A quick look:

As new laws have been put into place and efforts of employment service professionals have continued to support people with disabilities, one would think that the overall employment rate of people with disabilities would have increased greatly. However, there are several obstacles that still need to be conquered, including a divide between efforts to employ people with disabilities and the needs of businesses. With those types of challenges in mind, the Diversity Partners Project (DPP) set out to develop, test, and launch a new learning process to enhance employment service-employer relations using a more systematic approach.

Key Findings:

The Diversity Partners Project divided their efforts into four phases, with discoveries in each: the inquiry, the development, the piloting, and the evaluation and refinement phases. Through these phases, DPP found several results about knowledge translation:
- Knowledge translation can be difficult to achieve in the contexts of segmented audiences, but each audience has the potential to improve the job opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Knowledge translation results may vary with the skills and experience of people using the information, their priorities, and the job opportunities within different communities.
- Teams must be willing to challenge their own assumptions, move quickly and often between inquiry and development stages, and openly engage with potential stakeholders.

Putting It into Practice:

The DPP’s ultimate goal is to assist employment service professionals in improving their relationship-building capabilities with potential employers of people with disabilities. The authors explained that through each collaboration with stakeholders, value was gained by both the DPP team and the stakeholders. The authors also explained that the pilot phase and evaluation and refinement stage are continuous and ongoing as employer relations best practices are developed and put into place within these agencies. But even though it was too early to come to conclusions about the effectiveness of the DPP teams knowledge translation efforts, the process of challenging assumptions and collaborating with the stakeholders who have a direct effect on the employment success of people with disabilities proved to be valuable for all involved in the phases of change.

More about this Article (Where to go from here?)

After conducting this first survey of the “snapshot” of business relations strategies and approaches by SVRAs, the authors planned to conduct in-depth interviews and additional surveys, which should expand upon the research in this article, but this article provides the baseline of this topic.

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