**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Sector Strategies Virtual Business Engagement Academy**

**Core Session 1: Find a Need and Fill It: Planning the Talent Pipeline Response with Partners**

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*Transcript by*

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GARY GONZALES: (In progress) – are with you. While you're doing that, I want to turn things over to Diane Walton. Diane, take it away.

DIANE WALTON: Hey, everybody. Welcome. It's so great for everybody to be able to be here and listen and we're learning to listen now, is one of the things we talked about a lot yesterday, was our need to learn to listen and our – how much we benefit from the things that each other have done over time. So we're going to spend a little bit of time going over what was discussed yesterday. Some of the healthcare needs were expressed by those employers, how that sort of context and content pieced worked.

And then, we're going to really turn it over to four certified smart people who have done a lot of fabulous work in this arena. Rob Gamble, John Ball, Ben Kushner, and Kristina Payne are all on the phone. All have very different experiences and very different ways to answer each and every question you're going to post. So remember that we are here to answer your questions. We're glad to tell stories until the cows come home, but most importantly, we want to take care of you.

We also have some handouts for you to use at home, some employer engagement dialogs for your staff and partners that we'll share at the very end. All the way through, we're going to do questions and answers. And again, I can't stress enough how much we're here to answer the questions that you have.

The big objectives of this whole week, we have a weeklong Sector Strategies engagement academy going on, to spend some time schooling each other up on what it's going to take to move forward with Sector Strategies. It's not just because it's in the law now, but seeing the impact that it's had on the people we serve. The skills we've gained in working with employers has made such a huge difference. And so learning from each other, successes and mistakes, and then, again, those tools to use at home.

We do make some assumptions about you. Then we delve in because you want to solve some problems. And I don't know how many of you have done any work with Manny Pastor. He's at the University of Southern California and has done a lot of work about how equity drives economic development and strategies for moving forward. And he talks about how we in the workforce system need to drive the top, right, with sectorial strategies, grow the middle, and lift the bottom. And that's – those are the pieces that we're looking at today as we go. Any way we can help you in any of those arenas, we are more than glad to.

The guides yesterday, it was kind of fun because we were trying to set the stage so people would know who were on the phone and on the webinar. And there were – 25 percent of the people had not done any employer engagement to any significant level, which was sort of an interesting scary number for me. But anyway. So just that whole thing about keeping it open, not asking yes or no questions, but so what keeps you up at night? And what's keeping the healthcare industry up at night was a fascinating list around the changes inside – the technological changes inside the industry.

Later on this morning, Kristina Payne will talk about both the work that they've done with the IT sector as well as the healthcare sector. Very different ways to work in that the healthcare guys are recognizing that. They're thinking that maybe we don't know enough about how they work and what we really need to do is spend some time listening to them. And we are more than glad to do that. We're going to go through each of the four people who will be speaking next to have different things to say about the questions that were raised in yesterday's session, as well as some feedback we got after. So hopefully, your questions are going to be addressed. But we really hope you have some new ones and start putting them in there.

So Rob Gamble from Mission College. The slides are kind of floating around. Let's go – there we go. Rob Gamble's from Mission College. He has a checkered past, as do, I think, all the speakers on the phone today. Rob, I think I first met him when he was at NOVA at the local workforce board. He's also run an association, BayBio, of employers, and he's now at Mission College doing workforce and they're one of the recipients of the apprenticeship grant. So he has lots of ideas about how to take the first step because he's taken lots of first steps.

So Rob, take it away.

ROB GAMBLE: So in classic technology entry can you hear me now?

MS. WALTON: Absolutely.

MR. GAMBLE: Great. So I understand that – and it was definitely true for us, is that first step of getting out and talking to employers about apprenticeship is kind of – is a tough one. It's a big jump. And in – particularly, there's the kind of tradition of apprenticeship in California, where it's been really, really strongly related to the trades and really effective for the trades. But that's kind of where people think about it. And so we went out and we kind of a two-prong approach for our first step out into the community or into the business community. And one of them was – is that we looked for organizations, and there are some, that are already interested. So essentially, went out looking for members of the choir. Those – you know, the folks singing in the choir, we went out and contacted them and it was some interesting partners on that.

One of the biggest ones we ran into and our most successful partner was actually Cisco. And part of what Cisco's understanding is the background that they built over the years with the Cisco academies, like I think 5,000 of them worldwide, it's some tremendous number, actually kind of is an apprenticeship and it's a very particular kind. It's a competency-based apprenticeship. There's a series of levels that you hit and we got involved with them and they went out and introduced us to their customers. They actually introduced us to one of their biggest customers in the state of California, which was the state of California. And so we're working really hard with Cisco to establish apprenticeship as the state's new model for bringing in, training up network technicians.

Another area that we're working on, we just started working with, is there's a group of manufacturers in the very high end of manufacturing, and they're often comfortable with apprenticeship because a lot of them have either divisions or components or leadership out of the UK, Switzerland, Germany, and they kind of have apprenticeship baked into their thinking on how this works. And so we're working with the electronics manufacturing group, Semi (sp) and some others, to try and establish apprenticeships in that area.

And then, it's – and then, the other area that we've had some luck on, and I think it kind of comes up in the healthcare stuff and it comes up in a lot of places, is that we found the people who have problems. Their talent pipelines are not working for them. Essentially, we looked for the pain. That was a little bit the state of California.

Cisco found that for us in part of that partnership, but they see that they're going to need 1,000 IT workers in the next five years and they don't really have a pipeline to get them and it's kind of a difficult – they're competing against all the companies here in Silicon Valley for the talent and it was a tough haul for them. They saw a real problem. There are other places that we have been to that have this either demographic bulge, all of the baby boomers age out, or whatever the issue is. They can't get the talent and they're starting to feel the pain. And once they get that, their minds are a little more flexible about what they're willing to try.

And then, the third issue that we kind of came across, and we didn't have it when we wrote our grant and we didn't kind of – it didn't kind of come to us until we'd been in it now, talking to employers in trying to sell the deal, was that there's a lot of – and you guys may run into this. There's a lot of – there's that feeling that apprenticeship is kind of old. It is, and that it's rigid and it's kind of the way it is and it's not really this century's model. But when we got into and started trying to develop the programs with employers, what we found out was it's the most sort of flexible and responsive training product. You know, and I've been to ODT and cohort training and all kinds of stuff.

But in most cases – I'm with a college now. And you may all remember this from your college days or from advisory boards that you've had to serve on, is that colleges kind of listen to the outside world. We have advisory committees and whatnot, and sadly, what we do in the advisory committees is we invite everybody in to listen to us. But we kind of listen to the outside world and we make up our mind on what our response to that is going to be and we train people and we pitch them over – after two or four years, we throw them over the transom and hope industry likes what we did.

And industry has kind of the same response to us. They kind of say this is what we want and whatnot. But what they really kind of do is either through the press or an advisory committee, they throw it back over the transom and say, we're kind of looking for this, this is kind of what we want, and it's a lot of control at a distance, at best. But the coolest thing about apprenticeship is when you sit down and write the standards and you sit down and write the plan, the business gets to say, and they don't kind of get to say, they completely get to say, when you set up the competency-based thing, it's about what they need.

It's kind of a jump for people to realize. In fact, the latest, and this has come up since we talked about this a week or so ago, is that with one of the customers we're working with, we actually dialed back and kind of gave them more of a set model. Because to tell people it's that flexible coming out of the gate, some – there may just not be enough to hang on to for them. I don't know if that makes sense, but we had to give them a little bit of structure just so they could see that, OK, this is the base idea and now, we can modify it from there.

But the flexibility and the responsiveness of the apprenticeship, it's an amazing tool. You kind of have to dive in deep to get there, but those are the models we've got. We were gaining some really partners. In our high tech grant, we're probably like a lot of you. We're still waiting for the first people to sign on the dotted line, but I think we have some pretty strong prospects.

We've also dove in as just an institution into apprenticeship whole-heartedly and we're doing some stuff with some other folks who were seriously feeling the pain on talent pipeline in the transit industry, and we already have 130 registered apprentices in training in that program. And we sat down with them, we sat down with their organized labor group, who actually was the choir who we sang to in that group, and moved forward.

So it's kind of our story. We're sticking to it for the day and I'm not sure what the question opportunity is, but there you go.

MS. WALTON: I don't see any questions typed in. So people are going to have to start sending those to us. But I just – I love all those stories. If there aren't any questions on the board for those particular pieces, we'll go to some more panels of how it works and the person who's going to talk now is not an owl, is John and it's not there for his elder wisdomness. It's there because he's a guy I've known for a long time and he always knows who to call to make something happen and he knows how to braid the pieces. So John, take it away.

JOHN BALL: OK. Can you hear me all right?

MS. WALTON: Yeah.

MR. BALL: All right. Hi, everybody. So two things I want to highlight as critical to this work and probably for all the work we do. But we do – I've always tried to keep in mind one – the first is people. You have to deal with people and they have to be the right people. So I'll talk about that for a second. And then, communication, which is the key to the game. So an old anecdote about the people. Well, actually, let me hold just a second on that one. Not everybody can do this work.

You're talking about collaboration and so a lot of people working across lines in their own – between their own agencies and businesses and others, and a lot of people have been taught their entire life or have as a personality trait, the tendency to want to hold onto their information. They see their business division as being in competition with everybody else and they think there's a lot of secrecy involved in that, or at least some levels of an unsharing mindset, both between their companies in the same business and then between their industry and other people in the business sector and particularly between business and government.

So our job in putting together the policy teams and boards and workgroups and taskforces that make this thing work across the businesses within a sector, is to always be on the alert for folks who aren't stuck in that rut and the leadership in the sector and in the community that knows how to communicate across businesses, across sectors, and between the private sector and the public sector.

So if you think just for a minute about the people that you've worked with over your career, maybe some that you work with now, you will immediately recognize that not everybody is good at that. And the people that aren't good at it are not going to be well suited to help drive progress in sector strategies and integration across a regional labor market.

So it's one thing to say we're going to set up a structure or we're going to take the structure we have and make some changes and continue to reform it and grow it and evolve it and work on – have a passive approach to setting up the opportunities for participation and then waiting for people, waiting to see who comes and participates, who wants to volunteer, who wants to come. That's one approach. And it's a long, slow grind that really is not going to be able to hold the pace for what we need to do.

The other approach that I want you to think about and keep in mind as a first object is an approach that constantly monitors your environment. All the meetings you're in, all the chamber things you're in, all the classes you're doing at universities with other thought leaders in the community, all the activities that you do both in your professional and personal life, like I said, public and private sector, where you have as a major part of your understanding of your job constantly monitoring that flow of people that you work with and being aware of who's good at this work, who's collaborative, who believes in sharing, who has the DNA for it, who's not threatened by sharing information with other businesses that in some ways, they compete against but –

OPERATIR: The leader has muted all lines. You will now be joined to the conference muted. To unmute your line, press \*6.

MR. BALL: There we go. OK. So I'll just take that and folks can see that diagram with employers in the middle. Absolutely an employer-based or what we used to call in the old days the demand-driven system. We know that's what works and this is a representation of some of the forces in the community or groups in the community that are going to make that work. I want you to, in your mind's eye, now see that all of these various agencies, state apprenticeships, workforce system, AG-DEV (sp), organized labor, education, all these things connect direction to the employers.

Now, I want you to, in your mind's eye, draw another set of lines where in addition to the lines in between each of these indices or groups and the employer community, you draw lines between each of those separate entities and every other circle on the periphery of that wheel.

So you've got a line going from each circle to every other circle, and I want you to think about the lines of communication there. That's what allows information and thinking, ideas sharing, inspiration, problem solving to flow at what the military folks refer to as a force multiplier effect. You want those people to get in the habit of exchanging information any time, any place that they think it's appropriate or it's going to help them or somebody else.

So here's an example. Let's just start with the apprenticeship program they're always talking about and in addition to having a line to the employer circle now, they have got a line to every other circle on there. So for instance, there's a line straight to labor organizations, another one straight to local education.

And the opportunity here that it create for your sector approach is when you get working on whatever you have to have for a certain mission and people start getting aligned around a set of objectives and tasks in a community, you want the people you're working with in the apprenticeship circle to know and understand that they have the ability and the opportunity and the obligation to communicate all the time with the people in the labor organizations without going through whatever kind of organized structure you've got for having a meeting on the third Thursday of the month to talk about a set of issues.

You want them carrying that set of issues in their mind as a part of your team or the community here and understand everyone else's role and problems and assets. And not that – and if they go to a meeting at 7:30 in the morning and have it with the chamber of commerce or with a new company coming to town, whatever it might be, and here's something that actually they know from the meeting last month on the third Thursday.

That labor is looking at a particular set of issues and something comes up in their meeting that doesn't have anything to do with what they're trying to do in that agenda, but is a piece of information or a relationship or a connection or an opportunity that labor would love to have, they don't sit on it until the next month, the third Thursday. They have the meeting and say, oh, hey. I heard something that might interest you.

They move that information immediately and whatever kind of a communication system you set up, hopefully everybody that's on your community-wide army working on these tasks has access 24/7 to be able to communicate with each other. And I just want to emphasize that the communication has to move quickly, it has to be free of particularly the government bureaucracies and even the kind of lack of communication that moves across various factors in a certain sector.

And over time, people will learn to – and enjoy the opportunity to share information all the time about anything. I don know who's on here from the Silicon Valley, but we're reading books, been reading books for 10 years about the competitive advantage you have in the global economy because you have uniquely arranged your communication patterns in that labor market in that regional economy to do exactly this.

So just to reemphasize those two points. You have to be very aggressive about reaching out to the people that you know will be good for this work and not sitting there passively and waiting for the college to send the person that somebody over there thinks ought to be sitting on the committee.

Get the people who are really going to make the thing work and do whatever you have to do to get them because the whole enterprise will rise or fall on the talent that you attract and maintain on your team. And the second is the communication has to go well beyond, way beyond, the traditional bureaucratic communication processes that we set up, particularly from the public sector side, to make these enterprises work. So that's probably enough.

MS. WALTON: But it's so great because it's so true; right? I mean – and we see it every day and we're – just that – the flip side of it and then now can get to really think about scanning the room for who's adept in your room; right?

Or there's a great story about when John went in to take over a local board that needed a little bit of help and he knew he needed a business services guy and he called 10 business people and say who'd be great in this region with these particular needs? And eight out of 10 of them gave him the same name and he talked the guy out of a big high-paying job to come over and make a difference at the local board. So it is finding those people and it is really, really, really aggressively courting them. So fabulous.

And next up, the lovely Kristina Payne, who has so many stories to tell. I don't know how she's going to pick which ones, but I did put a little indicator on the slide with an airplane to have her talk about how she's the walking proof that listening is the biggest skill we need to have. So Kristina, take it away.

KRISTINA PAYNE: Oh, thanks for the intro, Diana, and yes. I see what story you like the most and I will definitely get to that. Just a little bit of background. My name is Kristina Payne. I'm the executive director for Lane Workforce Partnership. We're located in Eugene, Oregon, and our county is the geographic size of the state of Connecticut. However, the state of Connecticut has 3.5 million people, roughly, and we have 350,000.

So we have a lot of trees, but we do have a university as well, the University of Oregon. Some of you may be familiar if you follow sports. Our Ducks, the University of Oregon Ducks, are quite well known, at least the football team, for wearing different a uniform every game. So whether you're into sports or not, whether you follow it or not, there's always – we find it interesting just to see what they're wearing. Anyway.

And that was an industry that came right here out of the Eugene area. It's one of our stories, with Phil Knight creating a product in his garage and coming up with a Nike tennis shoe. And then, what he did was he moved his company and he is about a couple hours up the road and has a massive manufacturing plant and, of course, he's worldwide. But the manufacturing of the Nike shoe went away from us and it's been one of those things that we've seen as a community that we're really, really good with creativity and startups and launching things, and then, watching them leave us.

And so when we got together, we decided there was something we might need to do differently. And I've been in workforce development for 16 years. One of the things that I've done, the first Sector strategy work I did over 16 years ago was in healthcare. And so I've really felt like with what we had done in healthcare, we'd expanded nursing programs at the community college, developed great partnerships with the college, and then identified some systems planning programs for – specifically a program for medical technologists. So we were really successful in the healthcare arena.

However, when we looked at the data of the community as leaders, when you see that spoke with employers and then everybody else around, we brought everyone together, about 40 different organizations, 90 different members, and created the Lane County Sectors Strategy team. And when we looked at our data for our region, we could see that tech was booming. It was really on the edge of really doing a lot right here. We have 500 companies with a average of estimated 5,000 jobs and average wage is anywhere between $67,000 to $72,000 annually, which is a great wage for our region.

And we also saw some startups – a startup community that was cultivating these types of businesses and we thought we better sit down and listen to them and find out what they need. And what was different about this conversation is that we did not just focus on job training. We had our community that we – I said we created the Lane County Sector Strategy team, and I need to credit – so Lindsey Woolsey of the Woolsey Group came and did a training with us along with John Melville, her partner in crime.

And they came and did a training with all of us to really get us to understand that it's not one entity's responsibility. A lot of what John was saying around really creating partnerships and identifying who the champions are in your region and who has the skillset that can do the work that needs to be done and move things ahead, those are the people that you want at the table and they may not be your staff. It could be the staff of a city or a county or a community college. It could be the workforce board staff. But really, identifying who in the community is really the expert. And she helped us come together as a community and really think about it that way.

So when we met with the tech sector, we didn't just, as the workforce board – especially with healthcare, we would have fallen back on our typical focus on what are the training needs. We asked what was standing in their way of growing and expanding and what we found out was that, as the picture here depicts on your screen that's in front of you, it's been a teaser, I know, is that they really, from Eugene, wanted a non-stop flight to San Jose. That's where their – a lot of headquarters were, but they wanted to have businesses in Eugene and they wanted to stay and grow in Eugene, but they needed that non-stop flight.

And we took that information – we had some leaders in the community who were already working on that and when hearing that from the industry, it solidified the conversation and pushed it forward and it actually sped the process up in a way that was in months. We finally tipped the scales and Alaska Airlines offered now and we have it, a non-stop flight from Eugene to San Jose. Happened within about a four-month period of time. Not to say that there haven't been conversations happening up and to that point, but the industries coming together pushed it over.

And so what's important about that? Well, the big difference between working with healthcare and tech, I realized rather quickly, is that at this point anyway, our hospitals can't just say, "You know what? We're going to pick up and we're going to go someplace else. We hear it's better in Colorado." I mean, that's something, maybe; I don't know. But at this point, that's not the case. Tech, on the other hand, can go anywhere. And so when we're working with the tech industry, our conversations need to be a little broader and expansive and talk about what would keep them here, what makes them want to keep these jobs here and grow here?

And so besides the flights, the conversation has been around high speed Internet. So we were able to launch a pilot project with the city of Eugene and because of the success of that pilot with high speed between four buildings and our downtown corridor, we are now actively pursuing funds and have the cities on board with us, both the city of Eugene and the city of Springfield, and our state legislative senators and Representative De Fazio helping us identify the funds, bring them in so that we can have high speed internet, which will be a game changer for us.

It could – it will – it's not just affecting the tech industry. What it does is have a domino effect so that other businesses are getting the type of access that they need to the Internet, whether it be healthcare, manufacturing, or tech or a restaurant that wants to be able to have a Internet cafe so that people can come in and out and still do business and hang out at their cafe. So it really – it's a game changer right there.

So back to the Lindsey Woolsey and the group that she helped us create, the Lane County Sector Strategy Team. One of the important things that we made sure to put in place was a community accountability system. And that means that it's not just about the board coming and updating everybody on what's happening in the sector. It means that we have chairs of groups and champions in a variety of different organizations that stepped up and said, hey. We're the ones – we can move this forward. We'll be the ones working on this problem. That's in our area. We can do that.

So by them stepping and saying those things, we then, as we reconvene, ask them where they're at in the process, how they've moved ahead, what's happening. So it's not just to look at what's the board done for us today? It's what have we done as a community and how can the board, as the workforce board, further support, invest, and identify resources to make sure that the work of our team members continues to move ahead? And so that's been really important to us as well.

One of the things we also did with tech is created a local chapter of the Technology Association of Oregon. The Technology Association of Oregon existed primarily or only in Portland, Oregon. And Diane teases. I don't really hate Portland, but it does irritate pretty much all of us outside of Portland because if you travel or everywhere you go, most people know that there is a Portland that's about it when it comes to Oregon. So we tease Portland and say that they are the state of Oregon.

So the Technology Association of Oregon only existed in Portland. We created a chapter here in Eugene and we invested in an individual along with some other partners, the city, to create a staff position. And that person has really launched an incredible amount of energy and support and created a local business advisory group for the tech industry, which now, we've been positioned to be able to apply for the apprenticeship grant and create two apprenticeship grant programs for the tech industry, which we don't have any apprenticeship programs in tech in the state of Oregon.

And I imagine we'll be looking outside the state of Oregon, as there are some tech apprenticeship programs throughout the United States. But this will be new for us and as a result of our structure, we'll be able to pilot this and move it out to the rest of the state.

I can't stress enough the relationship building and how important it is and that there are businesses out there that have a number of problems and they do want to talk with you. They don't just want to talk with you, though.

They do want to see actions and I think a lot of what we've done as the local board is ensure that there would be action taken, that we weren't just going to listen and walk away and then spend the next – and then, the next entity would come and ask the same questions. We wanted to make sure that they knew that we'd be sharing this information across the board and that there would be other community leaders involved and that action would take place.

So I think I've covered everything we're doing here in Lane County and it might be time for some questions. Diane, what do you think?

MS. WALTON: Sure. I think that that's just a little bit of what you guys are doing, but it's such great work and it's so telling; right? Inside each of those Sector strategies and inside the work that – when Lindsey and John came to town and brought people to the table, the threads of John Ball's conversation run loud through that, of course. Finding the people who you need to get the job done. And so could you talk a little bit about the relationship with the college?

MS. PAYNE: Are you asking – is it for me, Diane?

MS. WALTON: Yeah.

MS. PAYNE: I just wanted to make sure.

MS. WALTON: There's a question that runs through it about it's all good to have those conversations, but then, once there's a specific list of skill needs or skill certifications people want to have, how do you negotiate all of those?

MS. PAYNE: Right. Well, the community college is part of the Lane County Sector Strategy team. So they're at the table. They get to hear the information directly. So as they identify what they can do, we also have partnered – they have businesses that have partnered with them to help further define the training programs and we also have a – we are unique in some ways that we have the University of Oregon. So it – we have the community college conversations bridging from the community college to the university and conversations with the university, professors, around their curriculum as well. And our relationship with the University of Oregon is stronger than it's ever been because of this work as well. The – typically, the professors don't look at their local communities and businesses and ask them if their curriculum is going to meet the needs of local business. So it's a big deal for the professors to be working directly alongside the business community.

MS. WALTON: Yeah. That's fantastic. Rob, another –

MS. PAYNE: I got [inaudible]. I see an apprenticeship conversation and we are applying for an apprenticeship grant. It will be connected to labor. The Bureau of Labor and Industry in Oregon is the lead of applicant for it. So – but it will be designed by the employers. But that question might also be for John.

MS. WALTON: Yeah. I think it's also because Rob can speak to the – this whole apprenticeships being connected to local labor organizations. Some are, some aren't. And so – and people have been walking that line. It's been interesting to watch across the country. Some states are more deeply routed in the labor tradition than others, but, Rob, do you want to talk about how you work with the local labor guy?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, we work with the local labor guy a lot because we're – we both have a federal AAI grant and a state chancellor's grant for apprenticeship. And the state chancellor's grant, actually, one of the partners in it is the California Labor Federation. So they're actually a working partner with us on it and the interesting part is that's for a somewhat more traditional apprenticeship. So it's transit. It's the transit guys, trains and buses and whatnot.

But where he may really – I mean, and he helped us a lot with that. But where he may really help us is the biggest potential employer we have for our network technician apprenticeships is the state of California. And it turns out they're organized. They're under a union. And the guy's name is John Brower. He's our guy. And one of the issues that we have is that there's kind of a general agreement amongst the tech directors in each of the departments. So Caltrans and the unemployment EDD and what not that this seems like a pretty good idea, something they want to do.

But getting it to rise just one more level to the directors of what we in California call agency has been kind of, like, 13 separate initiatives and where John may really help us out is he may be able to get sort of the critical mass to where it quits being 12 parallel efforts and starts becoming this state's effort towards apprenticeship. And if he's able to pull that off, that'll – that's the win of the whole deal.

I think part of the deal, and in California, I know we're blessed, kind of, because of who we have at the California Labor Federation. But it also means that from our perspective as a provider is the college. We're singing to the choir, but we're agnostics. If there's labor involved, good. We're with you. And if there's not good, we understand and we can meet that.

Sort of the upside value of having labor involved is they are organized and that can help. So sometimes when we do them with – we're doing them with the electronics manufacturing side; we're working on that. They're less organized and so one of the things we've had to do is find sort of intermediaries to take over that organization place that the unions would take. And we're trying to get it where it's industry organizations that do it.

So in Semi's case, there's the Semiconductor Industry Manufacturing Association and we've worked with SHRM, this Society for Human Resource Management, and we're trying to get them to play that organizing position. And the reason for it, so kind of the ROI to them to do it, is – and having spent a little bit of time as an industry organization guy, is you're always trying to bring home the bacon to your membership. And that's the value in it to them, is if their members have that pain, it's an opportunity for them to bring back a solution. Semi is international, but the bigger one, I think, for all of us is if we continue to make progress with SHRM. That may benefit us all.

MS. WALTON: Yeah. That whole – the work on the non-traditional – how we say it – the non-traditional industry side is very different state to state, just depending upon what's going on there. But it also has been dependent upon, in my experience, employers seeing you as solution providers, not sellers of apprenticeship.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah. But that's –

MS. WALTON: You want to talk about that a little?

MR. GAMBLE: Well – and that's kind of, I mean, essentially, it's searching for the pain or ROI or however you want to do it, is that they have to have a need. And if the need is talent, then we have a solution. If we're just trying to push a program, that doesn't really – it's kind of – doesn't go anywhere. And every single company that's engaged with us or an organization that's engaged with us has seen a need.

And once you find that – where their vested interest is and you can support that, where you have sort of common ground, then a lot of the difficulty kind of passes away and it gets more down to, OK. What do we got to do to make this happen? And it's really interesting when the button – when the switch flips. They go from kind of, like, OK, it's you guys on the phone again to, OK, let's go.

Cisco is doing the PowerPoints for our presentation to the centers. I mean, they're sticking to what they want; they are. They want to – they're driving the – they have a guy. He's their academic dude who's gotten so into this that we have a call with him today. He'll have a PowerPoint done for us for the state and he's agnostic on it.

MS. WALTON: That's great. And Cisco's such an interesting – we thought at first that they were engaging in the apprenticeship arena as an employer. And then, we realized they also would like to engage as a provider of training.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah.

MS. WALTON: Because that's what they do and that's what you're going to use them for; Right?

MR. GAMBLE: Right. And it's back – and that comes from straight traditional – I mean, if you look at anybody who's got a welding apprenticeship or a welding program anywhere in the state – anywhere in the United States, it's sponsored by Lincoln or Miller or one of the welding companies, and they don't do that out of the goodness of their heart. It's they want everybody to learn on their equipment so when they go out to buy equipment, they're comfortable with it.

Well, it's the same thing with Cisco. It's the same thing with NetApp. It's the same thing with VMware. Find someone who needs and embedded talent base to sell their product and maybe you're halfway there.

MS. WALTON: Right. There are some questions about that, how you take the solution back. John, you might have some thoughts on this one about once – like, you go, you have a couple of conversations, maybe the industry is there; maybe it's a single employer. And then, you think you've got something to sell and people want to hear, again, how exactly do you take it back and get them to buy in and become employer champions for you?

MR. BALL: Right. Well, I think –

GARY GONZALES: Diane?

MS. WALTON: Yes?

GARY GONZALES: John Ball, you were referring to?

MS. WALTON: Yes.

MR. BALL: OK. Goes back to that point of having the communication going all the time, understanding that it's a team. And so if you look at the nature of the question, it anticipates the usual dialectic of how we work, which is we have some meetings with the employers and we do some work in the agency or agencies or the college or whatever.

And then, at some point, we assume we're going back to them with a product. And a good way to make that really easy is cut out that going back step. Arrange a process or orient the process so that they're in it the whole time. There is somebody on their team, in their agency, in that sector, somebody or somebodies that can be a huge part of designing that training program or certification program.

And instead of an occasional check back – but like I said, once a month or once a quarter or when you get the thing done in draft form, OK. Come back. Here's our draft. Do you like our draft? Arrange the process so that it's their draft and your draft. It's our draft, includes that customer-client partner from the very beginning; adds a little bit of new territory from the beginning. Oh my gosh, are we going to have them on meetings? Yeah. It's us. It's all of us.

MS. WALTON: We have that so often and –

MS. PAYNE: This is Kristina. I just want a second thought. I'm choosing you, John, because I thought maybe that was a trick question that was posed. Based on where we are at, it's definitely – you want – it really is their idea, not our idea for them.

MR. BALL: Yeah. And we've got 100 years of tradition in the public sector doing – and sometimes, our leadership almost requires it in the way they expect us to carry out work plans, etc. And so let me go back to design if I can, really quickly, and just tie this back to a couple of things that Kristina was talking about. How do you do that? How do you make sure that it is us?

And Kristina talked about the importance of making these really action processes, action partnerships, so that people from the private sector who really are not into boredom, it's just not – it's part of our job in the public sector to sit around in these boring meetings. But these folks aren't used to being bored. Most of them haven't been bored since the day they got into their business or started and boredom is something they don't tolerate really well.

And if you go to two or three meetings with the folks you want in the room and nothing happens, that doesn't change substantially, they're not going to keep coming back and your ability to have them on your team on a day-to-day basis is going to go away. So one technique that has worked for me a lot is when we put our action plans together, anything from a strategic plan down to your own working notes about what you're trying to have done, our traditional way of looking at it, it's "You're my priority; here's what we're trying to accomplish as a group."

And you pick off the six most important things that'll make the sector work better, make the process work better, and I'm going to say expand that. You want that. What are the six – whatever the number is is the most important things we should be working on? Then, add another component to your work list that says what are the things that we can accomplish quickly. They're not necessarily the most important thing on the list. They might be number nine and number 14 and number 19 on your list of stuff you can do.

But you can get them done in a month or two or three and by the next time you have the meeting or a couple of meetings done, you're celebrating success as a group. Extremely important thing to buy in ownership in (ADINA ?) and getting into that group. OK. This is a group where I go and we say we want to do such and such and within a period of time within my lifetime. That's – so it helps cement that relationship and communication.

And then, there's a third set of activities or targets that I like to have on there, and it is what's going to be fun for these people? What's enjoyable? And if you look at the key people in the group in the conversation, in the community, what are the things that may not be – it might be number 40 on the list or they might not even be a priority item, but just an activity or a way of doing business or a subject that happens to come up or a place to meet that – so that people really like or it's convenient for them or the kind of food that they like when they come to meetings.

You should have a file on each of these people. And what kind of food do they like to have in front of them at lunch? Whatever it is that makes that meeting fun, you want that – you're – when you get together or even when you're on the phone, you want to be – that could be one of the most enjoyable events or times in the calendar of the people that you're trying to keep interested and on that team as employers.

And so it's all about building that constant communication and ownership so that you get to step right around that process, that dialectic process, of, OK, we work on the plan. Now, we're bringing back – you want the maximum number of people involved in the very beginning. And us, sometimes we just have to expand the definition of us.

MS. WALTON: One of the things that I learned working with John was that piece about trust and actually identifying some things to deliver on. Exactly. Whether it's the most important thing that's going to change the economy or if it's a little bit further down the list. And some of it maybe comes out of that – when Jack Welch was doing all his change stuff.

And he'd go in and say, you know what? What's bugging you? And people would say, I have to get seven signatures on a request. And he'd say, OK. Let's buy that thing down right now. And so it's just that people seeing you respond to what they need allows them to ask you for more and allows you to get to do so much more.

MR. BALL: Right. And so just very quickly, so the question – back to the question, not to minimize it. How do you give back to people? How do you make that conversation work in a way that's going to help them buy off on it?

First of all, I say include them from the beginning. Kristina also made the point that you're going to have to look across the sources of your talent and understand that just because your membership list or your flowchart or org chart says, OK, this position is to be appointment from whoever's sitting in the director of something-something at the college, but in some town in Eugene, the director of that part of the college or the Department of Labor or AG-DEV is a really dynamic person, just what you need, but in Corvallis, that person is not worth a damn. You know?

They've been in the job for a long time, but they're not suited for the work you're doing and just by the coincidence of the membership, you've got a low compression cylinder sitting there. You've got to – with the employer's interests in mind – make sure that somebody is in there fulfilling the function that the group anticipated when it said we want the college of such and such in here, that they're not getting the job done, if they're an obstacle, if they have bad personal or professional relationships with somebody in that employer team, you've got to figure out a workaround.

So that when you do take the next step of the conversation, here's our new training program, here's what we think that'll look like, how can we work together on this, you've got somebody from your side that actually can make that connection. It's a connection of trust; it's a connection of positive energy on the project.

MS. WALTON: Absolutely. Rob, did you want to add to that?

MR. GAMBLE: I don't know if I should.

MS. WALTON: I heard you rustling for a minute there. So I just wanted to give you the opportunity if you wanted it.

MR. GAMBLE: Well, and it's always about finding the people. I mean, and that's why – I mean, that makes all the sense in the world, is finding the people who can get it done and doing it. That's the – we all work against that kind of image of government workers and it does kill us when we bump into those moments. I don't think it's actually just government workers. I mean, it's everywhere and that's the trick.

MR. BALL: Hey, Rob. So I'm just seeing some – I just see somebody put up here on the list. "Based on what the employer needs, you need to bring a partner where you had a rift in the past. How do you bring them on board?"

Here's my best recommendation on that. Go after it head on. Do not sit around for even one meeting or two meetings or six months or a year with an issue of communication or trust or a team approach not working between critical people in the project. If you've got that issue based on whatever happened in the past, you've got access to resources across the community that can help you problem solve, mediate. You're going to find out who it is.

In your community, you're going to be able to know or quickly find out who these people listen to. If you've got a problem person or a problem relationship, who they listen to and who else has influenced you in the community that will help you sit down at lunch with them and say, look. This is a really important project for the community.

And you've got third parties that are saying for us it's important and we want to make sure that everybody's on the same page and it looks like we've got an issue about such and such. What do we do to work that out? Take it on. Do not wait for them to identify it because if people have had problems in the past, they're liable to just – they've gotten where they are by sitting on them, not bringing them up, passive-aggressively sat watching the other person in their projects for years and years.

And sometimes, they have to sit in the room together. If you leave that environment in place, nothing good's going to happen. So just take it upon yourself to get whoever is good at negotiating, brokering skills and get that issue on the table. If you can't solve it, then your responsibility is, your leadership responsibility to work for this community, is to create a new set of relationships.

If you got two people that you've tried and can't get past whatever it is that's bugging them, then you've got to have – part of your job is maintaining the relationships with the college president or the county commissioner or whoever it is, that you can go to them and say – with whoever else they will listen to you and say we need to make a change here. We have a relationship on paper that's not working. It's critical to our process. Let's sit down and figure out how – without embarrassing anybody, without downgrading anybody – we find the right seat for people. And if they're sitting in the wrong one, you've got to get them out.

MR. GAMBLE: You also brought up another thing, and it's one we're actually kind of facing as you move down and you start to enroll your apprentices and build (pilliers ?) and all the different things you need to establish to sustain one is while we're all kind of running headlong into developing kind of the new version of apprenticeship, a lot of the paper and the forms and the process are from 40 or 50 or 60 year ago. And we kind of bump up against it every step we go.

And the funniest thing or the wildest thing is that a lot of times we've been doing things just because that's the way we did it in 1960. And we just had a data collection issue yesterday on the various data that people need and when it got right down to it is we're collecting it three times and we probably could stick it on one form and be done; you know?

But no one had ever asked and it's because it's a little bit like, well, that's the way we do it. And, well, OK. Well, now there's a whole bunch of new kids in the game. We're probably driving the folks who have been doing it for a long time absolutely nuts. So it's not necessarily a person. Sometimes, and often in our case, it's been a process, that we have to sit down and go, OK. Now, how do we do it? And it turns out that a lot of times that it's just that's the way we've always done it and people are pretty open to, OK, maybe there is a new way.

MS. WALTON: And thank God they are open. I think we are going to try to take on that data and form and all that crap that does get in the way without people – it's not a conscious piece; right? It just sits there in front of you. So we could take that on right this minute, but, sadly, our time is coming to an end. These are fabulous people who have been talking and people who have been asking questions. I'm hugely grateful to everybody who's on board.

I do want to thank Ben Kushner who stands at the ready through this whole thing to talk about how to use business language and things you can ask your employer for and we're not going to get to that today. So we're just going to add him in later in the week. That big red buzzer there are some tools that we wanted to leave you with, too, about – sometimes, it takes practice. Sometimes, people, like before you make a big speech, like maybe before you participate in a debate, practice really, really does help.

And so work with whoever you're going to be working with. Call each other on acronyms. There's lots of fun ways to get really, really good at this work. We have some forms that have been attached to the presentations that you can use with your staff and your partners, just to work through some very specific exercises. You know, pick an employer, see what's going on with them. And one of the things that we were so surprised by after people got the apprenticeship grants, which required employer participation, was asking the question what jobs do they have? Have you been to their websites? And people had not.

So there's just lots of different work. So identifying the employer, this is something you can imagine doing with your team that we were talking about. You could go through the job openings and what the requirements are. Sometimes that helps you with some of this stuff that Rob was just referring to, just sorting it down. Jacqueline Rondeau (sp) is absolutely right that we've got to work the process as it's a hard piece, but we can do it. Getting ready for the visit. Knowing what your strategies are. All of that stuff, we've tried to talk through a little bit today.

We didn't have a huge amount of time to go through every little thing, but these are things you can do where it's going to make a difference. You're going to do it at home. So we're thrilled about that and we're always available to do more.

Of course, you can always contact us in the Department of Labor. We are always Lastname.Firstname@dol.gov and really want to know if you've tried to use those handouts and let us know how they go and who you used them with and how we can make them better. That would be fabulous too.

And then I do believe I'm going to hand it over to Gary Gonzalez.

MR. GONZALEZ: Thanks, Diane.

(END)