



Case Scenario

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

MODULE 2, LESSON 2

CLAUDIA AND FIRST MEETING

Introduction

This scenario is reviewing a VR staff member's initial interaction with an employer she hasn't previously been involved with. This scenario allows learners to think about how to prepare, decide what information to start with, etc.

Scenario

Claudia is preparing for her first meeting with an office supply company. In their initial phone call, the employer mentioned a need for some staff training, but she didn't get into specifics.

Claudia muses: "Okay, I don't have much information about the employer's needs to begin with, so let me think about what I should offer first..."

Option 1: "I know they are hiring, so I will offer them training on how to hire workers with disabilities." (**Response:** "Even though I know they are hiring, I don't know what they are looking for training on. I should find out more about their needs.")

Option 2: "Because I don't have specifics from her, I need to visit with her about what she has in mind and what her training needs are." (**Response:** "Exactly! Once you have learned more about her needs, you will be able to customize the training options that you offer.")

It's important to get to know an employer... Developing a relationship with the employer will help you individualize training and other services to meet their needs.

Follow-up: Imagine you were in Claudia's shoes. Do you know exactly what training and services your agency offers? Ask yourself:

- What training and services does your agency provide?
- Are these services available statewide?
- Are there limits to when training and services can be provided to an employer?
- Does the training offered by the local job center duplicate what your agency offers? Is there an opportunity for partnership?

Branching scenario #1: "Hi, I'm Marcia, the HR manager." *You introduce yourself and your agency.*

What is the first thing you want to do in that conversation?

Option 1: Mention that you have seen their job openings and you have a candidate that is interested and could be a good match. (Response: "Ummm, are you a job agency?" *Try again, and don't lead with a candidate. Even though they may ask about applicants, your goal is to initially get the business talking about their needs and goals.*)

Option 2: Make a brief intro and elevator pitch. Ask if you can set up a meeting to learn about their business and how VR may support their goals. (Response: "Hmm, well we're always looking to grow. Why don't we meet?" *Correct! Inviting the employer to talk about their needs and priorities is an important first step in developing a trusting relationship.*)

Now you've made it to your first meeting with the HR manager. What's next?

Branching scenario #2: The HR manager mentions: "So...I've never met with an agency like yours before. Where should we start?"

Option 1: You thank her for allowing you the opportunity to meet. You give a brief elevator pitch and ask her to tell you more about the company & its needs.

(Her response is to start telling you about the business: "Well, we are a growing company...")

This is a great start and exactly where you want the conversation to start! Remember to listen more than you speak. Asking questions and letting the employer guide the discussion with their priorities is a good strategy.

Option 2: You start by mentioning that you have noticed they have several job openings, and you feel like your agency could help with employee retention.

(The HR manager responds with: "Well, this is a tough economy...")

Hmmm, let's try that one again! Jumping in like this could sound judgmental like you are criticizing their ability to retain employees. It's too soon to have this conversation. Think about how you can get her to talk about her business and see where it leads. Most likely, it will eventually start leading toward any hiring needs the business has.

Nicely done! This scenario demonstrates how initial conversations can begin. It is helpful to be prepared with a brief elevator pitch to introduce yourself, but not to start with your own agenda. Listening is key!