? Well, with 84 hires, which is an amazing number, and a tremendous number, and I congratulate you on that. There's no doubt that they're going to have an impact on the company one way or the other. So if you can demonstrate that, that certainly would be a powerful, powerful story to tell.

But we have another poll. We'd like to – and Mike is going to lead on that. It's about employer surveys, Mike.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thanks, John. I appreciate it. One of the most powerful things we can do is look at customer satisfaction. I'm sure we all go into many places, and grasp how well did you enjoy the services you received, or how well did you – how satisfied were you? So in this case, we're going to do another poll that's up there. We'd like to see how many of you are using customer satisfaction surveys, either online, paper, telephone with your employer partners. It's a very valuable role to play.

MR. KEATING: All right. For this one you can choose one or more, so click at least one box, and you can choose more than one if you like, so go ahead. Many of you are voting now, but go ahead and vote if you haven't already done so. We'll turn it back to you, Mike, to comment on what you're seeing.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thank you. And we see almost even. We use online. Some do not conduct. I'm sure you know in your hearts many ways what – how well people are doing, what kind of measures you might use. And in many cases, what is proven, whether you're Campbell Soup, or whether you're a new car, or whether you're staying in a hotel, or whether you're doing our services, what's the value of the service, and how happy are the customers? Are they repeat customers for the right reasons?

So most of you. I'm very happy to see that, conduct the customer satisfaction effort. I'd like to share with you, this is a simple – and this is one of the downloadable items you'd have that John and I have developed a short follow-up survey that we'll share, and we'll do a follow-up e-mail and download it. And we'll send it out in Microsoft Word format. So if you want to edit it, or use it, and brand it, you can certainly do that.

Again, these don't have to be overly complex. They just need to know, do they measure the essential functions and areas that you need to know in order to understand whether an employer is really pleased with the product that they're receiving? Anybody else do any – mentioned most of you do. Do any of you want to comment about your customer satisfaction survey?

MR. RAKIS: Does anyone use SurveyMonkey to do this?

MR. LAWRENCE: Does anybody want to comment about how good their employer surveys are? Do you have a 95 percent satisfactory rate, or what – or have you seen it change overtime?

MR. KEATING: All right. Feel free to share examples. We'd love to hear good or bad, your experiences. So take those in now to the chat window, and/or we'd love to hear your voice. Thanks to those who've already shared verbally. But if you'd like to contribute something, go ahead and press \*6 to unmute your phone line.

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. We've kept this survey really brief, and I think that really does help in terms of getting a good response rate. But we also want to (stay ?) a part of it for comments for an employer that has extra things to share. But I know that in my experience what I've done in trainings, and I've had follow-up surveys, I always paid close attention to that stuff, and I think it really does, for those of you that are not doing it, it does give you some insight as to things you're doing right and perhaps some things that you made the improvement with.

We'd like to hear from you if you're actually using customer service, I mean, employer surveys, and what you've learned from the process. How many people have responded? What's been your response rate? How you've – perhaps how you've changed your way of doing business, way of providing training, or way of providing placement services based on the feedback that you've got it?

MR. LAWRENCE: I see Rick (ph) commented about – he sends paper, or e-mail survey to employers, but don't get a lot of response. So, Rick, has that happened over a long period of time? I mean, does it – is it consistently low, or do you feel – what is a level of response? Do you want to elaborate a little bit on that?

MR. KEATING: And, Rick, if it's easier to chime in over the phone, \*6.

MR. RAKIS: One thing that I've found helpful is –

MR. : Hey. This is Rick.

MR. LAWRENCE: Hey, Rick.

MR. : When we sent out the survey – hey, Mike. How are you?

MR. LAWRENCE: Good.

MR. : We just didn't get a lot of – get the responses back from the employer. Even the ones sometimes we have good relationships with, we don't get the survey back. And probably over the last five years, 20 percent.

MR. RAKIS: That's low for that type of survey. How long is your survey, Rick?

MR. : It's four questions.

MR. RAKIS: Four questions, OK. That's short. That's the way it should be. Do you do a follow-up call, or e-mail, or –?

MR. : We try to. I can't say we do it on every occasion, but we do.

MR. RAKIS: One thing that I found – can help with a survey is to do a pre-announcement that in the next couple of days you'll be receiving a survey from us. It's one page. It'll take three minutes of your time, or five minutes of your time, so just getting that announcement ahead of time.

And then saying why you need it. It's really important for us to improve our level of services. So pre-announcement sometimes can boost that. Well, we know from the research on surveys that a pre-announcement can actually raise the response rate. You may want to try – have you used SurveyMonkey, or do – have you tried that?

MR. : No. I'm sort of SurveyMonkey challenge, so I haven't used it yet.

MR. RAKIS: Well, perhaps we should do a bulletin on using SurveyMonkey, and it is really is relatively easy to use. And it's available at no cost. I mean, there are – you can pay for certain levels of service, but a basic survey can be done at no cost.

MR. LAWRENCE: And if you're doing it under 10 questions, then you can do it for no cost.

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. We're recommending that you do no more than 10 questions, or you keep it below 10 questions to get a good response rate. But –

MR. LAWRENCE: And, Rick, based on the respondents, people that did respond. Did you learn much from their responses?

MR. : I think we learned what we were looking for. Whether or not the people that we provide it for them worked, or did the service we provide to the employer work?

MR. RAKIS: Well, that's good. I mean, even if it's only 20 percent responding rate, getting feedback is always a good thing to have. But perhaps we can work with you to get that respondent rate up. And we'd be happy to do that.

MR. : OK. Great. Thank you.

MR. LAWRENCE: (Inaudible). I see you may some great comments there. I was going to offer as a tip. You said we don't send formal surveys to choose, but there's nothing like hearing from the employers to let our support for employers, or just a personal support for – (inaudible). It's always hard when employers offer support. I follow up with employers who've fallen off to make sure there are no problems with the service. It's a great comment. You want to add a little bit about talking to the employers?

One of the tips I used to do in my time was when I saw an employer who had quit, I would go – I'd like to examine my negative. I would go and speak to them. Not to ask them to come back, just to understand what did we do to cause you to not – was it something with our service? And that was very eye-opening to me. That was one of the tips I found that they saw when the director was coming in to ask, and they (knew that it cared ?), and that seem to make some difference. Sometimes they would come back and say, well, how about I give it another try, but I never asked them to do that. So I was really interested when you said you like to follow-up with employers that have fallen off to make sure it's not the service.

MR. RAKIS: Or even a phone call can – one can do a survey, a five-question survey using a phone call as well. It's a little less formal as sending something out on paper, but you're getting the same results back.

And I think if people don't respond to a written survey, one of the best things to do is follow up and say, we sent you a survey, – (inaudible). It'll only take two or three minutes of your time. Do you have some time to do it? But if you know the employer well enough and know what's the best time to reach out to the employer that's also a big help. But if they know you, they're unlikely to say no to a three minute phone call where you ask four or five survey questions.

Did someone have something to add? I heard someone in the background there. Greta said that she does – they do a survey at their job fair, and they fill it out on site and have them turn it back in. Good. You're using the – you're seizing the moment to when you have the employers with you to get their feedback. And, Greta, what's been the response, what have you learned from those surveys since you've been at the job fairs? Have you picked up any tips, or guidance that you can share, or something that you've learned from your own organization?

One thing that I've seen over the years, too, is that sometimes people will not gather information, or groups will gather information, and then it will sit some place and it won't be used. As part of their routine, routine contact with employers, they solicit information, they gather information, but they kind of drop the ball because they don't analyze it. It just sits there either on a form or on someone's desk, and they don't take advantage of all the information that they've gathered.

And Greta is typing. Greta, you can always feel free to unmute your phone. If it's easier for you than typing, welcome to hear your voice. I'll be glad to hear your advice. OK. We've learned to change the venue to make it more accessible for employers and to provide staff, help to bring more – to bring (their more ?) – (inaudible).

So you've learned something from your surveys. It's rare that people conduct employer survey and don't learn something from it. There's always feedback that you can use, and if you can keep it simple, and keep it short, then you're much more likely to get a response.

But for those of you that are having trouble getting a response, we welcome the opportunity to provide you with some assistance in either designing a survey or using SurveyMonkey or using a technique that we've found to be effective, we'd be happy to provide that assistance one-on-one.

MR. LAWRENCE: And if you've been successful, and you can always let us know – one of those ways to let us know is to share it on your Q&R, and we can submit – we always want to know what's working for you and what kind of success stories you have, so there's lots of avenues to do that.

MR. RAKIS: Let's move on to the next slide, Mike.

MR. LAWRENCE: John.

MR. RAKIS: OK. Tips. OK. You're in the final stretch, the last year of your (brand ?). You got to raise those placement numbers. You want to add success. I've been in that position. I know what it feels like, and you're closing in on a goal or an objective. How do you get focused? What do you do? What tips can you share? I know with my organization, as the focus shifted to placement and retention, we would have daily meetings. The goals would be put up on the wall. Every day they'd be changed. I'd put someone in charge of changing the graph.

Everybody in the organization became a job developer. It was everybody's job to be on the lookout in the newspapers, in their walks, on the streets of New York. If they heard about an opening, or if they knew about a company, we wanted to hear about it, so that was one of my strategies. And the other strategy that I like to use is that I have a big map of the area. And every place we had a placement, I'd put a thumbtack on. Now you can do this via computer. Doesn't have to use a big map, but I like to have it up in the office so that everyone can see it.

When I looked at what areas in the city were we not working in; it was kind of interesting, because job developers tend to have certain areas that they like to focus on, typically because it's either around the office, or because it's near where they live. And then there were some areas that we found that were not – we hadn't focused on our attention on, and there were businesses there that we could net some placements in. So that told me where we needed to – either shift our focus or change our focus. So what tips can you share? What – in the crunch, as you enter the final stages of the grant, what's worked for you? How have you gotten your numbers up? How have you made those placements? What's worked for you?

And if something had to work for you, let us – share that. We'd love to hear it. I know all of you have different techniques and methods for reaching your placement numbers, whether you're ahead or behind. What do you do? I think Andre (ph) is typing. Mike, is there anything that you'd like to share with the group?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes. This is kind of a tip in a different way, John. I guess we have found that bulk mailing in a short period of time really didn't work, didn't have a lot of response for the time and effort and money that we put into it. So we learned – kind of learned that the hard way, similar to what Rick said. Unfortunately we would send out a mass mailing to employers, and it really wasn't – it wasn't very successful. It just competed with the hundreds of other pieces that they receive.

MR. RAKIS: I learned the same thing the first year that I was doing this. I spent a lot of money on nonprofit mailing status, and then it just didn't net me any jobs, so then it was thousands of letters went out. So that's something that hasn't worked.

MR. LAWRENCE: A little more targeted work, like making them aware of an employer fair coming up, or something like that or some kind of focus event. That was a little different. But just to say this wonderful dead for you just competed with everything else and got lost in the shuffle.

MR. RAKIS: I know all of you have your –

MS. : This is Terry Sanders (ph) from Lorain County Community College. And we also doubled down, as you mentioned. I mean, just really every week looking at our results where we're at, paying close attention to who's in our talent pool. But really also leveraging very much our economic development partners.

So we stay very in as close in touch as we can with those who are working with companies. Our project was focused on innovation companies, so they tend not to make extensive use of public job boards and free services around these jobs. So just really it's that intensive, ongoing communication with them.

We have found with some of our high field folks it's been that – it's been multiple touch points to support that person being looked at by a CEO. We just had a woman hire who is a scientist and had been laid off by one company through three different people that had a connection to the CEO. He ended up taking a close look at her and hiring her. So it's just that ongoing constant collaboration with anyone who may already be looking with companies as well as our direct outreach that we have found to be successful.

MR. RAKIS: How do you step up your contacts with your economic development partners? Do you have meetings, calls, or all of the above?

MS. : It's a little of both. The ones that are in our local community we seem to meet with on a regular basis. We meet with every month. But we being – any of us in workforce development as our workforce board, our career tech center in the college as well as our economic development allies.

We've stayed in touch in person and by phone with the partners that we had originally on the – although their grant is over, we have continued to stay in touch with them. Just especially when we have really candidates that we just think are really potentially a great match for some of their innovation companies, and particularly when we also find an opening, and we want to find out if they have a relationship, and they would reach out to the person who's hiring.

MR. RAKIS: So doubling down on your efforts with your economic development partners with your employers, – (inaudible) – staff, regular meetings, those are all things that you've found to be effective in making placements?

MS. : Right. It's that personal outreach, that personal relationship building.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yeah. You've certainly done a nice job making multiple contacts in a very efficient way, more, of course, that that company would hear about this from multiple people and groups and partners, and that they're all knowledgeable and have a value to that company already, so you've certainly organized your efforts in a very efficient way. I compliment you on that effort.

MR. RAKIS: What do you think to motivate your job development staff? What techniques do you do to keep them on target without burning out?

MS. : For our staff?

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. I mean, I think it's – and one thing that I've – obviously we – a lot of pressure falls on those people making placements as you approach the end of the contract, so how do you – do you do anything to keep them motivated with that so that they don't burn out?

MS. : Well, it's definitely a team effort. I think we celebrate every placement. I mean, I think a lot of us are driven by this work because we want to help companies succeed and we want to help individuals find their place.

And then it's just that constant teamwork that no one person feels like they're shouldering all of this, because it is such a multi- – it takes so many different touch points in this environment to help people be successfully – and I don't know, Tony, if you're on. If you want to jump in (inaudible) and others who are doing this work.

MR. : Yeah. And just kind of reiterate that personal approach. So if we refer a candidate out for a position, we're having them go ahead and do whatever the normal application process, and then we check within our network is somebody has a connection with that company. If they do, and then it's that personal touch-up saying, hey, we have this candidate who just applied. So you throw a name out there, they're more likely to take a closer look at the resume.

MR. RAKIS: Keeping it personal and then celebrating success. How do you celebrate your successes when you make a placement? Anything special that you do, or different, or anything that you can share?

MS. : We just kind of hoot and holler at our team meetings I think.

MR. : We do a lot of high-fiving.

MR. RAKIS: Yeah. One of the things that I've done with employers is provide them with recognition, and then do that at ceremonies so that everyone feels that they're part of the action and part of the success.

MS. : Yeah. I will as a team – it's the college. Like, the college is doing a really nice job of telling the stories. Lorain Community College has a publication called Career Focus, which is really focused on highlighting students who plan on to get hired, or be really interested in internships. And actually our college is now rolling out a publication really directed at businesses.

So we've been actually sharing quite a few stories from our speech market accelerator to help really direct it at companies, to help companies – company leaders understand. It is a complex of interactions. We want to be a good partner. We want to be a partner for the long haul, because the bottom line measure we're looking at is, is that company growing? Is that company achieving their growth strategy?

MR. RAKIS: Posted the news stories, get the word out. What I found useful is that you allow the line staff, the frontline staff to be quoted in a story, to talk with the reporters, talk to the people that are compelling the story. It really does feel good. I mean, it's one thing for an executive director to give a quote, but when a line staff person – a developer – has a quote in either in the newspaper or in a newsletter, that makes them feel good.

They're getting some greater recognition, so I always urge profits or programs to make sure that all of their staff is praying to be responsive to be able to go in on a job interview, or perhaps a radio interview. Things like that make people feel proud of their work, because they're getting not only recognition from within the organization, but outside the organization as well. So thank you for sharing that.

We're seeing some more comments being typed in by Andrea (ph). I think she covers a large area. They try to reach out to each county program each year, so that's the second half of that year I focus on visiting employers in the counties that I've not had a placement. Great, great idea. I think it's really important. I think at a beginning of a contract to put together a stakeholder map of employers, and all the areas, all the employers that you work with.

And then as you see them, as you make contact with them, check them off, but look at that stakeholder map at least once a month to see who haven't you reached out to. And I think there is this tendency to meet a little bit further away, perhaps not to reach out to them. Or perhaps if you haven't had much success in the past, not reaching out to them as much, but those are the employers that you've got to reach out to nevertheless.

(Crosstalk, inaudible.)

MR. RAKIS: So someone I think needs to mute their phone.

OK. Additionally, I coordinate an industry sector partnership for our project sector. We meet regularly. We send monthly newsletters. It helps employers to remember me and the project when they are looking for new employers. So having regular meetings, regular monthly newsletters that people get. Excellent.

To motivate staff, Andrea goes on to say, I have short-term goals and sticker charts. She says, can you tell I'm a millennial? Yes. I can. Well, that's valuable as well. I think people need to know what the numbers are. They need to see progress. They need to be complimented on the progress, but everyone needs to know that it's time to focus on those placement calls.

MR. LAWRENCE: I'd just like to add, John, many of us in these projects are already working in certain sectors, whether it's manufacturing or healthcare or whatever. But sections are going to take on a much important role as a part of broad public policies, so certainly that's a tip everybody can build on and learn from that, how to organize your luck by working through the common needs of sectors. So made a good point, and of course certainly good ideas.

Susan commented about always be looking. As John had said about everybody is a job developer in his office, but also different twists you put on it. Sometimes you're out just talking to somebody on something else, some outside activities, and you develop a good relationship with people. So, Susan, anything you want to add onto that, any examples or thoughts on that?

MR. RAKIS: By the way, not only is every staff member is a job developer, but every board member was as well in my nonprofit, so I would always talk to board members, because they were heads of companies at one point in their careers, perhaps heads of companies while they're on my board.

And they knew employers, and so I would brief them on a monthly basis as to our stats of where we were in placement and ask their guidance and help. It's an important to have an employer advisory committee as well, and turning to them for guidance on placements. And we want to use their network. So if you have 12 people on your advisory board, I always have this saying with boards, whether it was my board of directors or my advisory board, give or get out.

I expected, as the executive director, for people to actually – if you're going to be on a board, you've got to do something. If not, it's time for you to move onto another board, perhaps, or step down – (inaudible) – my expectations of my board as well as my advisory board was, we need some names of employers to reach out to. Give us some names and we'll do the follow-up.

Is anyone using advisory board to help with your placements to help with your networking as well as meeting with economic development boards? Do you use as advisory boards in that capacity? And I think that's an effective way, if you've chosen your advisory board carefully and you meet on at least a quarterly basis, I think that's something that one can expect for them.

When I've looked for advisory board members, I always put together a job description of what I expect from you as an advisory board member. So it might be as simple as coming every quarter, but also I mentioned helping us network in the employer community so that anyone that took on that role as an advisory board member, they knew exactly what I was expecting, and I think that's important. I think –

MR. : Right. We're using the board, too, for business contacts and developing. It's very nice. I mean, this is actually from – (inaudible). And we really use the board because they have better contacts. They have also fellow business members who also recommended each other to us and stuff. What I did when I was working for a staffing agency, I send to the businesses like the greeting cards, funny cards, sometimes – (inaudible) – and stuff like that, just to remind them that I'm still there to help.

MR. RAKIS: Mm-hmm. And how many people are on your advisory board?

MR. : We have about 19, 18.

MR. RAKIS: That's a large board.

MR. : Yes. We are nonprofit, too.

MR. RAKIS: And how often do they meet, or how often do you reach out to them?

MR. : Every month they have a board meeting, and all the stuff is in writing, especially business department.

MR. RAKIS: Good. Well, that's real active involvement. And it's good for them to see the staff as well, but I'm glad that you're using them. I mean, that's – in that capacity, in the extent. And is there – in terms of your placement rate, you've found that to be very, very helpful?

MR. : Yes. It's very helpful. They have really good contacts with the businesses around central regions. So the recommendation coming from that and then – (inaudible) – is just our capability to help businesses right away, and it's very successful and helpful.

MR. RAKIS: Well, that's impressive that you have 19 members that meet on a regular basis on a monthly basis. It takes a lot of work and effort to gather those people on a monthly basis to make sure they’re still there. But the fact that you're doing it, and actually obtaining some leads, networking through them is just great.

MR. : Yeah.

MR. RAKIS: Thanks very, very much for sharing that. Anyone else that would like to share?

I think we see – Debbie says that she uses economic development partnerships to network with companies who are expanding or locating in our region. Once again, leveraging your partnerships with economic development.

So you're using all of your partnerships, engaging board members and advisory board members, documenting results of keeping people apprised of those results as they developed, engaging your staff in public relations efforts so that they get credit for some of the work that's been done, celebrating your success with staff, all of these things I think are important.

It's just not one thing that worked. I think using multiple strategies is probably the most effective technique. Is there anyone else that would like to share what you've done or what you do when it comes to crunch time and getting the word out to employers, or perhaps closing those deals with employers?

I know it can be a challenge at times, especially if the job market is drying up, or it may not be what you want it to be at the time you have to do placements, and that can happen. Even the best of planning, sometimes there can be a lull in the hiring process. I think we shared quite a few things. Mike, anything that you'd like to add to what we've seen thus far?

MR. LAWRENCE: I'd just like to echo, John, that you mentioned about it's not just one solution, but it's many. We know your local contacts trumps a lot of things. But understanding all these tools and how you use them within your local contacts is really the key to success, some great sharing of ideas here, some great tips. We hope you pay attention to them, and we'll perhaps help you list them and look at this after it's recorded and share with your staff.

MR. RAKIS: One or two more things I'd like to add, Mike, is that for every employer you have, get a referral. Every success that you've had, reach out to that employer and say, we're pleased that you are happy with the placement that we've made and – (inaudible) – retained on the job. And we'd like a referral to another employer from you. It's pure networking, but, I mean, if you haven't done it, reach out to every employer that you work with, and get that referral. It can make a huge difference I think in netting the placements that you need.

We'd like to move onto the next slide. And if we are available for assistance in help in job placement that you're having an issue or a problem and you'd like us to diagnosis it, we're available for that. If you'd like some tips or some one-on-one guidance, we can do that as well. Whatever your needs are in terms of placement and job development, and keeping people on the job, helping them advance on the job. Both Mike and I have lots of experience doing that, and we welcome the opportunity to share what we've learned and work with you one-on-one.

If you feel that your staff may need some training, we can do training for small groups over the phone. Anything that you think we can help with, please feel free to call us, and we would be happy to design a solution just for your nonprofit or your budget. Mike, anything you'd like to add before we go onto the last slide?

MR. LAWRENCE: John, you've done an outstanding job. I certainly take up – everybody takes up on any kind of assistance we can provide. Thank you very much.

MS. : And this is Erica with Coffey. I just wanted to share with the group that once again you can download the employer's survey that they spoke about, as well as getting the word out. And that just shares how you can create press releases and be able to get your – highlight what you're doing in your publications. So those two documents are on the site that you can download.

MR. RAKIS: We'd like to thank you for participating. And I know that we have a survey to do. Gary, is that correct – Brian, I'm sorry, Brian.

MR. KEATING: That's OK. Yep. We're going to actually move over there now.

(END)