Boot Camp Project Narrative: Team Indiana

The 2020-2021 Disability & Employment Boot Camp supported teams in their efforts to design and test innovative ideas in their evolving workforce landscapes; ideas that will strengthen system capacity to increase employment of Americans with disabilities.

Experience Stages

| Convening Team | Defining Challenge | Building Empathy | Identifying Solution | Prototyping Solution | Testing and Refining Prototype | Defining Next Steps |

Convening Team Indiana

- **Melissa Gard** (Lead), Northern Indiana Workforce Board
- **Ashley Hout**, Corvilla, Inc.
- **Brandy House**, Oaklawn
- **Joanne Murillo**, Indiana Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- **Julie Stroud**, Corvilla, Inc.
- **Roz Summerlin**, Senior1Care

Defining the Challenge

Experience Highlights

The team completed a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to help clarify the challenge with current business engagement. The team identified key stakeholders.

Results

Original Challenge Statement

> Businesses lack information about how hiring individuals with disabilities can benefit them, that support is available to them to overcome obstacles, and resources exist to assist them in confronting challenges. Businesses see more obstacles than resources and perceive that they don't have the time required to overcome the obstacles in hiring individuals with disabilities. As a result, they are hesitant to take any time in considering the benefits as they have other priorities requiring their attention.

SWOT Analysis

Through the exercise, the team discovered possibilities for expanding training for businesses in Indiana as employers become increasingly interested in innovation and new ideas. Understanding that businesses may worry about the amount of time it takes to train someone with a disability was interesting yet identifying various misconceptions and misunderstandings businesses have of individuals with disabilities as the root of the challenge was more telling.

STRENGTHS

- Strong sense of collaboration on the ground among multiple agencies.
- People experienced working with businesses in the community.
- Experience working in industry for many years.
- Have a good marketing team here at Oaklawn.
- Individuals motivated to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. We have many community relationships built already.
- Wide range and size of industries.
- A great sense of knowledge.
- Knowledge of community resources.
- Strong backgrounds of team. We are advocates for those who are not able to speak for themselves.
- A passion for the industry.
- Innovation born of few resources. Some networking structures/groups already exist.
- Partnerships between agencies already established – e.g., Vocational Rehab and WorkOne.
- Many partnerships built already.
- Working relationships between the agencies on our team – WorkOne, VR, mental health, etc.

WEAKNESSES

- The time frame it takes sometimes to get things done.
- Sense of competition between agencies that do the same work rather than cooperation.
- Communication between departments.
- Lack of knowledge of some resources that may exist.

- Working together toward a common goal instead of individually.
- Lip service to some support.
- Clear boundaries and expectations for supervisors.
- Lack of time to work on collaboration projects – people feel their plate is already full without realizing how effectively their time would produce outcomes when collaborating.
- Staying in our lane – knowing our roles.
- Excuses – that's broad, but maybe, at times, some not trying as hard.
- Duplication of some services – competition and money streams.
- People feeling "that's not my job" instead of thinking big picture.
- Lack of engagement of staff that aren't directly involved in working with IWD.
- Lack of training in certain areas.
- Funding.
- Billable vs. non-billable – it's hard to justify doing a lot of things that aren't billable.
- Work ethic – team only as strong as the weakest person on the team – letting them know that we need you here and dependable and following protocols for employee attendance.
- More funding for general staff.
- Knowledge about community resources.
- Lack of acknowledgement for going above and beyond.
- COVID has caused businesses to look hard for skilled employees.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversity of work environments; diverse workplaces.
- Tele-medicine.
- Possibility of more remote work since the pandemic.
- Big opportunities for training in Indiana right now.
- Available funding.
- COVID has made some businesses focus more on surviving right now and tend to not be open to learning about how disabilities can be a benefit.
- People are working together more, in some arenas.
- People who are interested in innovation and new ideas.
- Employment opportunities for those with felonies.
- Infrastructure in organizations is becoming leaner and clearer.

- Expansion of transportation system.

THREATS

- Fear that won't be able to accommodate.
- People we deal with are not open-minded.
- All those misconceptions about IWD.
- People who aren't concerned about employment for individuals with disabilities – don't think it's an issue, fluctuation of unemployment and demand for employees.
- Marginalization is huge.
- Businesses think they are going to lose money hiring those with disabilities; pay grade.
- Misunderstanding of individuals with disabilities for those outside our industry.
- Loss of focus on long range benefits.
- Businesses feeling, they have to accommodate everyone in their facility if someone with a disability may need 1 accommodation.
- No time to do what we know needs to be done.
- People not having time or thinking they don't have time to invest.
- Employers might be worried about amount of time to train someone with disability.
- Businesses thinking it will be more of a distraction.
- Lack of transparent conversation from businesses about hiring.

Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders were identified and classified by the nature of their role relevant to DE services.

Stakeholder	Region/ State	Importance High/Med/Low	Potential Employers	Place to Network	Client Resource	Job Placement
Adult Ed	Local	High				✔
AJC Business Services Team	Regional	High				✔
AJC Partners	Regional	Medium/low		✔		
Business Associations	Local	Medium	✔			
Chamber of Commerce	Regional	Medium/High	✔			
Clubhouse employees	Local	High			✔	✔
DWD	State	Medium		✔		
Employers	Local	High	✔			
FSSA service providers	State	Low			✔	
Goodwill	Regional	Medium	✔		✔	
Ivy Tech	Regional	High			✔	✔
IWD	Local	High				
Retired business owners/SCORE	Local	Low	✔			
Rotary Club	Local	Low		✔		
SHRM	Regional	High	✔			
Tax Experts		Low		✔		
Transition teachers	Local	Low			✔	
VR	State	Medium		✔		
VR service providers	Regional	High			✔	✔
Young Professionals	Local	Medium		✔		

Building Empathy

Experience Highlights

The team learned about the benefits and techniques for building empathy to get inspired by the employers they hope to serve. The interview technique enabled the team to listen to employers to get new ideas about how to design for them. The team synthesized their learnings to identify patterns and surprising insights to inspire new opportunities for design. The team recognized that employers are used to being approached to make a hire rather than being approached by workforce to determine what they need. Roles for the empathy interview process were designated among Boot Camp teammates who then synthesized themes that stood out. The team interviewed 6 employers. The team agreed to include empathy building as a practice going forward to consistently listen to employers' needs.

Results

Employers Interviewed

- President of **ObeCo** (manufacturing) 100 employees
- Owner of **Dually Depot** (installs vehicle parts) 13 employees
- Recruiter at **St. Joseph Health Systems**
- Call Center Supervisor at **Press Ganey**
- Hiring and Training Supervisor at **Papa John's**
- Field Manager at **Kalamazoon Garden Solutions**

Key Insights

1. Supervisors primarily consider whether someone can do a job, not whether an employee has a disability.

2. The number of providers in the area providing the same service is a barrier, feels like the providers become competitive with one another rather than working together to serve businesses.

3. There are some people with disabilities that secure employment but do not come with documentation of a disability.

4. Employers are used to being approached to make a hire rather than being approached by workforce to determine what they need.

5. The solution may not be in trying to convince or educate employers about hiring people with disabilities, but in working together to provide qualified candidates regardless of point of view or from a narrow program perspective.

Final Challenge Statement

The problem is insufficiently streamlined and coordinated efforts between agencies and partners to educate those involved in the hiring process about how hiring individuals with disabilities will reduce turnover, increase staff morale, and maintain a stable workforce.

Final How Might We Statement

"How might we relieve frustration and dread for the supervisor involved in the hiring process to reduce turnover and maintain a stable workforce?"

Identifying a Solution

Experience Highlights

As the team convened and conducted empathy building, potential solutions were identified. The team ultimately selected a solution to prototype and test during the Boot Camp and acknowledged a desire to pursue additional solutions identified at a future date if possible. The team participated in a Peer session where they gained insights from other teams.

Results

Potential Solutions Identified

1. Host focus groups (e.g., AJC and partners) to continue the empathy discussions.

2. Provide general education to employers.

3. Create new collateral, brochure / video; include the benefits of diversity hiring (would it be bigger than disabled.)

4. Make resources more readily available for businesses to spread awareness of available services and benefits.

5. Provide/promote job task analysis as a service.

Chosen Solution to Prototype

Create a new narrative grounded in employer needs to refresh collateral such as a brochure and website information.

Prototyping Solution

Experience Highlights

The team enjoyed using Google's Jamboard tool to:

1. Brainstorm elements of the new narrative grounded in employer needs.
2. Select and organize content areas using the sticky note feature to "sketch" their prototype.

Results

Images from the 2-page prototype sketch are shown below.

PROTOTYPE OF "Content to be used for webpage, flyerX" – Note: Draft content for webpage and flyer

Region 2 AJC

FEELING STRESSED ABOUT HIRING?

DREADING THE HIRING PROCESS?

FRUSTRATED WITH LACK OF STAFF RETENTION?

What We've Heard from Employers – clean language WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD US YOU NEED FROM YOUR WORKFORCE

Retention
Staff that stays after training
Skilled or trainable staff
Stable workforce
Positive staff morale

WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD US YOU NEED FOR YOU

To not be in constant training mode
To make a profit/financial
success/productivity

1

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Hiring diverse candidates
Matching candidates to appropriate
positions
On-site training and job coaching for new
employees
Consultation for hiring and supervising
managers

2

HOW TO GET WHAT YOU NEED
Connect with provider agencies for
guidance
Update/revise hiring practices
Learn new hiring techniques
Job fairs

3

DATA Did you know?
Who gets the job
Who stays on the job
Reducing sick time
Improved attendance
Increased productivity/profit
Higher staff morale
Punctual employees
Employees who stay on the job
Include regional data-size of available
labor force

4

- National employment studies, including a 30-year analysis by DuPont de Nemours, show that persons with disabilities have equal or higher performance ratings, better retention rates and less absenteeism.
- Employees with disabilities relate better to customers with disabilities. In the United States, this represents $1 trillion in annual aggregate consumer spending.
The Next Great Hiring Frontier, Wall Street Journal, 13 September 2005

- Companies report that employees with disabilities have better retention rates, reducing the high cost of staff turnover, a 2002 study found. Other surveys reveal that after one year of employment, the retention rate of persons with disabilities is 85%.
Unger, D. D., 'Employer's attitudes toward persons with disabilities in the workforce: myths or realities? Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities', 2002
Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information — DPI/2486 — November 2007

- *A 2003 survey of employers found that the cost of adaptation to accommodate employees with disabilities was $500 or less. 73% of employers reported that their employees did not require special facilities at all.*

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

How do I reduce liability?
What if I can't afford accommodations?
How do I increase staff retention?
What about tax credits?
How do I increase productivity and increase my profit?
What can I do to keep a stable workforce and increase staff morale?
Where do I find skilled or trainable employees?

5

Picture of IWD on the job

align with content – give a general sense of what's developing

Image of: hiring manager

6

Website; useful links you can click

JAN
ODEP
VR
WorkOne
Oaklawn/Clubhouse

7

Contact information: phone, email. Business card

8

Make titles bigger so can see the story quickly

Keep feedback at box level

WORKFORCE ENTITIES and THEIR SERVICES:

Vocational Rehabilitation
     Corvilla
     ADEC
     Benchmark
     Prairie Quest
     Cardinal Services
     Logan Center
WorkOne
Apprenticeships
Oaklawn
     Clubhouse
Staffing Agencies
Adult Education
High School CTE programs
Post Secondary Schools (colleges)
Job training programs
     Next Level Jobs
     Erskine Green
Accommodations
     Easter Seals CrossRoads
     JAN
Access
Goodwill

9

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

Job coaching
Accommodation recommendations
Benefits Counseling
Help with assistive devices
Driver Rehabilitation
Apprenticeships
Job analysis and matching
Job training
Job placement
Retention counseling
Transportation
Labor Market Information

10

Testing and Refining the Prototype

Experience Highlights:

The team met with 6 stakeholders to get feedback on the prototype. The team used Google Jamboard to synthesize the results of their testing.

Results:

The synthesized results show several ideas for improvement of the narrative that the team can incorporate into their finalized narrative which will be used to create a flyer.

Synthesized Testing Results

Yays	Nays
-good info -well laid out -love the questions -all great information -teach employers not to be afraid -good statistics -very helpful -informative -questions are good for everyone -state what every employer wants to know who to contact and services provided -useful-likes did you kow 70% of IWD stay longer -what you have looks pretty good -good for school transition programs, young adults, pre-ETS -at top, the boxes match -the more people who see this, the better -companies still aren't taking care of their people. Look only at the bottom line of 30-day ROI	-services need to be elaborated, as things change -can do adaptive training, build on skills -how will the rest of the work force react - company culture? change working to be more comprehensive -would you have to change #6 from flyer to flyer? -CTE's not available to their constituants -training/job training -make it flow better -needs to make sense (small window of attention span)

Questions	Ideas
-box 1 change "ongoing training mode" to "onboarding" relates to retention -acronyms (2) -specify links specialties -define what service providers are -box #9 define what each org offers -clarify all agencies can help, but if have a job coach we can help -how to use flyer -liability? -write out full hames with acronyms behind them -need answers to questions	-Box 4 more statistics -state goal - help build workforce, economy more stable employee - we stabilize -as a flyer - pick up; scan them in for email version. -web design - available candidates -direct job trainings - businesses want training -update info to more recent years -more info to help businesses consider this group of workers -map on website - click on my agency can go here, here, here to get a list of agencies and their available candidates -address discrimination fear -create working relationships with various agencies -post on FB, social media - postings under title "we can help" -tie #8, 9,10 together into a grid, maybe #7 -tab-based info sheet -questions at top - concerned about employee burnout? #10 name what kind of support are these agencies going to provide i-invite employees in groups - zoom to look at -job-carving makes jobs - think outside box-eg parts prep, eg clean machines, mop floors #10 -add consultation for increased productivity -#5 diversity training for companies how to discipline, coach, match #2 working interview, job coaching -add ICC to Box #7

Outlining Next Steps

Experience Highlights:

The team again used Google Jamboard to brainstorm implementation ideas.

Results

Implementation strategies included:

1. Create flyer.
2. Disseminate flyer.
3. Share flyer template for other areas/programs to influence adoption.
4. Sustain the work: the narrative, flyer, and, eventually, a website.

Implementation Plan Details

Strategy / Task	Owner	Target Deadline	Notes
Create a flyer from new narrative			
Create a flyer from the narrative incorporating the changes identified through the prototype testing.			
Can be updated with new info at any time			
Use live links on flyer so can be converted to web or email			
Record success stories from employers, provide links.			
Employer statement (successes)			
Find skilled or trainable employees? What can I do to keep a stable workforce and increase staff morale? How do I reduce liability? What if I can't afford accommodations? Can I get tax credits for hiring individuals with disabilities?			
Disseminate new flyer			
Send electronic copies to all parties involved			
Attend community meetings to share such as chamber of commerce, etc.			
Encourage all agencies to share on social media account: twitter, Instagram, FB, etc.			
Record a zoom or vimeo going over the flyer – why we did it this way, what we want to accomplish with it			
Offer links for publication on DWD website, our agencies and other agencies			
Online meeting for employers to ask questions and get clarification			
Present flyer to those who interface with businesses to offer our help			
Use Facebook to advertise and/or ask employers to share on their companies FB page			
Quarter flyer to mailing list with employer success stories, more stastics/data, and ideas.			
Share flyer template			
Develop a prototype with blank spaces so this can be scaled to other communities			
Encourage others to use as much as needed, no concern with credit, etc.			
Sustain the new narrative, flyer and update website			
Planning group to meet quarterly to continue this work			
Quarterly meetings of Business Services from various agencies			
Gather list of individual who work with linking IWD and businesses (employer engagement) and offer quarterly brainstorming meetings			

Closing Commentary

The team greatly enjoyed the Boot Camp experience and collectively feel they gained invaluable insight into how to effectively listen to employers as their key strategy for increasing employer engagement. We were thankful for the breadth of team participants and even identified a couple of other representatives that we'd like to add to the sustaining team. We gained an appreciation for defining the challenge, building empathy with employers to improve our design, the value of prototyping and testing. We're enthusiastic about finishing the flyer and getting disseminated, to see if it helps us break through business engagement.

If you're interested in learning more about our project, contact:

Melissa Gard

mgard@gotoworkone.com

(574) 807-4752