
Measuring the Success of Communications with Businesses

Background

Businesses drive our economy. They provide jobs and supply the market with goods and services that consumers want and need. Businesses are always looking for ways to stay and remain competitive and a key component is having a skilled workforce – now and in the future. Workforce and partner organizations help businesses find and retain workers and build a talent pipeline. Also, they can assist with other aspects of the business, such as strategy development within the community/region and aligning service delivery with other organizations that offer complementary services.

Now is the time for the workforce and partner organizations to make meaningful connections and build strong relationships with business in a variety of capacities. Businesses rely on workforce and partner organizations to develop customized solutions through an integrated service delivery approach across all partners. Knowing how to build relationships with businesses can be a critical step for maintaining trust and ensuring continued business.

This document was developed as part of a [Disability and Employment Technical Assistance – Employer Engagement Cohort](#) which gathered agencies across the nation representing workforce, education, vocational rehabilitative services, economic development, disability partners, and other alliances that serve businesses. It is meant to be shared with the various workforce and partner organizations within your state who share business customers. This may include your local workforce board. You will find suggestions for how to establish performance measurements that track how well your workforce and partner organizations build relationships and trust with businesses.

Accompanying documents include *Interacting with Businesses: Guiding Questions Protocol* and *Building Business Relationships: Introduction*. These documents focused on workforce and partner organization relationships with businesses.

The following questions may be used as a guide for developing meaningful and data-driven measures when working with businesses. Since each workforce and partner organization within a state collects different program data, information contained in this document may help states determine the best way to evaluate success factors and improve service delivery with employers.

What might you measure to gauge the success of your outreach and continued relationships with businesses? What data might we track?

- ◆ An increase in the number of businesses accessing agencies.
- ◆ A measured increase in workforce and partner organization collaboration that leverages resources across systems.
- ◆ An improved measure of integration of people with disabilities into a business.
- ◆ A measured increase in the number of businesses hiring individuals with disabilities.
- ◆ An increase in the number of “hits” to state and local resource links provided within the tool.

Solutions

- ◆ Create a scorecard with outcomes.
- ◆ Create a shared website to count access through analytics.
- ◆ Develop a survey (a link and/or email) regarding the “usefulness” to businesses.
- ◆ Acquire a cross-system case management system (application) to track common data
- ◆ Organize a forum to engage customers of our systems and discuss how systems work. What strategies are successful within the workforce and partner organization? What information should be shared with businesses to demonstrate value-add?

How would the information be tracked?

- ◆ Many organizations have established databases that are already tracking some of this data, often in real-time. This may include tracking the services offered to businesses, the number of businesses, what businesses have been touched, and which businesses are posting positions.
- ◆ Use an already existing measure to track information, such as the number of businesses that use the services within your workforce and partner organization.
- ◆ Utilize analytics to count the number of hits on resources listed on existing websites. Capture baseline data ahead of time to measure the change (delta).
- ◆ Develop a survey and ask businesses about their willingness to work with the workforce and/or partner organization, and if the customer service has improved over a defined period.

What frequency/time would the data be collected?

- ◆ Cohort recommends an annual or semi-annual report that can be shared across workforce and partner organizations.
- ◆ Cohort recommends the flexibility to develop an action plan and schedule that works best within the state, in which all partners are willing to participate.

How would the information be submitted, and to whom?

- ◆ Cohort recommends that the state captures this information and determines what actions can be streamlined or improved upon. The tool has both national and state/local resources available that can be customized to meet the community needs.

Other considerations in measuring the success of business engagement.

When you are measuring your employer engagement opportunities, there are a variety of considerations. Below is a short list to address as you move forward.

- ◆ Are there other influencers that might impact the results of tracking data?
- ◆ The reliability of the data is dependent upon the accurate and diligent tracking of all entities.
- ◆ Surveys do not always capture the whole picture. A survey should be thoughtfully crafted.
- ◆ Are there data/resource sharing agreements, or costs associated with sharing data?
- ◆ States, workforce and partner organizations track and share different data across systems (not apples to apples).
- ◆ Workforce and partner organizations serve different populations and there may not always be disability-specific data that can be gathered.

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