

JOB TRAINING & PLACEMENT REPORT

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for professionals who support employment for people with disabilities

Think Market Share – Not Unemployment Rates

By Allen Anderson

A fundamental ability of job developers is to gain access to the job market. Job developers must earn the right to be considered as a resource person to employers.

This requires excellence in the job developer's engagement with potential employers, so that employers see them as a current and future partner who can resolve employment issues for them.

This ability can be enhanced through an understanding of the job developer's role in direct selling and in partnership building with employers.

The employment organization's foundation for success is built on several critical components:

❖ *First, the organization needs to be able to produce service users who are motivated to go to work.* Job developers and the agencies they work at must become known as organizations that offer motivated and work-focused individuals.

❖ *Second, in developers' relationships with employers, they must work hard at truly understanding employers' problems in order to offer the right solutions and the right candidates.* The goal lies in adding value to employers through the hiring of people with disabilities.

Factors We Can Control

Everyone has factors in their job

that they can't control, but they should never be allowed to dominate thinking and actions. This breeds negativity and lack of action. The economy is the best example of this principle. The combination described above works in a robust economy – and it also works in an economy in recession!

Job developers must remind themselves that large groups of motivated candidates are waiting for the opportunity to work, whether in good times or bad. A developer's ability to help them is predicated on a sound selling approach and on partnership building with employers. How developers view the factors they *can* control – versus what they can't – will dictate capacity and efficiencies in good *and* bad economies.

Market Share Strategic Plan

When developers are asked why they are getting fewer jobs for people with employment barriers during a recession, they often report, "there are fewer jobs and a significantly higher unemployment rate." This can be interpreted as a belief that they, and the candidates they represent, cannot compete in a tighter market.

Why not? There are many markets that job developers succeed in that are *always* tight regardless of the economy. This includes rural

regions, highly competitive professional markets, and areas with chronically high unemployment.

The effect of an, "it's the recession/economy attitude" is that developers tend to accept their "lot in life" no matter how little it is, or they expect that somehow they will train candidates differently and expect them to take care of

continued on Page 3

Featured Inside

- ▶ Investigate an Employer's Financial Stability
- ▶ Are Online Profiles the New Résumé?
- ▶ Free Job-seeking Resource Launches
- ▶ Demystify Career Decision-making
- ▶ Cutting Job Training Doesn't Make Sense
- ▶ Out of Work? Out of Luck
- ▶ What's New in AT?
- ▶ Real JOBS NY Lives Up to its Name
- ▶ APSE Announces Partnership

INSERTS

- ▶ APSE Connections: Keeping the Employment First Movement Moving

Investigate an Employer's Financial Stability

Many job seekers fail to realize that while employers are investigating them, they should be doing the same to ensure that their target organizations are a promising fit.

This oversight can be very problematic down the road, according to Marcia Heroux Pounds, author of the recently released book *I Found a Job! Career Advice from Job Hunters Who Landed on Their Feet*.

"Before seriously considering a new job – especially if you are leaving a (current) job – learn everything you can about a company's financial condition," Pounds explains. "Many job seekers in this recession have found a job, only to be laid off again. Sometimes, it was avoidable with a bit of research that pointed to red flags."

Pounds encourages job seekers to ask employers questions about revenue and year-to-year growth to achieve a better understanding of the company's financial status.

"Many job seekers feel uncomfortable posing such questions, but as long as you ask them diplomatically, an upfront business owner or manager will credit you for being thorough," she says.

For job seekers still hesitant to engage in such a discussion, or

are unable to get straight answers from employers, Pounds recommends some additional strategies for obtaining key information:

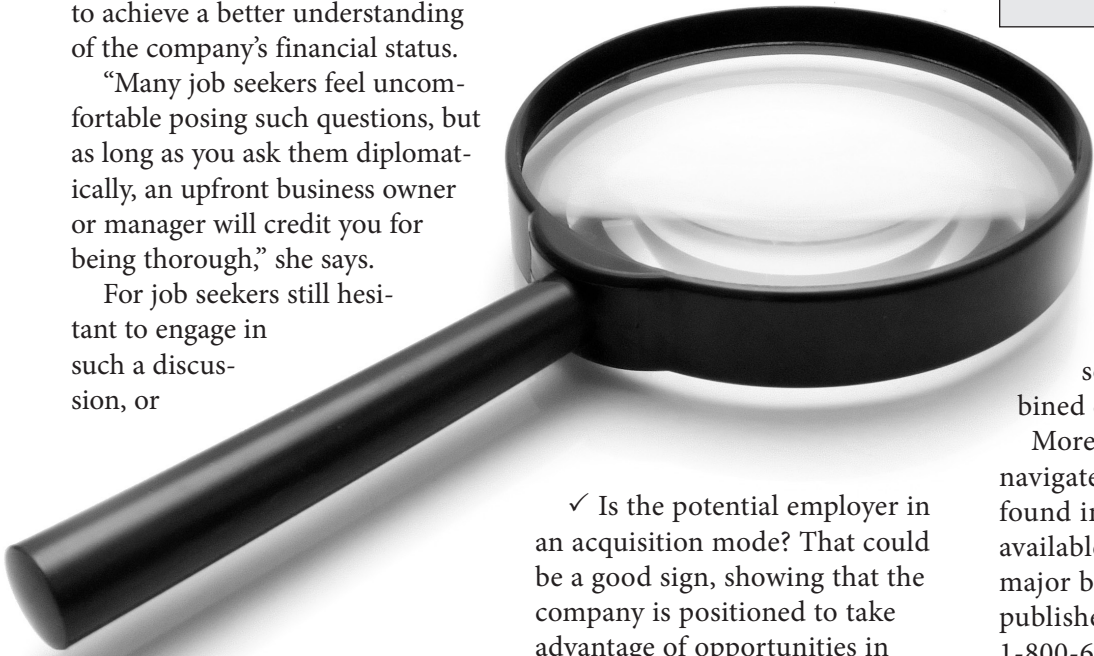
✓ For public companies, you can get a snapshot of financials through their required filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission at www.sec.gov. Look at the company's revenues and earnings, and compare them with a year earlier. Look at the trend over five years. Recognize, of course, that nearly every company took a hit in the recession in 2008–2009. The question is: Has the company started to recover since then? Ask what the company's strategy has been to weather the recession.

✓ Do an Internet search to see what has been written about the company, especially in the archives of your local newspaper, which may offer more information.

✓ Is the potential employer in an acquisition mode? That could be a good sign, showing that the company is positioned to take advantage of opportunities in

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the marketplace. Also realize that acquisitions and mergers mean the company will likely be reorganizing certain departments for "synergies," which usually results in layoffs somewhere in the combined companies.

More advice on how to better navigate the job market can be found in *I Found a Job!* which is available at www.amazon.com, major bookstores and from the publisher (www.jist.com or 1-800-648-JIST). ■

themselves. In so doing, job developers abdicate their role to address changes in the economy.

With this attitude, too many developers have assumed a *reactive* role that *gives in* to circumstances – rather than as a *proactive* one that *addresses* circumstances head-on.

The long history of having a backlog of well-trained and motivated candidates who want to work in bad – or *good* – times proves that this reactive approach does not work. It need not be this way.

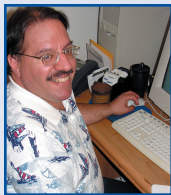
Here is a telling example: El Centro, California and Yuma, Arizona, in October 2009 had the number-one and two highest unemployment rates in the U.S. (at 30.4% and 30.2% respectively). Statistics like these certainly *could* lead to negative attitudes about employment opportunities and job development activities.

Proactive Perspective

However, there *is* another perspective. Both El Centro and Yuma *had* job openings in October 2009. Both never had “no jobs,” despite 30.4% and 30.2% unemployment. In fact, for the 3rd quarter 2009, El Central had 9,528 new hires, of which 2,322 were new jobs.

Yuma, meanwhile, had 7,630 new hires, of which 4,345 were new jobs that were added to existing employment.

Consequently, the question is not how to deal with 30% unemployment, for which there is no obvious solution, but rather what is the organization’s selling strategy to gain market share of the job openings that *do* exist. What share of the 4,345 or 7,630 jobs does the organization know about, and how do they increase market share for their candidates?



Editor’s Notebook

Special thanks go out to Allen Anderson, a long-time *JTPR* contributor who provides an outside-the-box perspective about how unemployment rates are *not* necessarily a telltale sign of the jobs that are *actually* available in a given community. The graphic that accompanies the cover article (on page 4) is a particularly unique piece that can be replicated in most any agency.



Allen is one of those special contributors that are treasured to busy editors like me because they

can be counted on to provide solid articles each and every year.

In fact, Allen’s contributions to this newsletter date back farther than me, and I’ve been editing *JTPR* since 2004!

Next month, watch for a State of APSE article from Executive Director Laura Owens. The Q&A will bring readers up to speed with what has been going on in this key organization during the past year, which is especially vital for those of you unable to attend APSE’s annual conference in June.

Finally, don’t forget to visit our blog to stay current on supported employment news that crops up before we get a chance to publish again next month. The address is impactpublishing.wordpress.com.

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Consider another location: A Midwestern state places 6,500 persons with disabilities in employment during 2009-2010. This was a good number considering that this state was among the top five states in the U.S. in unemployment.

But here is the question: In this same state for 2009, there were 1,590,624 jobs filled, of which 793,411 were new jobs. Are 6,500 persons with disabilities an acceptable level for the entire year when there were 1,590,624 jobs filled?

This state example demonstrates that the numbers of jobs for people with employment barriers are too marginal in terms of the percentage of the total job market. If developers doubled the total number of jobs, it would still be a statistical blip.

As a result, job developers must improve their strategies and direct-selling skills to improve their market share. Gaining market share is the guide for operating strategically – not seeking explanations for poor or mediocre performance based on an unemployment rate.

Organizations need a plan for improving market share, not an excuse for why they are excluded as in “blaming” the unemployment rate.

Summary

Tragically, recessions teach too many of those involved in job development that when the going gets tough, job developers and their agencies stop.

continued on Page 4

Instead, it's vital to evaluate and refocus on job-market penetration and hold capability to gain market share. Organizations need to review the numbers, and types of employers they have now – and

consider how they can do more business with those employers in the future.

Organizations need to build plans to bring in new employers, even though the market is much more competitive. Organizations should strive to be players, not spectators.

The accompanying article and employer/assessment grid below directs planning to do just that. ■

Allen Anderson is a long-time contributor to JTPR and president of DTG-EMP, which specializes in job development and marketing skills training for professionals placing people with employment barriers. Allen may be reached at allen@employmentoutcomes.com or visit www.dtg-emp.com.

Employer/Employment Assessment Grid

Maximizing the opportunities that are available with existing or potential employers is the first place that agencies should focus on to gain more market share.

This article is designed to develop an approach to assess an agency's current status with employers in order to build strategies to increase business with employers they already do business with. It's a lot easier to grow existing employer relationships than it is to create new ones.

Let's consider a way for agencies to assess their existing employer situations in relation to their employment objectives.

Building a Grid

Appearing within this article is a grid with a vertical and horizontal axis. The vertical axis illustrates three sizes of organizations based upon their total number of local employees. These have been arbitrarily set at:

- Small – Less than 10 employees;
- Medium – Between 10 and 50 employees; and
- Large – More than 50 employees.

The horizontal axis illustrates the range of pay scales that have been secured through an agency's employment efforts. There are three pay scales:

- Level 1 – Minimum wage;
- Level 2 – Minimum wage plus \$3/hr. above minimum; and
- Level 3 – Greater than minimum wage plus \$3/hr. above minimum.

This grid is based on several assumptions:

- The larger the base of local employees, the more likely the potential to place a greater number of clients; and
- The more local employees there are, the more likely the range of all three pay scales employed.

- Therefore, an organization that employs more than 50 people is likely to have more potential jobs with all three pay scales.

Employer Employee Size	>50	L1	L2	L3
	10-50	M1	M2	M3
	<10	S1	S2	S3
		1 Pay Scale	2 Pay Scales	3 Pay Scales

Employer by Pay Scales

To use the grid effectively, the first step is to build the grid as described above.

- Place two pages of flip chart paper together on the wall and draw an account assessment grid with the appropriate labels for each axis.
- Then, write the name of each existing employer in a given territory on a separate Post-it® Note.
- Place each note in the appropriate segment on the grid. For example, if ABC employer had 45 local employees, and they offered pay scales in two wages (minimum wage and minimum to plus \$3.00), this employer would be positioned as a medium (M) size and a level (2) or M2.

An agency will then have an instant portrait of an employer territory. If all of the job developers in an organization complete this exercise, chances are the portraits will look quite different.

Are Online Profiles the New Résumé?

Is the traditional résumé going the way of the dinosaur? Some human resources (HR) managers interviewed recently by OfficeTeam think so.

More than one-third (36%) of respondents said it's at least somewhat likely résumés will eventually be replaced by profiles on social and business networking sites.

"The résumé continues to be an important job-hunting tool, but it's also useful for professionals to create online profiles that highlight their expertise and qualifications," said OfficeTeam Executive Director Robert Hosking. "As hiring managers turn increasingly to the Internet for information about prospective hires, job seekers should keep their online profiles current and behave professionally."

OfficeTeam offers five tips for creating an impressive online profile:

1. Get the picture. Make sure the photos that are visible in your profiles and on social media sites are professional. Untag yourself or adjust your privacy settings to limit who can see certain images.

2. Show your star qualities. Provide employers with a clear sense of your capabilities by posting information about your work history and highlighting key accomplishments on sites like LinkedIn. Sharing your personal interests and hobbies on Facebook also can help people relate to you more easily.

3. Talk the talk. Incorporate key industry terms to describe your skills and positions of interest so hiring managers can more easily find you online.

4. Make the right connections. Be selective about who you allow into your social networks because potential employers may contact these individuals for insights on you. Contacts also could alert you to job openings.

5. Keep it fresh. Regularly update your profile and be active professionally. Post useful advice or comment on articles on LinkedIn and industry forums.

Additional tips for presenting yourself professionally can be found in *Business Etiquette: The New Rules in a Digital Age* at www.roberthalf.us/BusinessEtiquette, a new guide from OfficeTeam's parent company, Robert Half. ■

Free Job-seeking Resource Launches

Springboard Consulting, a company whose mission is to mainstream disability in the workplace, announces it is launching an online employment center for connecting qualified candidates with disabilities with employers who are looking for qualified candidates.

The idea is to match employers who are unsure of where to locate such candidates, and people with disabilities who are unsure which companies are truly committed to recruiting and retaining them.

The center is free to qualified candidates with disabilities. Resumes should be sent to www.consultspringboard.com/employment-center. Questions should be addressed to info@consultspringboard.com.

Source: Springboard Consulting LLC (<http://consultspringboard.com>). ■

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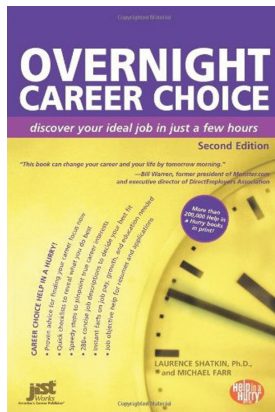
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Demystify Career Decision-making

High school graduates can be mystified about what to do next. Moreover, many other people already in the working world dream about pursuing another path, but few are certain about what other kinds of careers are better suited for them.

According to renowned occupational expert Laurence Shatkin, that's because people often don't spend enough time considering what they're good at, what their interests are and what's important to them.

That's a dilemma he helps resolve in his newest book, *Overnight Career Choice*. In this guide, Shatkin gives readers a process for identifying their ideal career, as well as a



wealth of strategies for obtaining it. To help readers better understand what they want, Shatkin:

- ❖ Introduces readers to the nine most important components of an ideal job — and explains why selecting a job title *isn't* one of them;
- ❖ Helps readers assess their key skills and interests; and
- ❖ Explains the connection between work values and motivators and career choice.

Based on these factors, Shatkin connects readers to a world of career options through more than 280 current job descriptions with information on earnings, growth, openings

and skills and education.

In addition to his advice for making tough career decisions, Shatkin also discusses the following topics:

- ❖ 2011's hottest industries and job market trends;
- ❖ How to reroute your career without starting from scratch;
- ❖ Nine ways to earn a living using the skills and knowledge you already possess;
- ❖ The benefits of securing employment in a non-traditional occupation; and
- ❖ What green jobs are and how to find them.

Overnight Career Choice, Second Edition, is available at www.amazon.com, major bookstores, and from the publisher (www.jist.com or 1-800-648-JIST). ■

In the News

Cutting Job Training Doesn't Make Sense

A recent House proposal to cut funding for programs providing critical job training to unemployed and underemployed workers is highly counterproductive during this time of persistently high unemployment, CLASP, the Center for Law and Social Policy, said recently.

Investment in job training works. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, more than two-thirds of adults and three-quarters of dislocated workers who completed training programs during 2008-2009 landed jobs in what was arguably the most difficult job market in decades.

At the same time, the House-passed Continuing Resolution includes drastic cuts to adult, dislocated worker and youth programs under the *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)*. These cuts would sharply reduce or eliminate funding for summer jobs for youth, job and training assistance for unemployed and underemployed workers, and support for one-stop career centers.

To read a short summary of the report, go to http://www.clasp.org/issues/pages?type=basic_skills_and_workforce_training&id=0003#ARRA2.

(Editor's note: While persons with disabilities were not specified in the CLASP report, one would deduce that this action would be detrimental for this population as well. Contact your local legislators and let them know that cutting job training is wrong! Tell them that investing in job training pays for itself in the long run as un- and underemployed persons become solid, taxpaying citizens that contribute greatly to the economy.) ■

Source: CLASP. **Editor's note:** This article first appeared on our blog at impactpublishing.wordpress.com. Subscribe (for free) and you'll receive an email when there is a new post. This way, you won't miss out on any timely news that crops up between issues of JTPR.

Out of Work? Out of Luck

In a public meeting held recently, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) examined the impact of employers considering only those currently employed for job vacancies.

According to Helen Norton, Associate Professor at the University of Colorado School of Law, employers and staffing agencies have publicly advertised jobs in fields ranging from electronic engineers to restaurant and grocery managers to mortgage underwriters with the explicit restriction that only

currently employed candidates will be considered.

The use of employment status to screen job applicants could seriously impact people with disabilities, according to Joyce Bender, an expert in the employment of people with disabilities.

This restriction would also disproportionately affect a number of other groups, other officials testified. They cited certain racial and ethnic community members, and women, particularly older women and those in non-traditional occupations.

“At a moment when we all should be doing whatever we can to open

up job opportunities to the unemployed, it is profoundly disturbing that the trend of deliberately excluding the jobless from work opportunities is on the rise,” said Christine Owens, Executive Director of the National Employment Law Project.

Materials from the Commission meeting, including statements and biographies of witnesses, may be found at www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/meetings/2-16-11/index.cfm. ■

*Source: EEOC (www.eeoc.gov). **Editor's note:** This article first appeared on our blog at impact-publishing.wordpress.com. Subscribe (for free) and you'll receive an email when there is a new post. This way, you won't miss out on any timely news that crops up between issues of JTPR.*

Assistive Technology

What's New in AT?

What is it?

iCommunicate

What does it do? iCommunicate is a symbolic and director selection communicator program and prompter for people with communication or cognitive disabilities.

How does it work? The program allows individuals to use their Apple iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch as a communicator and cognitive aid. The user selects a picture and the associated audio clip will play. If no audio recording is available, it has a text-to speech feature.

Who makes it? Grembe Apps, www.grembe.com.

What is it? Aukey Portable Video Magnifier

What does it do? This is a

handheld video magnifier designed for individuals with low vision.

How does it work? The unit magnifies images between 1.5 and 17 times their original size. It comes with a carrying case, detachable stand, and more.

Who makes it? The manufacturer is in China. There are five distributors in the U.S. To find out more, go to www.abledata.com, the “100 most recently added products” link in the upper right on the home page, and then scroll down to this product.

What is it? iPad Cordless Switch Interface

What does it do? This is a switch control interface designed to enable individuals with severe

physical, motor control, neurological or upper extremity disabilities or spinal cord injury to control an Apple iPad with a switch.

How does it work? It has two switch input jacks. When a switch is plugged into one of the jacks, the input becomes a tap or touch for any iPad application (app) programmed for switch access.

Who makes it? RJ Cooper & Associates, 27601 Forbes Road, Suite 39, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677, (800) 752-6673, www.rjcooper.com. ■

Source: ABLEDATA (www.abledata.com), which adds more than 1,000 assistive technology products to its database each year. ABLEDATA records are provided for informational purposes only. Products contained in ABLEDATA have not been examined, reviewed or tested.

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Real JOBS NY Lives Up to its Name

For Jill Shepherd, who has battled depression and alcoholism, overcoming the barriers that stood in her way to finding a job seemed like an impossible task. When conventional methods of obtaining employment did not work, Shepherd enrolled in the Real JOBS NY program, which she credits with changing her outlook on life.

“Before starting the program, I was in serious trouble – in a state of panic, without a job and nearly broke,” explains Shepherd, who now works as a retail cashier. “The program gave me the skills and encouragement to land on my feet again. Working has helped with my self-esteem and quality of life.”

Shepherd is one of approximately 75 people with psychiatric disabilities who have been placed in jobs after rolling in Real JOBS NY – a collaboration of the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) at Syracuse University, Workforce Development

Institute (WDI) and the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS).

Based out of Schenectady County Community College and SUNY Adirondack, Real JOBS NY vocational counselors provide recovery-oriented and person-centered planning, individualized case management, and referrals to the services and supports that can help clients achieve short-term employment goals as well as career aspirations as part of a long-term recovery.

Participants have access to a broad array of services, including those at local community colleges.



“Location matters,” notes Stephen Traver, WDI Director of Vocational Services. “They [persons with psychiatric disabilities] are more likely to come to a program that is not housed in a mental health setting.”

Recent employment figures is one of the clearest measures of the program’s success, according to Traver. Among those enrolled in Real JOBS NY during 2009-2010, 64% were employed at least three months after being placed in a job. The national average for similar programs is only 9%.

“More than two-thirds of people with psychiatric disabilities want to work, and only 12% are afforded that opportunity,” notes Oscar Jimenez, Director of Community and Economic Development with NYAPRS. “Programs like Real JOBS NY are vital to change this unjustifiable disparity.”

Real JOBS NY is funded by the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration “Projects with Industry” grant. ■

In the News

APSE Announces Partnership

APSE (formerly the Association for Persons in Supported Employment) has recently partnered with GettingHired.com, a private sector initiative helping to lead the effort in closing the employment gap for people with disabilities while helping employers meet the challenge

of finding qualified workers.

Through this collaboration, APSE members have the opportunity to offer the people with disabilities they serve with an easy to use, free resource in finding employment located at <http://www.GettingHired.com/apse>.

APSE members will have access

to all of the career tools and informational resources and 24/7 connection to the job listings offered by GettingHired.com.

APSE member organizations will also have the ability to post job openings and to search the database of talented people with disabilities at GettingHired.com. ■