

TIE THAT BINDS

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ATTITUDE IS THE REAL DISABILITY

INTERNS

What is the difference between an internship and volunteering? This has always puzzled me. Volunteering is doing something because you want to be helpful with an outside chance to find employment for some people.

Internships are a little more structure. Some businesses go into an internship with the idea that they will have an opening and can use the internship as an opportunity to view possible candidates. This is a big difference from volunteering. An intern is more likely to be using this opportunity to gain new job skills, bulk up a resume or create a positive image toward themselves.

In Tennessee, we have had some success with paid and unpaid internships. There has been success with Project Search, Project Opportunity, the REDI Initiative, the City of Chattanooga and a cluster of churches in Upper East Tennessee. All of these internship experiences have been entered into with the expectation that the businesses will be offering opportunities to qualified interns. How many times have you entered into a volunteer agreement with the hope that the employer will hire when there is an opening? As an employer, I would never have an opening because I am getting the work done by a volunteer, that I am not paying. This increases my bottom line and I

have no inclination to hire someone when I can get it for nothing.

I think we have been savvy in developing internships. We have approached businesses that traditionally have doubted the ability of people with disabilities to satisfactorily do the work that is needed to be done. Through long term exposure to work, expectations of employers and creative teaching methods we have demonstrated that we have quality people who can qualify for their positions.

MEETING JOB PLACEMENT GOALS

"I was in another lifetime one of toil and blood. When blackness was a virtue and the road was full of mud." Bob Dylan wrote that. But it feels like another lifetime when we were meeting Job Placement Goals. Back in the 1990s, my agency had a goal of one placement per week. We were successful for most of that decade. We were thinking outside of the box.

Nowadays that phrase makes me cringe, we have been thinking outside the box for a quarter of a century. We are either outside the box by now or should be kicking the box over. So what are the leading placement agencies doing?

1. Reviewing what has not worked. Do not repeat failed responses and expect success.
2. Marketing the activities of your agency. Many of the folks cannot meet the standards of the business, so can the business adapt to the abilities of the person we represent! Our agency is good at developing techniques, accommodations and learning styles that will work well with the business and the job candidate.
3. Knowing the employer and being seen as a business. Knowing the employer has been a

stable for a long time in job developing. But, how many agencies see themselves as a social service agency? We need to present ourselves as a competent member of the business community that knows the successes and pitfalls of the business community.

4. Focusing on the real need of the business.
5. Avoiding competition. There are 110,000 businesses in Tennessee. I want to spend time showing them that people with disabilities can do the jobs at their business. I am not sure I want to compete with every other agency in town. This might add more competition and choice that could reduce the number of people I place.

CESP SUCCESS

Congratulations to the new holders of the Certificate of Employment Services Professionals Certificate in Tennessee.

Cristi Blalock and Kathy Rankin from Frontier Health,
Lee Sinnott, Chip Fischer and Evelyn Rolan from Ridgeview,
Bill Toye, Denise Herron and Gail Thurman from Pacesetters and
Nora Buckley of Easter Seals.

TREND ANALYSIS

An agency in Upper East has a sophisticated system to track its placements and compare the placements over years and compare the agency's placements with the general workforce.

Accommodations (hotel and food service)

24% of placements, a slight decrease, while the region saw a slight increase.

Retail 12% of placements, same as last year,

matches the regional average.

Healthcare and Social Services 15% of placements, which is consistent over the years.

The regional percentage is 22%.

Manufacturing 25% of placements is a sharp increase from an average of 15%, which is higher than the regional average.

Construction 0% , this segment is always a low percentage. The region is typically around 4% of the workforce.

Administrative support and waste management (janitorial, temp agencies, office support and call centers) The region stays at around 5%, while placements vary from 5% to 40% of the agency's placements. This year placements were 24%.

Does your agency know where the jobs are in your area? Are you making efforts to diversify your placements?

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**Your work is going to fill a large part of your life,
and the only way to be truly satisfied
is to do what you believe is great work.**

**And the only way to do great work
is to love what you do.**

If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle.

**As with all matters of the heart,
you'll know when you find it.**

**And, like any great relationship,
it just gets better and better as the years roll on.**

So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

Steve Jobs