



Business Services and Employer Services: The Strategic and Operational

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The Situation

- The public workforce system has been slow to change the paradigm from social service to economic development as mandated by WIA;
- Demand-driven system more of a reality where business entities have been involved and led the way;
- WIA looks at employer and jobseeker as equal customers but tends to measure and reward only jobseeker activities;



The Situation

- Incumbent worker training projects sponsored by federal and state funders have allowed the workforce system to bring something of value to business to the table;
- However, we still do not agree on how to measure impact on businesses as a result of these interventions;
- We still have not institutionalized these efforts...funding silos continue in many areas;



The Situation

- A great deal of inertia in the One-Stop system;
 - Strict jobseeker focus;
 - One dimensional focus on employers...job orders;
 - The wrong people with the wrong skills;
 - Continued lack of coordination with public sector folks from economic development and education that are trying to be of service to the employer community.



Organizational Confusion

- How do we communicate a demand-driven vision from Workforce Investment Boards to the One-Stop system?
- How do we deal with mixed signals from the State bureaucracy?
- What is the division of labor with regard to employer outreach between WIBs and One-Stops?



The Task

- Clarify the relationship between WIBs and One-Stops
 - One-Stops are creatures of the WIBs;
 - WIB strategy drives One-Stop operations;
- Resist the efforts of the State bureaucracy to intrude in that relationship;
- Clearly define who does what in relationship to employer outreach.



At the Strategic Level...

WIBs are responsible for...

- Linkages with business and industry;
- Industry-specific interventions;
- Coordination with other community systems (economic development, K-12, higher education, adult basic education);
- Resource identification and allocation;
- Oversight of the one-stop system.



At the Operational Level...

One-Stops are responsible for...

- Employer connections to the one-stop system for labor exchange services;
- Company-specific interventions;
- Helping people to reach the first rung of career ladders;
- Passing folks off to the next level of provider.



From the Strategic to the Operational

- Data drives planning;
 - Understanding of local economy is the first step;
 - Regional connections put the local economy in a broader context;
 - Concentration on local industry clusters provides a way to focus planning efforts;
 - Data eventually needs to move down to occupations, career ladders, entry-level jobs, skill requirements and such to be useful to the workforce practitioner;



From the Strategic to the Operational

- Planning drives policy development;
 - Information needs to be shared broadly with community leaders, government officials, educators, and WIB members;
 - The involvement of technical folks from those groups ensures the “buy-in” of these systems to the interpretation of results;
 - Ultimately, the WIB is responsible for working the results of planning into its policy documents;



From the Strategic to the Operational

- Policy drives the deployment of resources;
 - An investment strategy involves setting priorities...
 - For outreach to key industries;
 - For related program development in contracted services;
 - For changes to the deployment of one-stop services;
 - Those priorities need to be reflected in the policy documents of the WIB;
 - Staff is responsible for sharing this information and negotiating changes with the One-Stop provider;



From the Strategic to the Operational

- Strategic deployment often requires changes in the service delivery system;
 - More industry focused;
 - Additional services;
 - Employer services personnel;
 - New metrics;
- Negotiated in WIB/One-Stop contracting



The Role of the State

- Support the gathering and use of good data...
 - Priority industries;
 - Priority occupations;
- Funding for incumbent worker training;
- Support for metrics that go beyond common measures;
- Coordination with education and economic development



Roles and Responsibilities

- Workforce investment boards set the strategic direction;
- In cooperation with other community systems;
- Often, they are the organizers of industry partnerships;
- Provide direction for the One-Stop system;
- Put resources on the street;
- Responsible for evaluation of success of interventions



Roles and Responsibilities

- One-Stop system has traditional roles in labor exchange, rapid response, and worker retraining;
- Jobseeker has been the traditional customer; adding employer customer means a new role;
- Business outreach now goes beyond employer advisory committees;
- All employer interventions need to have an eventual connection to the One-Stop system



Pinch Point

- Business and employer services tend to be a pinch point in WIB and One-Stop relations;
- There are a variety of ways to organize so that the job gets done;
- The solution for an individual area will depend on...
 - Existing community resources;
 - Existing internal resources;
 - Who has the funding to do it;
 - Scale and regional connections



Business Services

- Business services tend to be done by the WIB and its contractors...
 - Relationships with intermediary organizations;
 - Research about priority industries and the career ladders that are a part of them;
 - Organizing groups of companies into industry-specific groups;



Employer Services

- Employer services tend to be done by the One-Stop system...
 - Job orders and labor exchange;
 - Rapid response;
- Additional employer services are the “new frontier” of One-Stops;
- Incumbent worker training funds have complicated relationship between business and employer services



Employer Services Options

- Retooling existing staff and broadening traditional employer outreach;
- Hiring private or public entities that specialize in employer outreach;
- Using a One-Stop or community partner that has outreach staff



“New” Employer Services

- Screening
 - Drug testing;
 - Criminal background testing;
 - Credit checks;
- Assessment
 - WorkKeys
- Personnel services for small employers
 - Personnel policy manuals;
 - Job descriptions;
 - Training and consultation on EEO issues



“New” Employer Services

- Incumbent worker training
 - Development of training plans;
 - Delivery of the training itself;
 - Liaison with other entities around other economic development issues (lean manufacturing, investment in plant and equipment)



Boundary Issues

- Does the One-Stop system have the capacity to provide the “new” employer services?
- Is there a role for WIBs that moves them closer to service delivery for employers?



Your Input

- How does it work in your area?
 - Roles of the WIB and One-Stop;
 - Involvement of community partners;
 - The scope of Business and Employer Services;
- What are the problems and sticky issues?



In Conclusion...The Task

- Clarify the relationship between WIBs and One-Stops
 - One-Stops are creatures of the WIBs;
 - WIB strategy drives One-Stop operations;
- Resist the efforts of the State bureaucracy to intrude in that relationship;
 - Air cover or air raid;
- Clearly define who does what in relationship to employer outreach;
 - It's not that simple;
 - Highly idiosyncratic to the local area and local circumstances



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