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Book review

The job development handbook: Facilitating employer decisions to hire people with disabilities
John Nietupski, Dale Verstegen, Debra Martin Petty,
Sevierville, TN: The University of Tennessee,
1995, 63 pp.

The shift from in-house facility-based services to community-based supported employment has also created a shift in the way rehabilitation professionals must approach their jobs. The demand for customized jobs for persons with disabilities has placed many human service professionals in the role of sales person. This often creates an uncomfortable situation as job developers, once part of the 'caring profession,' must meet the community on its own turf-the business world. This publication presents a step-by-step approach to job development. Many job developers may be new to supported employment, or new to the practices of 'selling,' or need a fresh perspective on their own selling strategies. The authors draw upon their collective experience in supported employment to offer a business approach to job development that includes employers, community members, and supported employment professionals working together to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities.

The general highlights of this book:

- The target audience is clearly identified, and the purpose of the book clearly stated in the Introduction;
- The step-by step arrangement of the book follows a logical progression, in easy-to-read segments highlighted with bullets and boxes;

- The language was understandable and the examples were presented in a down-to-earth manner;
- The authors provide lists of resources and suggestions throughout the book. The appendices at the end of the book include additional, valuable resources such as publications, videotapes, newsletters, business directories and data tracking forms.

The book is broken into three chapters;

- The Cold Call Model
- The Referral Model
- The Quality Improvement Team.

Specific areas of excellence:

- Distinguishing between the 'Cold Call' and the 'Referral' models of job development is a critical point made by the publication. Too often job developers can be seen scanning the want ads looking for any available employment opportunities.

The authors provide a framework for using the Cold Call Model which includes:

- Listing the types of businesses where this approach is useful;
- Listing sources of business information upon which to make a cold call decision;
- Discussing how to contact a business;
- Offering sample questions to ask a prospective employer;
- Providing thoughts on how to survey the employer's needs;
- Emphasizing the need to probe for how hiring

a person with a disability benefits the employer;

- Presenting ideas on conducting site surveys; and
- Listing the important areas in a hiring proposal.

Chapter 1, The Cold Call Model offers several critical suggestions on managing the sales interview and process. Those include:

- Assuring that key decision-makers are present when the hiring proposal is made;
- The value of doing the legwork before a hiring proposal is offered;
- Making the prospective employer comfortable;
- The importance of listening, and allowing the employer time to make a decision; and
- Not being afraid to ask for a decision.

The Referral Model is presented as a way of 'turning cold calls into warm calls' (p. 2-1). It offers a contrast to the cold calling in that the main emphasis is on the use of advocates to pave the way for supported employment. As with the chapter on cold calling, the Referral Model takes a similar step-by-step approach to presenting the process to job developers.

The Referral Model offers a contrast to the Cold Call Model in that it depends on building and relying upon relationships to develop jobs. A long-standing belief is that the vast majority of jobs are found through personal networks. The Referral Model seeks to discover and capitalize on such networks.

Chapter 3, The Quality Improvement Team, is a noble and ambitious revision of the 'business advisory council.' The authors suggest the development of a team of advocates who examine the job development process, generate ideas for new development, and recruit new advocates. The team is also used to generate 'enthusiasm, commitment, and resources to what is otherwise considered an individualized occupational activity.' (P. 3–17)

Areas in which this publication can be enhanced

The Cold Call Model represents many traditional sales tactics, like those used by Willy Loman, the central character in Arthur Miller's *Death of A Salesman*. An excerpt from Miller's play appears in the Forward of this publication. Although these tactics have been successful, the authors should consider toning down some of the high-pressure approaches, and re-thinking the language they use as they elaborate on the steps. In Willy Loman's world, the sale was the objective, and he would resort to manipulation and pressure to control his 'prospect.' In today's world, 'managing the process' is seen as the critical element of sales success.

In the introduction, the authors identify their two primary customers: people with disabilities and employers. They may want to consider adding a third group: the brokers or middle-men. They include, case managers, parents/guardians, and even managers of services for people with disabilities who control movement into supported employment. Without their input and support, employment for a person with a disability may be severely hampered.

Although the authors list people with disabilities as a prime customer, they are hardly mentioned in this publication. Their approach seems to be primarily focused on the supported employment agency, rather than on the individual person with a disability.

Chapter 1 offers trial questions to affect 'closing' the deal. Again, the term 'close' represents a traditional approach to selling. It is interesting that such a traditional objective as 'closing' would include questions that contradict another tried and tested tenet of selling — asking questions that can be answered with a yes or no. Modern sales professionals avoid 'yes or no questions' like the plague. Today's sales professionals also refer to getting a 'buying decision' instead of 'closing.'

The Referral Model should include more information about persons with disabilities and how an advocate can represent them to an employer.

The Quality Improvement Team is a wonderful idea. Keeping volunteers committed and inter-

ested over the course of six meetings will be challenge.

Recommendations of the utility of this book to rehabilitation professionals

For many rehabilitation professionals, the thought of selling is foreign and sometimes aversive. This book helps take the mystery out of the selling process, translating it into easy-to-understand ideas and steps.

The processes identified in this book can be an

useful tool to the novice as well as the experienced job developer. As a novice, finding any source of direction is helpful. The experienced developer will find ideas to supplement their repertoire of methods to approach employers and affect positive outcomes for the people they represent.

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