**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**ETA 2016 SECTOR STRATEGIES VIRTUAL INSTITUTE**

**Unicorns, Leprechauns, and Regional Partnerships…Myths, Legends, and Beyond Industry Engagement Peer Workshop**

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*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Murrieta, CA*

OPERATOR: Good morning. My name is Benita, and I will be your conference operator today. At this time I would like to welcome everyone to the "Unicorns, Leprechauns, And Regional Partnerships…Myths, Legends, and Beyond Industry Engagement Peer Workshop" hosted by WorkforceGPS. I would now like to turn the call over to Mr. Brian Keating with Maher & Maher. You may begin.

BRIAN KEATING: All right. Thanks so much, Benita, and welcome, everybody. Thanks for joining us today. Thanks to everybody who's been participating throughout the week with this virtual institute. Looking forward to today's sessions as well. We want to go ahead and go ahead and just kick things right off.

For us to do that, I'm going to move us right over to today's content and I do want to welcome you all. We're going to be doing an interactive breakout session in a little bit but for now sit back and we'll be doing a short initial presentation. If you haven't already done so, in that chat window on your screen feel free to introduce yourself and let us know who you are and where you're joining from today. That would be great. And yeah. We're going to kick it right off so we have as much time for that collaborative discussion as possible.

So to that end, I'm going to turn things over to Christy Montgomery. Christy is a senior analyst with Maher & Maher, and, Christy, it's all yours. Take it away.

CHRISTY MONTGOMERY: Thanks, Brian. So good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us early this morning. I know we may have a few west coast friends who are joining especially early. And I also want to say thank you for joining us. I think you guys are either intrigued or brave or just maybe curious by the title of this session, "Unicorns, Leprechauns, and Regional Partnerships…Myths, Legends, and Beyond."

And so I can't take credit for that session title. I actually have to give it to one of our speakers, Jan McKeel. But from the title you might be able to tell this is a little bit different session than some of the other sessions are.

This is actually a 201 session, and so some of the other sessions are labeled as 101, which are a little bit more introductory. They're covering some sort of basic principles and how to get started. This session we're actually going to dive a little bit deeper, and unlike some other sessions where you don't get as much access to ask the panelists questions, we actually are encouraging you. Please use your chat bar. Type in questions.

I've kind of explained this is sort of like if you're watching an episode of the actor's studio. I'm going to be interviewing our panelists and asking them some open-ended questions. Fortunately, I've had the privilege to work with both of them in the past.

So I know some pretty good things to prod them about. But also as they're answering if you have a follow-up question or if you have any interest in another topic that they don't expand on, just feel free to type it into the chat window.

And I also saw a few friends on this morning. So I know we have some people from South Carolina and Missouri and Florida. If you have not introduced yourself, please go ahead and take that opportunity to type into the chat window. We would love to say hi, and just know if I know you personally, I may call on you to ask questions if I know you have a good one. So we're going to keep on moving.

Some of the key objectives, things that we're going to focus on are elements that have helped develop successful sectors partnerships. How did they get started in this? Both of our panelists are sort of pioneers in this. They've been doing this for years. So they have some great lessons learned, and one of the reasons we also chose both of these speakers, they're actually very good teachers.

They've spent a lot of time doing mentoring and peer learning with other local workforce areas and partners across the United States. And we're going to discuss the real world of industry engagement.

Jan and I had some conversation this morning. She's actually in the same room as me. She's learned some lessons along the way. There's sometimes things went wrong, but she learned from those. She was able to sort of take some of those moments as learning opportunities and change course. And then also we're going to uncover some common themes around urban partnerships and rural partnerships.

I am Christy Montgomery. I am a senior analyst with Maher & Maher. Prior to joining Maher, I was a state workforce board director.

The panelists we have with us this morning are Jan McKeel. Jan is from South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance. She is a local workforce board director, and there's a lot of really great, interesting things about Jan that I could highlight. One of the things I think that I would like to say is something that's unique to her is she is in a very rural area that's south of Nashville.

She has several counties that are especially rural. Amazingly talented at working with her surrounding local workforce investment areas. Some of those are also rural, but she also does neighbor Nashville and Wilson County and some of the more metropolitan areas, and they've been able to really create some wonderful partnerships. So if you have some questions around anything – if you're a rural area and you kind of want to know what the best way to work with another urban area or why to do that, feel free to ask those questions.

And Jan actually introduced me to Keith about a year ago. Keith Lawing is the president and CEO of the Workforce Centers of South Central Kansas. She introduced me when I was – (inaudible) – the project for ETA's WIOA technical assistance voices of experience. If you logged on early, you were able to see a little bit of that, and those videos Keith was really able to speak to how to engage businesses, how to form sector partnership, and which is how they actually are currently focusing on eight sector partnerships.

And so I'm going to let him talk to those things. He's been able to do things like have his workforce board come up with ideas where they actually have to host a golf tournament. But he's been able to work these industry partnerships where business truly is leading and coming up with some ideas to help build these partnerships out.

So, Brian, we have a poll question.

MR. KEATING: Yes. We do.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Is everyone able to answer them?

MR. KEATING: Yeah. Folks had started to answer it before we started. Let me go ahead and bring that back up. So the question is, how would you characterize your current level of sector industry partnerships? And your choices are we've got this down, we're fairly advanced but still looking to learn, we've gotten started but interested in taking it to the next level, and/or we're just getting started.

So many of you have already voted. If not, though, that's back up on your screen. Go ahead and click the button that you would like to choose for your answer, and we'll give you a few more seconds. So make sure you're voting now by choosing one of these options. And, Christy, you should be able to see those results as they roll in in real time.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Excellent. It looks like most of you have gotten started. We have a few people who are fairly advanced, and we also have some people who are just getting started. So just want to encourage you, if you are just getting started, please feel free to ask your questions. You probably have some really great insights or you may even have your own lessons learned, things that you're dealing with now that will really help us take this conversation to the next level.

So I'm going to start, and the other thing I want to mention, remember this is sort of like the actor studio. So we're not going to rely as heavily on a PowerPoint slide with bullet points that the speakers talk to. We're really going to give them the opportunity to take this a little bit further. You're going to see some slides with some images of some of the partnerships that they have, and they may speak to those images.

But the real content here is the really rich dialogue that we're going to have with them. So again, I encourage you, if you're just logging in, this is an interactive session. If you have questions, if you want the speakers to follow up or expand on something, please feel free to type that into the chat room.

So I kind of want to start with Keith and Jan will – you guys will have some conversation back and forth, but we're talking about what makes a successful industry partnership. And there's some key things that – about both of your areas. You both work really well with surrounding local workforce areas. Can you talk a little bit about that and why you guys work outside of just your geographical boundaries?

JAN MCKEEL: Sure.

KEITH LAWING: Sure. Jan, why don't you start?

MS. MCKEEL: I'll be happy to. I'll kick out a couple of things, and then, Keith, you just jump right in here.

MR. LAWING: Got you.

MS. MCKEEL: So one of the easy reasons we could work so well together is because we know, as workforce development professionals and the work that we've been doing for a long time and we've known each other for a long time – so there are those standing relationships, but we know that people that live, for example, in the eight counties that I work in actual – or that I have responsibility over and work in, that they actually travel outside of this area. They're part of the commuter shed.

So they may actually work in the Nashville area, which is another workforce board, but still that's important to the work that we do because we work with employers and employees. So we know it just makes sense to work with those other workforce boards, and again, having a longtime relationship, you don't want to know the total years of experience we have together. It would be centuries, it feels like, but we've worked together for a long time.

We actually – I guess I'd like to say we worked together as regions before it was cool to be a region. We knew that we depended on each other and not just from the standpoint of best practice sharing but actually putting it together for the folks that – the jobseekers and the employers themselves. That would be my first comment.

MR. LAWING: And I'll just add to it. The boundaries for most of the local workforce areas do not line up with that natural labor market, like Jan was saying, and we're one of five workforce boards here in Kansas. We have the Wichita, Kansas region. So we've got a fairly urban county, but some of our counties are very small within our service delivery area.

And we have a very dominant industry. Aviation manufacturing really is the prime employment source for a large population, and that goes well beyond the six-county boundaries that we work in. And we've had a couple of – when the economy does downturns and there's maps of layoffs, it is not just businesses and individuals in our particular local area that are impacted. It does extend well beyond.

So again, having that real positive relationship with workforce boards in the region that's sharing the labor market – every opportunity to align services and leverage resources and we try to take advantage of that. And I think as Jan was also saying, I mean, we're pretty seasoned. My counterparts in the state, we've all been in these positions, and so have had the opportunity to develop relationships.

And I think that's a big key. You need a trust factor. You need to be able to depend on people to help you to get your mission accomplished and vice versa, and that's something we've been able to – we feel pretty good about.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Thanks, guys. So I'm hearing a couple things from you both. One, geographical boundaries, those sort of political lines we draw for service areas don't mean as much as the actual labor market and where the workforce is coming from and – (inaudible) – for their job. And I'm also hearing that starting this you really had to build some partnerships and some relationships of trust.

And both of you guys kind of pioneered this when there weren't as many technical assistance resources on regionalism and sector strategies. There weren't sectors virtual institute. So think back to when you were getting started, and maybe that's when you were first becoming the director. But what are some things that you had either heard before or some things that scared you, and what were some experiences and lessons you've learned along the way that made you successful?

MR. LAWING: Well, let me – I think what drew me in – and I had worked – I became the director in 2005, and I had been working in the system prior through the local governments in the area. So I had an idea of what it was about, but we all at the local area – I hate to use this terminology, but there was kind of a common enemy, and that was the state.

And I say that with all due respect, but it was kind of like we need to stick together on certain very common issues or we would be divided. And so that really kind of started driving conversations, and like Jan said, we were working kind of in this regional environment before kind of mandated.

So the five board directors just started getting together on a regular basis in a conference call. When there was a state board meeting, we'd show up a little bit early again to build that relationship, and the benefit of that is that I would not consider the state the enemy anymore. By us providing a platform and environment to work with the state on common issues across local workforce boards, that's really helped relationships all across the state and with our state agencies who were involved in this entity.

So it took some time. You have to do a little traveling, and you have to listen as much as you want to do some talking.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Keith, that's a great point, and you had Jan and I both chuckling. And I'd be your former state level person and actually working with Jan in the area. I think the state – some of those things I know Jan has done as well working with the other local workforce areas, but you bring up a really good point about finding some common ground between your colleagues who are sort of your neighboring local workforce boards.

Jan, I have a question for you. I was privileged to be part of a committee that was choosing and selecting grants recently in the last several years, and it was actually a – the governor's staff and several of the executive level leaders from different departments within the state, economic development, human resource – human services. And one of the things that came up was there was going to be one area that was able to get two grants. And when someone asked, do we think Jan's area will be able to handle it, normally they would turn to me as the state workforce board director and ask me. I didn't even have to say anything.

All the other partner agencies in the state level said without a doubt, yes. I didn't even have to – (inaudible) – to get to that point before each was describing where you're kind of having to work to get some things that you want from the state, but then to get to that trusting relationship?

MS. MCKEEL: Well, number one, I love that because I've never heard that before. So that absolutely thrills me because that same grant we're getting ready I think – we're partners now with five different groups that are turning them in. So let's hope that they will say on the second version that, yeah. They can handle five of them, which would be incredible, but thank you for letting me know that.

I think the big thing is to do what you say and say what you can do. And I think that's true for regionalism or any project that you're working on. So don't bite off more than you can chew. The key goes back for us to the relationship.

So if I'm working on a regional project, I have to know that I've got the relationship built that I can't over-speak for another partner or that I have a way that I can come in and work with that partner. It's not unusual for us – in fact, just in the last two weeks we've actually won two regional grants with numerous partners involved, but one of my workforce boards – one of the more rural workforce boards is actually going to partner with us on one of these grants.

We'd written in money for them to actually deliver some of the services. He's come back to me since that time and said, you know what? I think your group can do this better. So is it okay with you if I just let you keep that money and do it? And of course on that particular instance, I'm happy to do that. So I think that's a little unusual in being able to have that kind of relationship where someone actually turns down the work because they feel like maybe they're not positioned to do it. And if we didn't have that relationship, that would never happen. Does that make sense?

MS. MONTGOMERY: That does. That's a really great point, and I think we can also hear from Keith on this a little bit. Keith, I was just in Wichita with you and your partners there and filming for ETA a industry engagement listening session. And one thing that struck me was there were several different players. You were all focused on sort of building the identity of your region and allowing economic development and workforce development strategies. You guys also seemed to not be very territorial and willing to work together. So what have you learned over the course of time working through these projects?

MR. LAWING: Well, some of what we've already talked about. Again, it's I think really having a common goal and lining that up across agencies and across partnerships. When you – here in Wichita one of the things that we're experiencing is with a kind of structural change in advanced manufacturing. And with technology, instead of an industry like aviation here employing 40,000, 45,000 individuals, they'll probably be looking at a future where they're employing 30,000 individuals.

And so how do you – suddenly there is a common goal amongst many players, amongst the cities, the counties, the local government. You look at economic development organizations and businesses across the board. If we can't replace – if we lose 15,000 jobs in a market like ours, that's just a huge chunk. So really that's what this common vision is and that's part of what you got to see when you were here and that's why we're working in so many sectors.

Now, the level of engagement in those eight sectors really varies a lot about market conditions and employer engagement, but the whole idea is figuring out ways as a community you can position your community to give businesses the competitive advantage and try to help them sell product and drive business growth.

So again, we've got Wichita State University, which is changing the landscape of their campus right now to be focused more on innovation and research. We've got a group of businesses who are making financial investments with the city and the county to support economic development. And so then you got community-based organizations, our United Way, our Community Foundation looking at things about developing a talent pipeline. We're rallying around youth employment issues and at-risk youth.

So you've got leadership. You've got a trust factor, and you're able to draw some of these initiatives together under the common goal of economic development, job growth, skills, talent development, those types of things. And so again, we didn't necessarily create that environment at the local workforce board. We're happy to be part of it, and we're able to take advantage of those relationships that we've been building for the last few years.

MS. MCKEEL: Keith, I would totally agree with what you're saying, and I would just emphasize the importance. We talked a lot about the local workforce and the local workforce board professionals, but it is equally important that we pull in the higher ed partners on that, just like you're talking about, because they serve a region.

So it makes more sense for us to be built around that as well as the economic development side of it. You cannot do any one of the – there are three legs to the stool, and to have truly successful regionalism, which it's all about the jobs at the end of it and making sure that we have the employees that meet the jobs that the employers, it takes all three legs of that stool. So totally agree.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Jan, so I know we talked a little bit earlier about some lessons you learned along the way and some things you – some learning moments as you guys were starting these industry partnerships. I know you've had skill panels that were also partners – (inaudible). Was that an instance where you had to – (inaudible) – or were those other grants?

MS. MCKEEL: No. Absolutely. I'll talk a little bit about the skill panel. First of all, positive. You needed – we needed – to kick those off we really needed something to rally around and what we rallied around were some initial workforce studies.

So it's hard to argue with facts, and even though the facts came out that we thought they would be what they were and indeed they were, there weren't any real big shockers on it except that it was calling for a shortage of workers around the Nashville area, which we are absolutely seeing. It's not so much in the numbers but in the skill levels and the skill gaps, and we're truly seeing that. But that gave us the ability to really narrow in on specific industries, which in our case it ended up being healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and information technology. So those skill panels are built around that.

The other piece that helped us with the higher ed piece of it was at the same time we had complete Tennessee legislation which more or less demanded that higher ed have this formal linkage with industry. So because we were already positioned, we were able to come in and fill that role that had been legislated. So those things that happened help us get to that point.

Then we had to – some of the things that you run into – I don't know if any of you all have ever experienced this when you talk about new problems and then folks think, well, we've been doing this forever. Sometimes the conversations would get a little defensive. So we had to work through that so that partners knew this was not about getting defensive. It was about listening to employers because perception was reality for them. So we had to work on some facilitation and some understanding what partners' roles were actually during skill panels and the conversations that would take place and then perhaps save the defensiveness for back room kind of things where you could talk about it and then come back with some solutions.

The other thing that I would talk about with the employer-driven skill panels, I remember one meltdown meeting that it just was a total meltdown because what we had done is what often we're very good at, is presenting item ABCD, here it is, this is the answer, move on.

And employers were having a real difficult time tying it back to the goals. So after that meeting we totally changed everything about how we presented, and things didn't make it to the agenda if it – we even arrange our agenda by goal and then the action items under that. If the action item doesn't fit a goal, it doesn't make it to the agenda, and that saved us and really took us to the next level.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Keith, do you have anything to add to that?

MR. LAWING: No. I think that's a great example. Just I think the important thing is that – and the experiences that I've had is that the less I speak at one of these skills panels or industry panel meeting, the better.

I mean, you really want business and industry to do most of the talking, most of the leading. It's their show. They need to run the show, and I think those are when the engagements work the best when the conversation is led by business and industry and that's the – we've had both sides. I've gone to these panels and I've talked way too much sometimes and people walk out of there and I just don't think they got any value. I think employers get more value when they're leading a conversation.

MS. MONTGOMERY: You both make some excellent points, and so I kind of want to recap. Jan was mentioning sometimes having to sort of built trust up with partners and sort of taking the territorial – (inaudible) – defense – (inaudible) – and then also to listen to the employer and making sure that the meeting that they're coming to, if it's truly employer led, what does that look like? How are they leading, or – (inaudible) – to the point of – I think that was a great example of setting your agenda by goals. And then Keith sort of talking about sort of listening more and sort of giving them that active role of being able to have something to say.

We have a question because you mentioned finding common goals. How do you sort out that common goal for multiple priorities that partners bring to the table? And I would kind of add to this because we do a lot of – (inaudible) – sometimes one of the first things I see is sometimes partners don't know how to bring others into the loop of getting them on board, get them bought in, get past the conversation of, okay. This isn't blaming you for anything. But how do you guys sort of give advice to someone to sort of orchestrate your meetings and your partnerships and what you just described?

MS. MCKEEL: I can shoot something out on that. The first thing that we did – and this was probably the wisest thing that we've done, which actually allowed it to be successful and continue, is we were able to secure some funding to bring in a facilitator, a third-party facilitator who has really – that has been her role is to walk us – especially that first year, we used her heavily so that we could set those common goals and work with it in that way so that it wasn't any one partner driving the conversation. So to bring in that independent facilitator was the smartest thing we did.

MR. LAWING: Yeah. I'd echo that as well. And again, that gets your trust level to get your partnership level up because, again, sometimes if you're trying to lead a conversation from a workforce board's perspective or if you're sitting there listening to your local eco devo guy or gal lead a conversation, maybe sometimes you're not getting the level of buy-in and partnership. So the outside facilitator, but we've done a similar thing in how we've created some of these and got these up and running. And that's a good way to do it, especially if you can get some dollars to – or somebody to sponsor, somebody to help bring the funding to get that done.

MS. MONTGOMERY: One quick question. If you were – maybe you're in a more rural area and your funding levels aren't the same as urban and there really is not a pocket of money to fund, what's some creative ways you guys have found outside independent facilitators?

MR. LAWING: I really work a lot with our chambers of commerce and, again, our local eco devo person. In a more rural area, one of our counties just to the south of us, we actually share an office with the local economic development agency there. And so using them to convene, asking them because, again, you're a more targeted setting there. You're a little more focused, or sometimes you kind of work within an existing meeting structure.

If the chamber sponsors a round table or a scramble or something like that that's already convening and already there, maybe you can get on the agenda or be part of a presentation. So those are a few things that have worked with us, especially in initiating some partnerships or trying to introduce yourself or try to increase your capacity in terms of engaging businesses.

MS. MCKEEL: I would echo that. I think we do a lot of that borrowing from other meetings that are already set up because employer fatigue is real and especially when you get into the more rural areas where there aren't as many employers to draw from. So I do think it's important to again go back to those relationships, and if you have the relationships with your chambers and your economic developers and you have something that you need to get in front of employers, many times they're willing to let you be part of that meeting.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Thanks, Jan and Keith. I think you guys have done a really excellent job of giving us some broad overviews and also some details of some lessons learned and some approaches. And especially I appreciate you guys thinking about creatively outside the box how to engage other initiatives for whether it's facilitation or to make sure that you're not getting employer fatigue with having multiple people come to them with the same ask.

We're about to break out into breakout rooms. So if you're in the audience, this is sort of a very interactive session. We still encourage you guys to enter any questions into the chat area. We're going to break up into two breakout rooms. Brian will come on and explain this, but it will be done automatically. We're going to continue building off of this conversation. Jan will be in one room with me, and Keith will be in another breakout room with Carrie Yeats. And they'll sort of start the conversations off and continue some of the themes from this morning.

But on your screen right now are a few sort of leading questions that you guys might have some insights into. So what myths have you faced, and how did you overcome them? What were key resistance factors, whether personality – Jan spoke to the territory or defensiveness this morning, funding – that you've experienced along the way? And how have you been able to operationalize this across partners? So those are just some questions to sort of get you thinking. Again, we do encourage you to be interactive, and we will be asking for audience questions.

When we go to the breakout room, as I just said, I will be in one breakout session in room one with Jan, and breakout facilitator two is Carrie Yeats, who is the director of the State and Regional Workforce Solutions for Maher & Maher. So she will be an excellent facilitator for that room as well. Brian, we're ready for you.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. We're going to go right into the breakout rooms then so we have enough time, as much time as possible. One thing I do want to mention, encourage everyone to go ahead right now and find your mute button on your phone. Hopefully you have a button or a feature.

Go ahead and mute yourself now, if you think you don't want to jump right in over the phone because, when we do do the breakouts in a minute here, we are going to be unmuting your phone line. So we will need you to mute yourself. If you don't have a mute button, you can mute yourself by pressing \*6, and we will be monitoring you as well. But we want to encourage you to proactively mute your phone line, if you think you may not want to speak up right away. And with that being said, we do want to hear from you. So encourage you to speak up right away and be part of the verbal conversation in addition to typing into the chat.

All right. We're going to go ahead and move on to the breakouts. We'll have some instructions on your screen. We're going to be making an announcement. We'll come back in about 20, 25 minutes or so. We'll let you know when that's going to be, and stick with us to the end because we'll do a short debrief when we get back from the breakouts. That being said, we are going to go ahead and move to the breakouts now. So, Benita, if you could go ahead and break us out, we're going to do that now virtually as well, and let's go ahead and get started. One moment. All right.

(breakout session)

OPERATOR: And you're back in the main conference.

MR. KEATING: Great. Thanks so much, Benita. Wonderful. Well, welcome back, everybody. I know we had a great conversation in breakout room one. We are going to go ahead and move over to go ahead and do a quick debrief, and we also have a poll window up. So please go ahead and vote in that poll, and you can actually choose more than one. So encourage you to go ahead and do that, if you like.

All right. Great. Christy, I'm going to turn it over to you to review the – what we're going to discuss in breakout room one. So please feel free to do that.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Brian, we had some really great interactive conversations where some of our participants actually shared models that they have. There was a Detroit model where they have work-based learning.

We had a lot of conversation around rural areas and how, when there's limited staff and resources, how to utilize existing meetings, chambers of commerce, to develop those relationships. We also first started talking about the employer's need and then so too it's not important to sell them the big picture and get them to understand everything fully because, if you've ever tried to explain the workforce system to an employer or a board member, it's a little – (inaudible) – recommended.

Here at – (inaudible) – start feel about that partnership. And we had some follow-up questions to the three leg model of including higher education relationship, so how those relationships got started. Jan – it's also important – (inaudible) – state workforce agency but also your higher education to have individuals there who – (inaudible) – workforce development who can – (inaudible) – all the community colleges, help drive those initiatives and to have a key point of contact who is there.

We also broke out a little bit into apprenticeship. If you're not able to fully get an employer on board with an apprenticeship, sometimes there's some re-education. People have their own myths and theories about what those are. So if it's not a registered apprenticeship, really to start with work-based learning. And Jan mentioned some goals – some successes she's had out of the skills panels building those relationships with employers, making some initial aids where they – (inaudible) – host sort of – (inaudible) – because you're paying for it section about how you get to that point where the employers are looking at sort of asking.

One of her employers wrote her a $15,000 check. So I think to help with this initiative, to help with the part-time staff person. So I think we all would – (inaudible) – get to that point where we have employers writing checks. And that's the end of my summary.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. Thanks so much, Christy. Now, we're going to go ahead and move to Carrie, Carrie Yeats. So, Carrie, if you'd like to give us a quick debrief of what you covered in breakout room two.

CARRIE YEATS: Sure. Thanks, Brian. Happy to do that. Well, in breakout session two we talked about several myths, one of them being that sector partnerships are not easy, that it actually is harder than we might think to get employers to the table, and talked a little bit about some of the strategies around the idea what's in it for them.

And there are some short-term objectives that would be of interest to employers, but then we also talked about the long-term benefit of being engaged. And it could involve not just very traditional workforce issues but things about branding and the image of manufacturing, for example, and how you have to really think creatively about how to make a sector partnership of interest and of value to employers.

We also talked a little bit about the myth of competition. We often hear that employers are reluctant to participate in partnerships because of a sense of competition between businesses. And based on experiences of those in the group, it sounds like that was not the case. There was certainly a little bit of competition around just competing for the workforce but not competition around business-related issues or trade secrets, that kind of thing.

We also talked about the myth of sector partnerships being more work, and the folks on the phone actually found the opposite, that it wasn't more work to participate in a sector partnership, and actually, the benefit and the yield was much greater as a result of them.

Some of the barriers we talked about – and this was probably the main one – was just the barrier of losing your champion. The champion is so important to drive the agenda and the work of the partnership, and when you lose your champion, it's very difficult when you have that leadership vacuum. Fortunately, in many cases it sounds like champions may leave one business and go to another. So they haven't been lost. They just changed companies, which in the end hopefully will bring more businesses into the partnership.

We also talked a little bit about the importance of telling a story and, as I said before, being able to articulate what's in it for the employer, whether you're getting that message through a short piece of collateral that's been developed or just using your relationships with businesses either through phone calls or meetings to convey what the partnership's about, how that's really important.

One question that came up in our chat that we did not have a chance to address, Christy, would be identifying or deciding which type of person within a business is the best person to be part of a sector partnership. Is it a C-level executive? Is it HR? So that was something that came up that we did not have time to address.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Thanks, Carrie.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. All right. Great.

MS. YEATS: Thanks.

MR. KEATING: Back to you, Christy.

MS. MONTGOMERY: And it looks like – and, Brian, – (inaudible) –.

MR. KEATING: I'm sorry. You cut out there for a sec, Christy.

MS. MONTGOMERY: It looks like we've sort of come to the end of our time today based off our time slots. Is that what you guys have?

MR. KEATING: Yeah. We're about out of time today. So any slides you want to use to wrap up? And I want to encourage everyone to stay on to give us some feedback before we let you go, but I'll turn it back to you, Christy, for any closing remarks or anything we want to share before we go.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Thanks, Brian. I actually don't have the ability to move slides right now, and if I do, I apologize. But I think Carrie mentioned a good thing. We had some conversation in our breakout group, and Jan was able to speak to the last question Carrie had of she usually starts with an HR person. But it's also sort of finding someone that's willing to buy into your vision.

So it's sort of that – it's very key to develop those relationships, find out what their immediate need is, and start that with the person that you're able to engage. So her suggestion was HR is where they usually start, and also her staff do a lot of outreach where they're going to chamber meetings. They're also doing cold calls but they're going to lots of meetings where industry is there having conversations and that's where they're best able to meet those industry champions.

Brian, if we're – if there's anything that we need, is there an ability – I'm not sure if on the last slide there's some contact information. We had some individuals said that they had links that they would like to share. We might – can just maybe put in the chat an e-mail address for them to send any links that they have to or any questions.

MR. KEATING: Sure. We're actually going to move to a chat window in a moment where folks – where we can type – give folks an e-mail address or any other information we want to share with them. Make sense?

MS. MONTGOMERY: Excellent. I think we're ready for you to go.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. Great. All right. Great. Well, thanks, everyone, again for participating today. We are going to move to that feedback portion. We do want to ask you a couple of questions here before you log off. So go ahead and respond to these polling windows that we have up. Meanwhile, we will go ahead and invite you to type in any open-ended feedback you might have for us before you leave today. And then, Christy, we can give an e-mail address for folks to follow up if they have questions or really anything else we want to share with folks before they leave today.

But looks like people are sharing their ideas. Thanks for that. We're going to leave this webinar room open for a few minutes to give you an opportunity to do that before we close out with the session. So hope to see you on other workshops during today's virtual – this week's virtual institute and including the closing plenary on Friday. And I think for now, we're going to go ahead and leave it there. Thanks so much, everyone, and hope to see you later this week.

MS. MONTGOMERY: And, Brian, I just want to say special thanks to Jan – our wonderful panelists Jan and Keith who've done an excellent job today. I think I learned some things from them. So I'm sure the audience enjoyed being able to pick their brains as well. Thank you both.

MS. MCKEEL: Thanks for having us.

OPERATOR: And this concludes this morning's workshop. You may now disconnect. Presenters, please hold the line.

(END)