

Marketing?

Now More than Ever...

**Maximizing Employer Relationships
in Turbulent Times**

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Abstracted from:

Get the Marketing Edge
by Dale DiLeo & Dawn langton © TRN, Inc.

The most productive way to look at job development is to think of the process as the practical extension of personalized career planning. Career planning should lead to clear ideas about types of work and worksites desired, job characteristics and the individual's special considerations. This information is the basis for job development, and should drive everything you do to help each person become meaningfully employed.

A job search focuses on the characteristics of the individual potential employee and the needs of the employer. It is up to the skill and judgment of the employment professional to facilitate the connection.

The process of facilitating that connection relies on *marketing*. Marketing can be thought of as anything you do to build relationships with your key audiences. For instance, you need to present your agency to employers as professional and businesslike. This requires a well-conceptualized marketing plan. The elements of the marketing plan will help job developers approach employers and act as a resource to them.

But marketing does not end with finding jobs. You must include the process of negotiating a unique situation for a person that will benefit both the individual and the employer – a win-win scenario.

Employment professionals face a second balancing act: that of marketing 1) the specific employment services and the skills of particular individuals provided to employers by your agency **and** 2) the abilities and image of people with disabilities in general. For example, a marketing campaign that portrays people with disabilities as “in need of a helping hand” might result in job placements, but would do so at the expense of their image as contributing members of society.

Setting Marketing Goals and Objectives for Job Development

Your marketing goals should flow from the overall goals of your agency or program, which support your mission statement. In turn, every marketing step you take, from advertisement to advisory board, should support your marketing goals. The chart below shows a sample mission statement and a related goal and objective for an employment program or agency.

Additionally, some specific objectives can pose an even greater problem for employment services for people with disabilities. Because of the nature of personalized job development, program-wide objectives must be used cautiously. Personalized job development is all about each individual's dreams and plans for his or her life and career. A goal such as “place *x* number of workers” must be looked at in human terms. You are not selling widgets to ABC Company; you are dealing in people's lives.

Say, for example, several individuals are not happy in their placements and re-enter the job market. That leaves you with 25% of your service recipients unemployed at the end of the year. But if they learned more about their skills and preferences, their experiences may have been a success in pointing out new directions for career exploration.

Your challenge is to develop objectives and evaluations that provide clear data on how you've done, but at the same time leave room for employees and job seekers to grow, explore and make choices.

The Planning Process for Marketing for Job Development

Numerous communication models are presented in marketing and public relations texts throughout the world. Most illustrate a similar slant – that the process is an ongoing, cyclical endeavor that constantly feeds new information into the system to modify it and make it more effective.

The steps involved in marketing to employers are the same as those you would use to impact any

audience. Use the following set of questions to shape your marketing planning. It is a tool to kick off or support your ongoing process of clarifying agency goals, defining audience needs and using limited resources in the most effective ways. The questions cover the key areas of two-way communications models, including research and evaluation.

Involve “internal” audiences such as people with disabilities, staff, board members and volunteers in your marketing planning. All of these groups have a stake in your program’s success and you, in turn, need their support in your marketing efforts.

- *What is the mission of our organization?*

Each agency or program should have a consensus of its vision of services stated in a concise mission statement.

- *What are we marketing (our product/service)?*

From the mission statement, a variety of areas should be apparent, including such things as employer labor source, individual job placement, skill development and image enhancement, agency/program identity and family support.

- *What are we currently doing (marketing audit)?*

Evaluate your current efforts to determine what is working, what could use improvement and what should be eliminated.

- *To what audiences/publics are we marketing?*

An organization has many interdependent audiences that relate to its goals and mission.

- *What are the needs of our audiences?*

Each audience, from families to employers, is unique and has its own needs. Utilize research to learn more about these needs and also to discover ways to reach your audiences.

- *What action do we want our audiences to take?*

Spell out in objective form the steps that each audience would take in order for your mission to be successful.

- *What are the abilities and preferences of the people we represent?*

To be precise about your ability to meet the needs of your audiences and the goals of your program, you should make a thorough analysis of career skills, aptitudes and interests of each individual served.

- *How are we positioned?*

As an employment service providing workers to employers, your agency should be aware of other such services in the area. Determine how your agency compares to others and what unique speciality services you offer that traditional for-profit employment services may not have. A special concern is to position yourself as a service to employers, and not only as a human service organization.

- *What will our customers pay for our product or services?*

Most employment programs that serve people who have difficulty entering the labor force do not charge for services.

- *Where will we deliver our product or services?*

Employment services are provided at the worksite.

- *What are regional economic needs and trends?*

Become familiar with unemployment, economic growth and projections for development in your region.

- *What specifically is our message to each audience?*

Because of the uniqueness of every audience, a concise message needs to be formulated for each one.

- *What are our resources?*

Make an analysis of fiscal and people resources that can be committed to the marketing effort.

- *What mix of tools best communicates our message within our resources?*

Based on the resources available and the audiences and messages developed, draw up a promotional plan (or plans) for creating and refining the tools that will present the most cost-effective results. Include a schedule for each.

- *How will we measure success?*

Your plan should include ways to evaluate audience satisfaction, the impact on the image of people with disabilities, specific service outcomes and the results of individual tools.

Organizing Action Plans

The planning questions outlined on the previous pages represent a comprehensive approach to marketing planning. It starts with being clear on your mission statement, what you are currently marketing and to whom, and the pros and cons of your current marketing efforts. You might assume that your whole organization agrees on these areas, but it is wise to set aside a planning meeting to be sure. For example, many a marketing planning session has been sidetracked by disagreement about organizational mission and current activities.

Once you have established consensus (or agreed to a compromise!), one way to organize your marketing planning is to brainstorm all the audiences or publics that have an impact on how well your agency achieves its mission. You can then develop a communication plan for building relationships with each group.

Use the flow chart at bottom as a way to begin organizing your key planning steps. It is a simplified version of the marketing planning questions.

- *Audience*– The specific people to **whom** you are or should be marketing.
- *Purpose/Outcome*– **Why** you are marketing: The reason a particular audience is important; what behavior you want to elicit from each audience; what you would like the outcome of the relationship to be.
- *Audience Needs/Exchange of Services*– **What** each audience needs and what things of value you can exchange.
- *Tools/Action Steps*– **How** you will market: tools and techniques to develop an “exchange of services” that meets audience needs and brings about the outcomes you are looking for.

Use the form above to record your ideas in each category for each audience. One way to use this form is to break all staff and board members into groups of no more than 20. Advisory boards, including employer and parent groups, can also participate. Meet with each group for 1-2 hours. Have them brainstorm key planning steps for each audience. Record their input on overheads, large sheets of paper or a blackboard. Transfer the results to forms later.

This exercise in internal research:

- involves all members of the organization in the marketing process, gains their support and increases their awareness
- generates a greater wealth of ideas than what one or two people assigned to marketing might think of
- suggests audience needs that can be used later when asking employers directly about their needs.

As you continue your marketing planning, you focus on audiences with whom you must build relationships, and you develop methods to research their needs.

External Research to Learn Employer Needs

The key to a marketing approach is to know, in detail, the needs of your audiences. This is sometimes referred to as being “market driven” instead of “program driven.” Rather than focusing on what you currently offer and why **you** think it is good, you must step outside your program and view things from the prospective employer’s point of view. This “external research” can be as simple as meeting with a cross section of employers and asking them about their needs, or more complex, such as a formal random sample survey of employers in your region. The section on action plans talked about internal research to tap into staff ideas, including brainstorming the needs of your audiences. These internal suggestions are an excellent starting point that can be built on and modified by using external research.

For example, if internal staff suggest training on the ADA, it is important to learn if employers would find that helpful. You can ask employers to rate such suggestions and to offer their own. Once you determine employer needs, it is time to look inward again and modify or create ways for your services to meet those needs.

Organizing Employer Research into a Job Bank

Once employer information is collected, it should be organized into a “job bank,” with a file on every employer. The job bank should be in a computer data base, but a set of file cards will work for those without access to a computer. The goal is to know as much as you can about each employer – both personally and professionally – to build a working relationship with them and monitor their developing employment needs.

It is important to know each of your customers **individually**, not through generic market data. Your “Employer Profile” will differ depending on your area, agency and potential workers, but you should include both a detailed resume of your contact person at the business (education, family, previous employment, special interests) and details about the company (management goals and concerns, present and future employment needs, openness to hiring people with disabilities). Also include a section on communications: how the employer heard about you; what sort of contact has been made with the employer, when and by whom; and what the next step in the communication process should be.

A job bank such as this will help you build employer **relationships**, which are the most important tool in the job developer’s toolkit. But you must understand it and use it, not just compile it. And it must be kept up-to-date, because outdated information can be worse than no information at all. It should also be treated as confidential, since some of it may not be intended for the general public. Share it with the necessary people in your program, but monitor who has access to it out of respect for each employer.

Finally, a job bank will ensure that staff turnover does not cause your agency to lose touch with an employer. A new job developer can quickly review pertinent information about each contact person and each business. He or she also can keep the marketing communication effort flowing smoothly and avoid duplication of effort, such as sending a brochure that the employer has already received, which would make your agency appear unprofessional.

Action Steps:

- Know your “universe.” Develop a complete list of area businesses by exploring Chamber of Commerce memberships, business directories, Yellow Pages or other listings.
- Organize these businesses into categories such as growth industries, established companies, companies with labor concerns and start-up businesses. Do whatever research is necessary to enable you

to do this, including the use of existing data from the library or Chamber of Commerce. Consider a one-page questionnaire to businesses to glean basic information.

- Once you have categorized businesses, use the list to prioritize companies for contact. Considerations:

- potential job matches
- opportunities for quality placements based on the career planning sessions you complete with individuals.

Professional Symbolism and Images

The name, logo and other symbols of an employment program should present a consistent image that represents the services being marketed to employers. The image also should be dignified and respectful towards the people served. Too often, human service agencies choose names or images that evoke pity, sympathy or charity.

Instead, choose names and logos that represent careers, business, resources, employment and professionalism. If your agency has an established sub-contract relationship with local businesses, consider a separate division or program name for your employment services. This prevents confusion about the two messages your agency may be giving: work procurement for your facility and workers to fill jobs for employers. Likewise, if your agency offers services other than employment to individuals, such as residential support, consider a separate name for your employment component.

Don't confuse employers with a logo designed for fundraising, or one that offers comfort and security to parents. Employers expect to work with a professional service that understands the labor needs of their companies. Your logo should convey that image.

Your business card should also convey a professional and businesslike image related to the services a business expects – not the services you are providing to the people in your program. Likewise, use job titles that employers encounter in the business world, such as general manager and account executive.

Sample Marketing Calendar

Month _____

Staff									
Week 1									
Week 2									
Week 3									
Week 4									
Week 5									

Priority Job Seekers

Name	Employers to Contact	Referrals	Staff Responsible
_____	_____	_____	_____
Career Goal Areas	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Name	Employers to Contact	Referrals	Staff Responsible
_____	_____	_____	_____
Career Goal Areas	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Name	Employers to Contact	Referrals	Staff Responsible
_____	_____	_____	_____
Career Goal Areas	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Dates	Appointments	Phone Numbers	Notes

Month _____ ✓ Employer Marketing Timeline

Employer _____ Phone _____ Referral _____ Phone _____

	Contact Date	Contact Type	Outcome	Next Steps	Tools Used	Tools Developed
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
	Hire Date	Start Date	Job Title	Supervisor/Co-worker	Staff Support	Backup Staff

Employer _____ Phone _____ Referral _____ Phone _____

	Contact Date	Contact Type	Outcome	Next Steps	Tools Used	Tools Developed
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
	Hire Date	Start Date	Job Title	Supervisor/Co-worker	Staff Support	Backup Staff

Employer _____ Phone _____ Referral _____ Phone _____

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Employer _____ Phone _____ Referral _____ Phone _____

	Contact Date	Contact Type	Outcome	Next Steps	Tools Used	Tools Developed
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
	Hire Date	Start Date	Job Title	Supervisor/Co-worker	Staff Support	Backup Staff

Marketing Planning Cover Sheet

Date _____

Agency Name _____

	Person Responsible	Date Completed
What is the mission of our organization?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What are we marketing (product/service)?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What are we currently doing (market audit)?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
To what audiences are we marketing?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What are the needs of our audiences?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What action do we want our audiences to take?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What are the abilities and preferences of the people we represent?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
How are we positioned?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What will our customers pay for our product or services?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Where will we deliver our product or services?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What are regional economic needs and trends?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What specifically is our message to each audience?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What are our resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
What mix of tools best communicates our message within our resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
How will we measure success?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Image Audit

What type of image do we present to our audiences?

	1	2	3	4	5
	Inadequate		Adequate		Excellent
Name of Program _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Message/Slogan _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Logo/Symbolic Representation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Stationary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appearance					
Facility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sign	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of Printed Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Groupings of People Served					
Perceived as Adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perceived as Individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recommendations for Improvement:

1.

2.

3.

4.



FOR PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
IN EMPLOYMENT:

Get the Marketing Edge!

A Job Developer's Toolkit for People with Disabilities

Now in its second printing, **Get the Marketing Edge!** has proven to be one of the most popular and useful books for employment, school-to-work transition and rehabilitation professionals.

How often have you heard it or even felt it yourself:

*There are just no jobs out there
for the people I represent ...*

The jobs **are** out there. Yet finding good jobs is one of the most difficult challenges in today's workplace. Often marketing and job development are left to staff with little support, guidance or training. This book can help you answer these crucial questions:

▼ DOES YOUR AGENCY OR SCHOOL:

- *have a well-designed logo, brochure and other tools of job development targeted to business?*
- *have a written marketing plan?*
- *actively network with local businesses?*

▼ DO YOU KNOW HOW TO HANDLE EMPLOYER CONCERNS ABOUT:

- *the Americans with Disabilities Act?*
- *the cost of insurance to employ workers with disabilities?*
- *misassumptions about workers with disabilities?*

▼ DO YOU KNOW HOW TO:

- *write a personal vocational profile?*
- *target your marketing message to key employers?*
- *develop job carving strategies with employers?*



Help support job development with the tools of marketing. *Get the Marketing Edge!* takes the mystery out of marketing because it's clearly written and uses real-world examples. It helps the reader address the needs of the two prime customers in an employment match: employers and people with disabilities.

PART ONE adapts proven marketing strategies from the business world to help employers diversify their labor force to include workers with disabilities. It gives you the tools to market the abilities of job seekers with any type of disability.

PART TWO hones in on individuals ... how to assess career skills and preferences for each worker and help each person shine in the job seeking process. It covers face-to-face interactions with employers, and includes cutting edge issues that affect marketing, such as the use of natural supports.

Let *Get the Marketing Edge!* help you develop these and other proven marketing strategies that lead to good jobs for people with disabilities.

ALSO INCLUDED!

A set of ten appendices to help you jump into your marketing efforts, including: Marketing Audit, Sample Business Survey, Image Audit, Sample Resume, Marketing Planning Worksheet and more ...

“Covers job development from A to Z.”

\$39

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Overview of Marketing Planning

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