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Organizational Marketing

Organizational marketing and job development are critical activities which, if done well, will contribute to the supported employment participant's success on the job, as well as the success of the entire organization. An organization must approach these two distinct activities with creativity and a clear plan of action. Although organizational marketing and job development efforts are ongoing and occur concurrently, the desired outcomes of each are not necessarily the same. Therefore, these terms are not synonymous or interchangeable.

Simply put, organizational marketing "sells" the unique service or services offered by a supported employment provider. Marketing efforts are directed toward two constituents: 1) community employers; and 2) job seekers with significant disabilities. Specifically, the services that will be marketed to community employers will be the availability of a rich pool of personnel options, as well as employment centered consultation. Personnel features include dependable pre-screened applicants. Consultation activities may consist of job analysis, job restructuring, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Supported employment organizational marketing was traditionally focused upon community employers, as the primary cus-

tomers. However, in a system which values choice and empowerment, and continues to debate economic control of service dollars in the hands of individuals with disabilities, supported employment organizations must begin to expand their vision of organizational marketing. Service providers now market and "sell" their services to individuals with significant disabilities as well. As discussed in the first section of this manual, the paradigm is shifting to a more tangible customer-driven approach to supported employment.

Job development, on the other hand, assists an individual to "sell" himself or herself for a specific employment position. This is done by establishing a strong business network and by developing and maintaining an information system regarding potential job openings. The primary customer during the job development process is the individual with the significant disability, also referred to as the job seeker. The job seeker is actively involved, shaping his or her own role within job development activities.

The organization must understand the important distinctions between organizational marketing and job development and appreciate the reasons why these two concepts are easily confused. The underlying foundation of each of

these processes is a strong customer-directed approach. The following table contrasts organi-

zational marketing with job development by demonstrating the differences in the focus, customer, and outcomes.

Component	Focus	Customer	Outcome
Organizational Marketing	Services, Customer satisfaction	Employers and Job Seekers	Increased Network
Job Development: The Path to Careers	Competitive Employment	Job Seeker	Job of Choice

Organizational marketing and job development are symbiotic or interrelated. That is, when an employment specialist is engaged in job development he or she can also be engaging in organizational marketing. This occurs because both marketing and job development involve:

- # Relationship Building
- # Service Marketing
- # Informational Networking

Therefore, an organization might experience employment development benefits and/or outcomes while engaged in organizational marketing. It is not unusual for an employment specialist or other representative (i.e. board member, family member, etc.) to find a job when conducting marketing activities. However, this does not always occur nor is it the objective. Yet, this experience does explain how these two concepts often get confused. Ultimately, marketing will maintain and expand the organization's networks. When a job becomes an outcome of this process it is a secondary benefit. The following examples

demonstrate two typical marketing contacts. In **Example 1**, the organizational marketing activity resulted in a strong job lead. **Example 2** demonstrates how a new marketing contact heightened the understanding of a local supported employment organization's services within the business community. While both examples may initially appear to have very different outcomes, the marketing network was enlarged in both instances.

Marketing Example #1:

Stan Marker is a member of the board of directors for Resource, Inc., an employment service company. One evening Stan gave a brief presentation to his Community Club on behalf of Resource Inc. Following the pre-sentation, a club member contacted Stan to request a meeting with Resource, Inc. staff. The community club member expressed an interest in hiring someone from Resource Inc. to fill an immediate need for a programmer in her company. Stan immediately contacted the director of Resource Inc. to follow up on the job lead.

Marketing Example #2:

Kate Callahan is a family member of a person with a significant disability. Kate recently contacted Carl Parkins, the personnel director, at her corporate office. During their conversation, Kate inquired about current and future company job openings. Although there weren't any at the time, Carl asked Kate about the employment "program" that her family member attended. Kate described for Carl some of the employment services that were available through her company, SEEK. Carl promptly placed SEEK on the mailing list for job opening announcements.

As mentioned earlier, the organization has two primary customers: 1) individuals with significant disabilities; and 2) community employers. It is the responsibility of the organization and the employment specialist to meet the needs of *both* of these target groups. Employers want individuals to fill available personnel positions who can meet company quality and production standards. Individuals with significant disabilities desire a job of choice which matches their respective interests, preferences, strengths, and career goals. To maintain a competitive position within a community marketplace, the organization must

operate with this customer-focused philosophy. The remaining section will describe the best practices associated with supported employment's customer-driven approach to organizational marketing.

BEST PRACTICES

Organizational marketing is not a great mystery. Marketing concepts and strategies are not new, all is tried and true! Supported employment marketing, as with any other business, relies on traditional, established activities first implemented in the business community decades ago. Often supported employment staff ask "What's new?" What *could* be considered as "new" is actually applying conventional business marketing practices and activities to supported employment services and organizations. The first step in initiating organizational marketing activities will be for the entire organization to evaluate its respective focus, values, and "mind set." The organization assesses whether or not it has the marketing mind-set by addressing the following terms and "personalizing" them to their own reality or corporate framework.

MARKETING MIND-SET/ORGANIZATION FOCUS	
Terms	Definition
Customer-based	# Customers drive the services provided
Customer-responsive	# Business reacts immediately to needs, issues, etc. of its customers.

MARKETING MIND-SET/ORGANIZATION FOCUS	
Terms	Definition
Customer Satisfaction	# Business pursues the satisfaction of customers.
Quality vs. Quantity	# The organization measures organizational outcomes using quality standards such as length of employment, severity of the disability rather than number of people placed in employment during a given year.
Business Niche	# The organization defines their unique services to be offered within the community.
Customer Identification	# The organization defines their constituents or the target of their services.

The charge then becomes to approach marketing from a business perspective to link with other businesses within the community. Marketing-oriented agencies are driven by their customers wants and needs. **In fact, all activities are directed by the customers of the business. This approach requires a firm commitment from management, as well as the entire organization for the necessary time, money, and staff investment to successfully implement goals and objectives. All marketing activities and organizational practices must be integrated and coordinated.** The key is cooperation, not competition, within an organization! Marketing is not solely intensive promotion, rather, it is a process of coordinating a set of activities to achieve customer satisfaction.

The Message

As supported employment organizations move about their business community, using competitive, business oriented language is

crucial. Marketing is an exchange of *valued* goods and services. Traditional marketing is a process in which the organization engages in several activities. These activities include the following areas:

- # gathering information about the environment,
- # determining benefits or wants people wish the agency to deliver,
- # setting marketing objectives,
- # determining which wants, and what portions of the community to serve,
- # developing a marketing plan, and
- # evaluating marketing efforts.

Crompton, J.L. & Lamb, C.W., 1986

Supported employment service providers are not human service agencies, rather,

they are employment service agencies. This is a significant paradigm shift for many supported employment organizations, which assumes a competitive and valued offering of needed services. The language is business to business; the message is: "Our company can fill your personnel needs!" This shift establishes an approach which presents the service, as well as individuals with significant disabilities, in a positive, competent, and respected manner. In addition, it focuses the organization's resources on the business community and is designed to satisfy employment needs.

Involving supported employment participants in the development of organizational marketing materials and the shaping of a marketing approach is key to organizational success. Customer involvement further enhances an organization's responsiveness to respective customer needs. Job seekers also assist in identifying the services which will ultimately be provided.

Yet, as discussed previously, a supported employment organization must develop a marketing approach that is specific to both constituent groups. Employers are the primary target of marketing activities. The employment specialist or manager can interview employers to determine the specific factors and features that they deem essential when searching for qualified personnel to join their business. This is also a productive exercise for supported employment personnel to become familiar with business terms and priorities. The input received from community employers can be highlighted in a supported employment organization's marketing materials.

Not only is the message and language a

very important aspect of marketing, so too is the expansion of the organization's network. This and customer satisfaction are the primary goals of marketing. Thus, the organization must enlist everyone employed or connected with their respective business. Mobilizing all associated networks will ensure continued growth. No one is exempt from marketing, everyone needs to participate, including: supported employment participants, family members, board members, management, direct service, and administrative staff.

A Marketing Plan: Developing a Marketing Strategy

Organizational marketing requires a creative plan of action and ongoing evaluation. The plan of action identifies the niche or service identity, competition, resources, customers served, and the outcomes which are expected. The results of such planning and development provides an overall strategy and framework for achieving success. Many of the questions which must be addressed in developing a marketing plan will overlap with similar themes. This will provide comprehensive information for the development of a marketing game plan.

When developing a marketing plan, the organization must seek answers to several different questions. The results or answers from these decisive questions will ultimately form the framework for the organizational marketing plan. These questions are listed in the following table.

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ORGANIZATIONAL MARKETING PLAN

- # What is the mission of the organization?
- # What are the abilities and preferences of the job seekers?
- # Who is the audience?
- # What services will be offered to satisfy the customers' needs?
- # What are the economic trends?
- # What are the outcomes expected?
- # What is the message to the customers?
- # What are the resources?
- # What is the promotional plan? What tools will be used?
- # How will success be determined?

What is the mission of the organization? A typical organization may have a mission statement which addresses the integration of people with disabilities into competitive employment. Yet, this is not enough. The organization needs to develop a mission statement that is specific to organizational marketing. This type of statement would focus on assisting employers with successfully hiring and integrating people with disabilities into the work force.

What are the abilities and preferences of job seekers? The answer to this question will provide some direction as to the types of employment opportunities that will be pursued, as well as the support needs of the job seeker. The abilities and preferences of these indi-

viduals will help to develop a framework of the services that will ultimately be offered. Supported employment services must be individualized. Therefore, services will vary based on the specific needs and interests of the job seekers. A clear response in this area provides some definition and foundation for building the plan.

Who is the audience? As mentioned earlier, supported employment organizations have two constituencies: employers and job seekers. Marketing activities are specifically designed and developed with the respective audience in mind. Therefore, an organization must delineate the activities and materials for each of the two constituents.

What are the needs of the customers? Once customers have been identified, a careful analysis will indicate specific needs. These needs must drive the services offered by a customer responsive organization. Possible employer needs may include: consultation on ADA; competent personnel to fill specific positions; or assistance with environmental analysis, job analysis, and task analysis. Job seekers, on the other hand, may need assistance with developing a resume; role playing an interview; identifying a job of choice; or developing a support network.

What services will be offered to satisfy the customers' needs? Many companies offer a variety of services. These include consultation regarding job and task analysis, job restructuring, information on ADA, employer labor source, job placement, family support, etc. Specific services should be marketed to specific audiences. For example: consultation and training on ADA is marketed to employers, job

placement services are marketed to individuals with disabilities.

What are the economic trends? Canvassing the community to determine the types of companies, employment opportunities, and changes in the economic community is a critical component of marketing. Conducting a community labor analysis of this type will determine the path the organization will pursue. Geographic areas differ in respect to the types of jobs available. For example, a beach community may have a healthy tourist economy with heavy seasonal employment opportunities in the service industry, while a rural area may have jobs in farming, lumber, and service. Or perhaps a mid-west town with a steadily deteriorating manufacturing industry is engaged in recruiting companies to the area in an effort to diversify the economic base. Knowing what jobs exist in a community and developing economic areas will help determine a service niche.

What are the outcomes expected? Outcomes include such indicators as: jobs of choice, careers, and employment satisfaction. Many organizations list as a goal that a certain number of individuals will be employed. However, such goals do not address adequately the issue of quality. Although the fiscal reality may require numbers, organizations must look at quality, not quantity, when engaging in organizational marketing. Outcomes must reflect elements of quality such as choice, control, careers, and person-centered processes in terms of job seeker needs. Often, outcomes which address employer needs are not stated. If an organization is truly responsive to both of its constituents, then both perspectives must be

represented and addressed to have success in the community marketplace. Outcomes must also include satisfied employers. Employer centered outcomes can be determined by analyzing general employer needs and then incorporating these needs into organizational goals.

What is the message to the customers? The message is specifically designed to the customer. Marketing materials such as brochures should be developed for each of the customer groups: job seekers and employers. An organization should have a promotional brochure which addresses the needs of employers, as well as a separate brochure designed to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. Often, marketing materials become outdated but are used even though they do not communicate an accurate message. For example, it is confusing to businesses to read a brochure which highlights the service of “putting people with disabilities in community jobs.” Instead, the message for employers is “identifying employees to meet the personnel needs of today’s business community.” Using one large promotional brochure may initially cost less, but in the end will only short change marketing efforts. The message of promotional materials should be professional and concise.

What are the resources? This includes financial and personnel resources. What percentage of the budget is available for developing marketing materials and engaging in marketing activities? Which staff is available to conduct marketing? Again, it is critical that everyone in the organization is involved in some capacity. An organization must ask itself if everyone in the organization will conduct direct

marketing. Or perhaps one individual will be hired to perform marketing on a part time or full time basis. Arguably, a more effective strategy would be to actively engage **everyone** in marketing endeavors. However, organizations often overlook marketing as they respond to the day-to-day happenings. In this case, perhaps having one staff person totally committed to organizational marketing would ensure continued networking. The bottom line is that *resources must be committed* in order to implement a marketing plan which will ensure a competitive edge and fill the needs of customers.

What is the promotional plan? What tools will be used? A promotional plan involves determining the most cost-effective marketing strategies based on the resources available and the outcomes desired. It would be an ideal world indeed if organizations had unlimited marketing budgets. This is not the case, and the organization must get “the biggest bang for their buck”. Activities may include public service announcements, public speaking, attending community and civic meetings, offering specific training to employers and word of mouth advertising by customers. The plan also includes marketing materials or tools such as brochures, flyers, business cards, etc. Although these are traditional approaches, it is important to conduct them with specificity according to the customer and to remember to use business language. Creative marketing will call for many non-traditional methods which are designed to further stimulate an organization’s well being. For example, a non-traditional method would include purchasing advertising placards which are placed at the tee boxes of

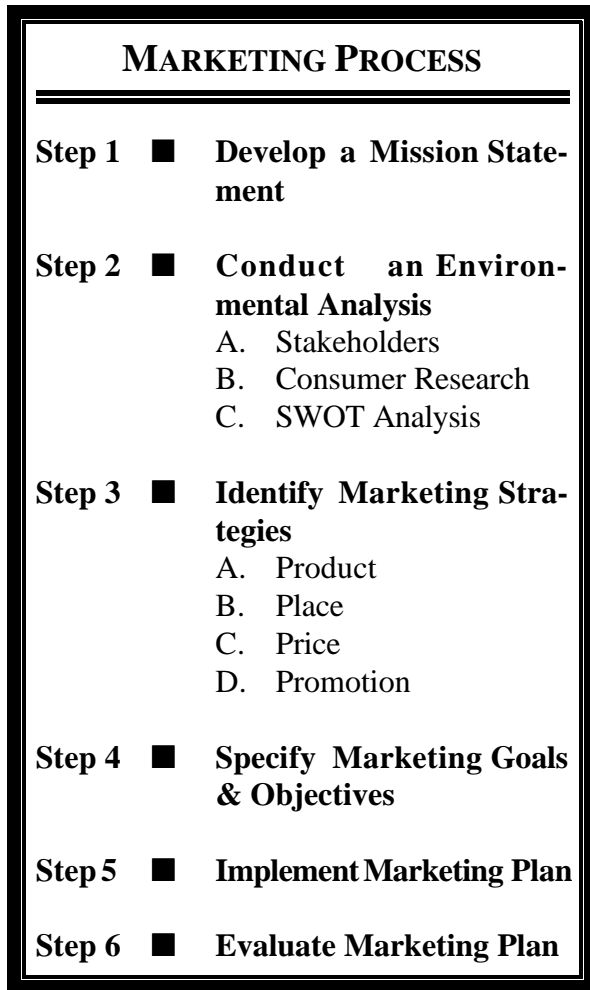
each hole for a local fund raising golf tournament. The intent of such a strategy is to become known within the community. Additional strategies may include mass faxes, magazine and newspaper articles and advertisements, inserts in corporate and business newsletters, posted information at public places, web page on the Internet, and pens, notepads etc. with the company logo.

How will success be determined?

Success is determined by evaluating customer satisfaction. An organization must put in place mechanisms to evaluate whether or not its customers are satisfied with the services offered and delivered. Before determining indicators of success, an organization will need to evaluate current marketing efforts. This will help an organization to see what is working and what is not. Evaluating current activities will lay a solid foundation for growth and success.

Answering these questions may involve several interested stakeholders. The following checklist which is found in the appendix of this chapter is a useful tool for tracking efforts to develop answers to these marketing questions. Using this checklist or one developed by your organization will ensure that all steps in the marketing process are completed. A responsible staff person should be identified next to each content area and the date that the activity is actually completed should be included. This will help ensure that all steps in the marketing process are completed within realistic time lines and that responsible individuals are identified for each area. Once this is completed the next step is to develop the actual marketing plan. The following table outlines the marketing process, with the remaining sections of this

chapter giving further details for implementation.



RRTC Newsletter, Fall 1995

When reviewing the above model it is important to remember that the final step of evaluation is an on-going process. Therefore, an organizational marketing plan would never be written in stone. Rather, based upon the evaluation data the plan is revised as needed.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is the compass of an organization and directs marketing efforts. The mission shows the goal of the organization, how it will be accomplished, and the benefits to stakeholders. A mission should be clear and

concise, providing the direction for all organizational activities. Every stakeholder of an organization should know the mission and what it truly means. This statement should not be just words on paper. Values and philosophy are directly reflected within this statement.

Example:

Our mission is to facilitate customer driven employment services within the community. We will accomplish this by delivering quality services to both customer groups: employers and job seekers. This will provide maximum value and opportunities for integrated employment of choice, as well as efficient and responsive personnel options for employers.

Environmental Analysis

The end result of completing an environmental analysis is the identification of the competition, the service niche, and the target groups to be served. Identifying competitors and target groups assists in determining if there is enough demand for specific services. Establishing a service identity will enhance one's competitive standing in the marketplace. As a service provider, the goal is to acquire the edge among competitors and to fill an unmet service need which determines a unique niche. The following example demonstrates how this can be accomplished.

Environmental Case Study:

Southson, a mid-size community in the Southwest, has one supported employment provider, Vista Employment Services. This organization concentrates on entry level positions in the food service industry. Their

customer base is largely made up of individuals with mental retardation. A new company, Careers Unlimited, is opening a supported employment business in Southson. After reviewing the existing competitor, Careers Unlimited determined that employers were in need of a variety of employees across job positions. Thus, the niche identified by Careers Unlimited was marketing to employers across the spectrum of vocational opportunities and not limiting the choice of potential jobs, nor the population served.

With this strategy, the new service provider has created a niche. It is filling a capacity previously not offered in the community. In addition, the new supported employment company is expanding opportunities for customer choice.

An organization needs to acquire as much information as possible about local competitors to reduce duplication of services and to ensure their own success. Once a decision is made as to the customers to be served and businesses to be targeted, an organization has then positioned itself as a viable business in the community. By doing these things, an image is created which the community recognizes and identifies with a specific organization. Creating a competitive image or service identity will drive marketing activities. Customers and the public at large will know exactly what the organization does and the value they can expect from the organization as a provider of quality supported employment services.

Supported employment providers may provide services to individuals with physical, cognitive, and mental disabilities, while other organizations may limit or narrow their ser-

VICES to individuals with a specific disability such as mental retardation or sensory disabilities. In addition, providers may look for employment from businesses throughout the community, while others may concentrate on specific industries based on either size, type of business, location, or past history. These important decisions will vary from organization to organization. The key to success is completing a thorough environmental analysis which in turn drives the decisions an organization makes. The major components of an environmental analysis are the identification of stakeholders, conducting consumer research and completing a SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals who are invested in the mission and success of the organization. These players are the manifestation of the values and philosophy held by the supported employment organization. They have a commitment to the objectives of the organization and work to ensure success in reaching these objectives (RRTC Marketing Newsletter, 1995). Stakeholders may include people with disabilities, family members, board members, staff, community members, employers, professional organizations, human service agency staff, etc. An organization must determine the needs, wants, level of satisfaction, and involvement of all stakeholders.

Identification of Customers and Resources. The ability of an organization to be successful depends on how well it defines its customers and the resources available to reach the identified goals. The organization's strengths, weaknesses, and limitations must be

understood. If a young supported employment organization attempted to provide employment services to all individuals with significant disabilities, they might quickly realize that resources were being spread too thinly and that their services were not cost effective. A broad and diverse customer base could strain many organizational resources such as staff, expertise, and/or funds.

The same is true for supported employment service providers who attempt to work with all community businesses. The provider organization needs to understand the labor market in which business is being conducted and develop a plan to target appropriate businesses. An organization exploring a marketing philosophy must analyze and determine the most appropriate business groups they will serve. The identification and selection of target groups will effect decisions regarding types of services, where and how services will be delivered, cost of services, personnel, and staff training needs. Job seeker choice is a critical aspect which must also be addressed when determining target employers. Identifying customers and resources will ultimately assist in identifying a company's niche and image.

SWOT Analysis. The SWOT, an acronym representing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, analysis is an internal and external assessment of the organization. The results of the analysis helps an organization determine services to be offered. An organization assesses their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal features of the organization. Examples of strengths may include dedicated and experi-

enced staff and board members, customer centered services, excellent community image, and a large network. Weaknesses may include limited resources for staff training, a long waiting list, limited staff, and a fragmented network. Opportunities are positive actions an organization can take. These may include access to supportive employers, attending personnel training workshops, networking with a supportive school system. Threats are aspects which may negatively affect an organization. Threats may include lack of referrals, competition, negative community image of supported employment, or lack of funding. Once an organizational analysis has been conducted, an organization will then attempt to minimize the threats and weaknesses and highlight opportunities and strengths.

SWOT Case Study

Crestview Employment, Inc. was having difficulty marketing and providing services. Crestview conducted a SWOT analysis. Strengths included mission and services determined by customers, and an operating budget in "black ink." Weaknesses included high staff turnover, low staff morale, and low pay. Opportunities included a variety of businesses available in the community and a good working relationship with the state rehabilitation services agency. Threats include high staff turnover and broken services (periods in which remaining staff needed to support customers of a departing co-worker and inability to provide consistent services.)

Using the information collected in the SWOT analysis, Crestview pursued the following:

- # Conducted a staff meeting to determine strategies to improve morale.
- # Shifted budget resources to slight pay increases, staff development opportunities, and created a part-time position to provide marketing support to employment specialists.
- # Scheduled bi-weekly staff meetings to address successes and issues.

By addressing these weaknesses and threats, Crestview was able to maximize their strengths and opportunities. Morale has increased and turnover has not been an issue in the last six months. Employment opportunities have also increased for customers.

Marketing Strategies

Strategies for successful marketing have been threaded throughout this chapter: determining services, organizational niche, the how, what, why, where, and when. In a nutshell, an organization will address the “Marketing Mix” or the P’s of marketing. These are as follows:

FOUR P’S OF ORGANIZATIONAL MARKETING	
Product	Employment services an organization offers. Services address both customer needs and preferences. (continued)
Place	Where an organization provides services. The Labor Market Analysis determines location.

Price	The costs of services? Services may not be valued if presented as free. Services are often subsidized by the state through vendor arrangements.
Promotion	How an organization promotes their services. Public relations, brochures, flyers, advertisements, public service announcements, etc. Use business language.

Marketing Goals and Objectives

Once an organization has completed information gathering and determined its service niche, goals and objectives must be developed. As with any goal or objective, they must be observable, measurable and obtainable.

An example of an organization marketing goal is presented below.

Goal: Increase employer participation

Objective:

By 5/30/97, a twelve person business advisory council will be established.

By 8/30/97, Crestview, Inc. will have organizational membership in Chamber of Commerce, Retail Merchant’s Association and Mason Human Resources Council.

By 11/30/97, the first employer of the year award will be presented.

RRTC Newsletter, Fall, 1995

Implementing a Marketing Plan

Networking is perhaps the single most important implementation strategy used in marketing. Once an agency has a service identity, networking is the tactic used to reap the benefits of the marketing plan. The adage, “it is not what you know, but who you know,” sums up the critical functions of networking.

With whom should the organization or employment specialist network? Everyone in one's personal and professional circle everyone in the individual's circle and everyone who knows someone in the community. In other words, everyone! The organization's brainstorming and creativity in identifying networks directly reflects marketing success.

Neighbors, Family, and Friends.

Neighbors, family, and friends are the most intimate foundation of a network. This pool of contacts is where marketing efforts should begin! Marketing is mobilized by approaching these individuals. Think about every circle of the job seeker's life to include school, church, social activities, etc. and determine how to engage these figures in the marketing effort. The employment specialist and the job seeker should increase marketing contacts by obtaining answers from family, friends and neighbors to the following questions.

NETWORKS TO INCREASE MARKETING CONTACTS

- # Do you know of any available jobs in your network/s?
- # Are jobs available where you work?
- # Do you know anyone that is in a position to hire?
- # Is this person in a direct position to hire?
- # What company(s) is this person linked with?

Most jobs are obtained through informal networks of family, friends, and associates. The following is an example of how to use the

family and friends network to obtain marketing leads.

Informal Networks Case Study

Mealburg, is a small rural town. Robert, as with many of his friends, used to be a member of the 4-H Club. After an accident which caused a brain injury, Robert told his employment specialist that he wanted to continue to work in farming. With the assistance of his neighbor Ken (whom he met through 4-H), Robert found a job at the local grainery. Ken had recently retired from the grainery and contacted the person who owned the mill. Robert, although he was not farming directly, was able to work with farmers throughout the community.

The above example demonstrates two benefits. One obvious benefit was that Robert acquired a job in a vocation of his choosing. The other, less obvious benefit, was that the Mealburg 4-H Club obtained an increased understanding of supported employment and the specified services of the organization through their knowledge of Robert. This is a good example of how initial marketing may also lead to a job.

Community Connections. Most communities have active civic organizations, business advisory councils, economic development councils, and so forth. These entities may be amenable to a presentation discussing the specific employment services that the organization offers. The employment specialist needs to find out when meetings are held and be placed

on the meeting agenda. In addition, organizations can utilize publications or newsletters of community connections by contributing or

including organizational marketing materials or a brief write-up of their services. In some cases, the employment specialist or manager will want to join these community organizations and participate as a community member.

This is an ideal strategy to become a part of the business network in the community. Employment organizations and/or staff should become active members of their local Chamber of Commerce. Although the Chamber of Commerce may be an entity which few supported employment organizations would think to join, it can be a rich source for networking. Membership can also assist the supported employment organization in keeping abreast of the local economic trends. Scanning newspapers or community publications for the latest economic trends and indicators, as well as new companies moving into the area is another productive activity. In addition, many communities have web site pages available on the Internet. These pages provide current information on community happenings or events and can serve as an additional source of information.

Employers. Employers are a priceless aspect of networking through personal and professional contacts and references. If employers are satisfied customers, they may be willing to network with other employers, provide a reference, or be quoted in marketing materials. This is successful relationship building at work. Casually mentioning an employer's name as a satisfied user of one's employment services is very effective. The employment specialist can even ask an employer if they would be interested in co-presenting, or mobilizing their own network. Ask satisfied employers to write

letters of reference for your company.

Your Own Company. The employment specialist should use all levels of the organization to mobilize networks, such as the board of directors, customers, managerial, direct service, and support staff. The key is to use existing networks to increase connections, creating a dominos effect or wider circles of contacts. Word of mouth is the best advertising money can buy. Remember, networking is an ever-growing and never-ending process!

XAMPLES OF MARKETING EFFORTS BY COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Supported employment programs throughout the country are interested in providing quality services and increasing the availability of supported employment in the community. There has been an increased interest in organizational marketing and its positive impact on the delivery of supported employment services and ultimately, its customers. Programs are experimenting with marketing concepts through many different avenues. Some programs have hired a marketing director and developed a marketing unit for the organization. Other programs have started by expanding efforts through an increase in public relations activities. In addition, supported employment providers are developing a variety of marketing strategies that are working for them in their own communities.

The following section will highlight several supported employment organizations in different parts of the country. These examples

were selected because they emphasized various marketing strategies designed to increase awareness and job development. The methods that are used by each of the following organizations were designed to enhance customer satisfaction with supported employment services in the community.

West Virginia

Businesses have, in the past, complained about too many rehabilitation service providers knocking on their doors. This duplication of effort is often confusing for businesses. A group of providers in Huntington, West Virginia developed a unique solution to this problem. Nine supported employment providers came together to create Supported Employment Collaborative (SEC). They hired one person to market supported employment throughout the local area. This strategy provides a larger pool of qualified applicants for each job opening and a greater likelihood that a person with a significant disability will enter the workplace. Each of the nine providers contributes a portion of the marketer's salary. This saves money for other marketing activities and provides one contact person for businesses. SEC advertises in the local paper with "testimonials" from satisfied employers who have used their services.

Oklahoma

Marketing efforts take many approaches and should be structured and planned to meet the needs of the many identified customers, especially the employers. A program at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, developed a great motto "Structuring

Environments for Success". This motto sends a positive marketing message to all of the customers. They have laid out specific marketing objectives and activities which will build solid relationships with the business community. Some of the marketing techniques used by this provider are:

- # Tapping into business job referral networks through computer modem and FAX.
- # Targeting specific businesses and conducting surveys.
- # Developing relationships with economic development organizations.
- # Participating in employer base groups.
- # Highlight success and SE services in news media (radio, TV, newspaper, in-house employer newsletters) at a minimum once a month.
- # Presenting awards to employers using business leaders as a presenter with follow-up media coverage.
- # Designing a logo and slogan to put on T-shirts and sweatshirts for SE staff to wear at civic events and, when appropriate, at job sites.

These marketing efforts have made it much easier to find good job matches which are enduring and to meet customer's short and long term needs. The goal is *to develop good jobs by developing good relationships with employers.*

Washington, D.C.

In order to enhance its marketing efforts, St. John's Community Services has developed very effective marketing strategies for its business customers. One important area for providers in any community is developing awareness among businesses about the many

capabilities and assets of individuals with disabilities and supported employment. St. John's through the D.C. Supported Employment Systems Change Project developed a marketing video which was short and professionally developed. Employers talked to other employers about supported employment. All D.C. area providers and their phone numbers were listed at the end of the video. In addition, a very unique brochure was developed which is geared toward the business community. It does not discuss or focus on disability but on services beneficial to businesses. These services include recruitment, training, and technical assistance. A very creative marketing strategy is the use of financial incentives to non-administrative staff to do organizational marketing and preliminary job development. The incentive program has carefully defined parameters and safeguards so quality placements are ensured.

EVALUATION

In order to maintain positive benefits to customers, the organization's staff must constantly evaluate the success of their program and services. Assessment helps the organization to maintain customer orientation as they work to provide quality services. The following list of questions may be useful in the evaluation process.

1. Are benefits being realized by the customers?
2. Are customers satisfied with the services provided?
3. What can be done differently to become

more customer friendly and responsive?

4. Are the right services being offered?
5. Are objectives met in a timely manner?

It is important not to fall into the trap of ignoring the assessment findings. As part of the marketing plan, the organization regularly reviews goals, objectives, timelines, and the available resources. Answers to the previous questions will assist in evaluation efforts. Once these data are obtained, the organization can make needed adjustments to improve customer satisfaction, as well as the services offered.

BENEFITS OF ORGANIZATIONAL MARKETING

Supported employment providers, rehabilitation agencies, and other social service public organizations usually ask two questions when attempting to convert to a marketing oriented approach: 1) What are the benefits? and 2) When will I see the benefits? A manager of a service organization must realize that people come to an organization not for the particular services offered, but for the expectation that the service or program will benefit them somehow. Over the past few years, many rehabilitation and supported employment programs have come to view themselves less as a rehabilitation provider and more as an employment services business. Once an organization starts designing its program and services around the benefits to its customers, it will be able to see the benefits to the organization. Marketing efforts do not always have an immediate effect or result. Patience and perseverance are important assets for today's market place. A marketing plan requires continual assessment

and evaluation to determine the necessary resources to effectively implement the plan. A competitive organization looks beyond immediate issues and focuses on the long term or the future. Yet, one ingredient that is often overlooked is cost. Cost, as well as benefits to the customers, and the organization as a whole, is very important to achieving the marketing plan and ultimately marketing success. As discussed earlier, marketing consists of many interested and involved stakeholders. Albeit, the primary customers are the individuals with significant disabilities and community employers. In successful marketing, each of the customers glean certain benefits.

Customer Benefits. Individuals with a significant disability stand to gain several benefits from a strong organizational marketing approach. Most importantly, they will be assured that the services of the organization will be tailored to meet their unique needs. The following section lists possible customer benefits.

- # Person-centered services and programs designed and delivered based on consumer information and input. People with significant disabilities will share their views, opinions, and experiences which will directly drive the services that they receive.
- # Services and programs will be available to individuals within their own communities. Thus, increasing accessibility and availability of the competitive market place and the employment and service options.

- # Increased opportunities to actually choose services and be involved in the service delivery process.
- # Increased involvement in the overall management and operation of the service provider's organization.
- # Employment opportunities available through the organization's improved relationships with businesses (this mutually benefits all customers and the organization).
- # Increased opportunity for independent and key players to assist organizations with the assessment of quality and the types of services provided within a specific program in the community. This ensures continued responsiveness and competitiveness.

Employer Benefits. Supported employment and other rehabilitation organizations must be proactive when identifying the employer's wants and needs. This approach allows the organization to design their services in response to employer expectations and will result in clear-cut benefits to the employer. The following is a list of benefits that employers can expect.

- # Assistance with understanding the ADA and how it will contribute to efforts to diversify the workforce.
- # Exposure to technology goods and services which may assist their operational performance for all employees, including workers with disabilities.
- # Availability of services to assist in recruitment, interviewing, testing, and accessibility as well as a resource related to specific personnel issues.

- # Ability to reduce cost through appropriate tax incentives.
- # Quality workers who are reliable and meet the employment needs of the business.
- # Ability to develop a one-to-one relationship with an organization promoting and providing quality employment resources.
- # Ability to cut cost by job restructuring recommendations.

Organizational Benefits. Every organization, business, or agency engages in some type of marketing activity. The question is, how well is it done on an organizational level and how effective are the outcomes? When marketing is done correctly, the results and benefits are varied and plentiful. Possible organizational benefits include the following:

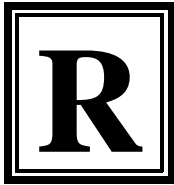
- # A greater demand for employment services, at both a job seeker and employer level.
- # A more supportive community which includes legislators, foundations, and businesses.

- # An increase in status and reputation in the community and among customers.
- # An increase in customer oriented staff, and an increase in staff morale.
- # Competitors will be trying to be like your organization.
- # Job seekers and employers will become promoters for staff and the organization.
- # Greater resources may be realized.



SUMMARY

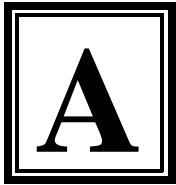
A market-based organization acknowledges the on-going nature of marketing activities, as well as the need for regular evaluation. Organizational marketing is indeed a time consuming activity; however, the rewards are well worth the effort. A competitive supported employment business which utilizes creativity and a clear plan of action will surely maximize resources, thus encouraging success!



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APPENDIX

Checklist for Tracking Organizational Marketing Activities

Marketing Plan

Checklist for Tracking Organizational Marketing Activities

Question	Stakeholder Responsible	Date Completed
What is the mission of the organization?		
What are the abilities and preferences of supported employment participants?		
What audience will be marketed?		
What are the needs of the customers?		
What services will be offered to satisfy customer needs?		
What are the economic trends?		
What are the outcomes expected?		
What is the message to customers?		

Question	Stakeholder Responsible	Date Completed
What are the resources?		
What is promotional plan? What tools will be used?		
How will success be determined?		

PART I: PRE-DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Organization Name: _____

Values/motivating factors influencing services: _____

Mission Statement: _____

Stakeholders/Needs/Wants/Satisfaction: _____

Customer Needs and Satisfaction with Current Services: _____

List Strengths,,Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Treats (SWOT)	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Opportunities	
Threats	

Results of Environmental Analysis: _____

PART II: THE PLAN

Goals	Objectives	Person/s Responsible	Timeline

Evaluation Plan/Schedule: _____
