

Addressing employer personnel needs and improving employment training, job placement and retention for individuals with disabilities through public-private partnerships

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Abstract. As social and economic forces impact business practices, the significance of delivering effective employer-driven, employment services (i.e., demand-side model) to facilitate employment and retention for individuals who have not traditionally benefited from labor force participation is of increased importance. The purpose of this paper is to provide descriptions of two public-private partnerships (Manpower, Incorporated and Community Rehabilitation Programs; Project Search), that currently operate a market-driven or demand-side model in an effort to increase the labor force participation and job retention of persons with disabilities. Factors that increase employers' interest in collaborating with rehabilitation providers and critical components of effective partnerships are discussed.

Keywords: Public-private partnerships, demand-side employment services, business rehabilitation partnerships, employment services

1. Introduction

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 granted individuals with disabilities the right to access and participate in a workplace free of discriminatory employment practices. In 1992, when the employment regulations went into effect for the vast majority of businesses employing 15 or more workers, approximately 54 million working-age Americans would now be afforded the same protections in the workplace as those afforded to individuals representing other minority populations. In addition to recognizing that employment discrimination against persons with disabilities is unlawful, the ADA also required employers to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified

applicants or employees with disabilities if they could perform the essential functions of the job.

Despite initial and widespread opposition by the business community to the employment regulations (Title I) of the ADA, several businesses and community-based organizations had already established highly regarded alliances for facilitating the employment and retention of job seekers or employees with disabilities. These public-private partnerships assisted in fulfilling the unmet personnel needs of employers who were interested in: a) recruiting and hiring employees with disabilities in an effort to diversify their workforce or b) facilitating the return to work and long-term job retention of valuable and productive workers who experienced injuries or illnesses while employed. Supported

employment providers also benefited from these partnerships as they were able to assist many job seekers with disabilities in accessing employment in the competitive labor market.

For instance, the Marriott Foundation's "Bridges From School to Work" program represents a successful partnership between supported employment providers, educational agencies, and private business [5]. Commencing in the mid to late 1980s, representatives from these organizations collaborated to provide individuals with disabilities opportunities for internships that would lead to employment within the Marriott Corporation. Similarly, Zivolich and Weiner-Zivolich [21] provide evidence of the effectiveness of a public-private partnership, referred to as "Jobs PlusTM", that began in 1989 between Pizza Hut Corporation, Integrated Resources Institute (IRI) a non-profit agency, and several supported employment providers. While Pizza Hut reported financial benefits of over \$19 million in tax credits resulting from the employment of individuals with disabilities and a reduction in the cost of employee turnover (over \$8 million), there were also significant economic benefits to the community as well. Specifically, taxpayers saved an additional \$43 million in reduced Supplemental Security Income spending and an additional \$12 million in local state, and federal taxes were paid by workers with disabilities hired by Pizza Hut. Perhaps most importantly from a human service and social justice perspective, the more than 14,000 individuals with disabilities served through the partnership reported a higher quality of life and an average increase in earnings of 104% (1997).

To professionals engaged in job placement and training services for individuals with disabilities, the process and participant outcomes resulting from the seminal experiences of these and other public-private partnerships demonstrated the importance of delivering "demand-side employment services". In providing demand-side employment services, rehabilitation professionals provide services directly to employers to address the employers' needs for qualified employees [7]. If public-private partnerships were going to be successful in engaging the business community to hire and support persons who have historically been excluded from mainstream society, then job developers and employment specialists needed be able to assess employer needs, present the business case for employing workers with disabilities and demonstrate how partnering with rehabilitation providers in an effort to support job seekers or employees with disabilities would add-value to their business.

2. Public-private partnerships in a post-ADA workplace

Almost two decades have passed since the law's inception and business involvement in public and private partnerships to promote the employment and retention of individuals with disabilities in the workforce remains strong. The United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN), the national organization that supports development and expansion of Business Leadership Networks (BLNs) across the country, continues to grow from just five sites in 1994 to over 43 sites at the end of 2000 [19]. The BLN consists of approximately 1,700 employer members nationwide. The BLNs are comprised of representatives from business and industry that collectively engage in activities to recognize and promote best practices in hiring, retaining, and marketing to people with disabilities. The development of the USBLN is one example of a series of partnership initiatives, primarily led by the Office of Disability Employment Policy within the United States Department of Labor, that offers mechanisms for connecting employers with potential employees with disabilities [19].

Paralleling the growth in business participation, employment services providers recognized the increased importance of meeting employers' needs as job developers transitioned from a sales-oriented approach to securing job placements to a marketing-focused, demand-driven approach. Employment services providers who were successful with the marketing-oriented approach were able to effectively communicate how the wealth of services they could potentially provide, including increasing the organization's ability to hire and retain persons with disabilities as well as address employer training and disability-related needs, represented a value-added business proposition.

Successful marketers were able to differentiate their products (i.e., job placement and employment training services) from competitors, including both public and private sector employment service agencies. Many rehabilitation providers served as consultants to the business in addressing ADA related-concerns. They also facilitated the identification of workplace accommodations that would not only benefit the employee with a disability but other employees in the work unit or position. Their marketing-related endeavors were also bolstered by the evolving nature of employer perceptions of the work potential of individuals with disabilities. Supported by evidence from employers (see, e.g. [10,17]), and representatives of business and industry such as the United States Chamber of Com-

merce (see e.g. [4]) and the Society for Human Resource Management (see e.g. [15,17]) employment support providers could more effectively address many of the myths and misconceptions commonly expressed by employers regarding the employment potential of persons with disabilities.

The purpose of this paper is to provide descriptions of two public-private partnerships that currently operate a market-driven or demand-side model in an effort to increase the labor force participation and job retention of persons with disabilities. The two case examples have been selected because they represent different degrees of partnership engagement. The first example provides a description of an evolving partnership between Manpower, Incorporated, the world's largest supplemental staffing industry and several community rehabilitation providers throughout the Southern United States. The description of the second public-private partnership, Project Search, provides an example of a well-engaged, business-driven partnership for delivering employment and training services within a specific industry – healthcare. Following the descriptions of the partnerships, justification for business and rehabilitation partnerships, as well as, critical elements related to the development and implementation of effective partnerships to promote the employment and retention of persons with disabilities are proposed.

3. Manpower, Incorporated and community rehabilitation programs

Manpower, Incorporated (Manpower), is one of the largest supplemental staffing companies in the world and has a long and successful history (i.e., 57 years) of providing temporary help services to employers. In 2005, they were ranked at the top of Fortune Magazine's ranking for the staffing industry and 140th overall. They have approximately 4,300 offices operating in 68 countries. Manpower's customers include businesses seeking pre-screened, qualified workers (i.e., end-users) and people seeking employment, both temporary and long-term. Though the organization's niche is widely recognized as providing contract workers to address employers' temporary personnel needs, Manpower also facilitates long-term, permanent placements for many end-users (i.e., direct placement into permanent employment).

During fiscal year 2004, Manpower assigned approximately 457,000 job seekers to positions with end-users and in an average week approximately 147,000 tem-

porary employees were out on assignment in the United States. Job seekers assigned by Manpower during 2004 worked on average a 32 hour work week. Even though the majority of Manpower's assignments are temporary in nature, approximately 40 percent of assigned individuals are ultimately hired into a permanent position by the end-user. Even still, for many Manpower assignees, a series of temporary placements represents continuous employment albeit within different businesses. The commonly held perceptions of rehabilitation providers that employment opportunities available through supplemental staffing agencies result in sporadic or intermittent employment is misguided. Decisions as to the continuous or episodic nature of employment often rest with the job seeker, which may present both challenges and opportunities for rehabilitation providers. Individuals assigned by Manpower are actual employees of Manpower and are eligible for a range of benefits including: affordable health insurance and optional life and dental insurance; paid holidays and vacation; and career development and training. In instances when Manpower assignees are offered permanent employment, the employee becomes a member of the end-users' workforce.

Manpower's end-users total approximately 400,000 clients worldwide and represent a diversity of business sectors. They serve 100 percent of the companies ranked in Fortune 100 list and 98 percent of the Fortune 500 list. The type of positions individuals are assigned to with end-users can be categorized as industrial (48 percent), administrative (30 percent), or professional (22 percent). The success of Manpower's staffing specialists in matching the abilities of job seekers with the human resource needs of their end-users is reinforced by the existence of over 350 site management programs within North America. In other words, Manpower staffing specialists are assigned to, and located at, a specific end-user's business. The existence of such a large number of on-site management programs provides evidence of the premium Manpower's management places on developing effective partnerships.

When a job seeker visits a local Manpower office, he or she meets with a Manpower staffing specialist and participates in series of assessments and interviews to help identify assignments that match the individual's interests, abilities, and experiences. In addition to matching individuals with jobs, Manpower provides an extensive array of soft skill and career development opportunities, free of charge, to job seekers who have registered for their employment services. For instance, individuals can access more than 5,000 hours of e-learning

in end-user software applications, professional development skills, business skills, information technology, and telecommunications through Manpower's Global Learning Center (GLC). The GLC, available through the Internet, affords individuals the convenience of accessing the training materials at a time and location that best meets their needs and schedules. Assessments and certification testing preparation courses are also available.

Overall, the staffing industry has been frequently recognized for its efforts to provide soft skills training and new skill development to job seekers [2,18]. Yet, availability of training and professional development opportunities does not ensure that persons with disabilities can access these opportunities. Therefore, it is important that rehabilitation professionals facilitate access to the technology and also provide assistance or support to individuals in accessing and participating in the training modules. The training and skill development programs offered through Manpower can be of significant benefit to job seekers with disabilities as they develop or refine the knowledge and skills that are in the greatest demand by employers to increase their marketability.

In several communities, primarily in the South, Manpower is collaborating with community rehabilitation providers to provide job placement services for individuals with disabilities. In each locality, the community rehabilitation provider (CRP) identifies job seekers with disabilities who may be interested in receiving additional job search and placement assistance from an outside agency in addition to accessing all of the existing employment services that they typically provide to job seekers with disabilities. After assessments have been completed by the CRP, the individual is referred to Manpower for intake into the Manpower-CRP Partnership Program. The CRP shares information on the job seeker's interests, job preferences, employment experiences, and knowledge, skills, and abilities with personnel at the local Manpower office. Information on potential accommodations that the job seeker may need is also provided to Manpower staffing specialists from the representative of the CRP. In some instances, the job seeker accesses services from Manpower with little or no initial support from the CRP other than the initial exchange of information and scheduling of the intake appointment. In other instances, individuals with disabilities receive support from an employment specialist during the intake process with Manpower, which may last from one to three hours. The specific arrangements for intake into the public-private partnership are decid-

ed at the local level and are made on a case-by-case basis, contingent on the needs and desires of the job seeker.

When the intake process with Manpower has been completed, both representatives from the CRP and Manpower engage in job search activities for the individual. The representatives in the partnerships work together to collectively formulate and implement strategies aimed at securing end-user buy-in for using the expertise and resources of the partnership to facilitate the assignment of an employee with a disability within the business. If an offer of employment results from the work of the partnership, than an employment specialist is available from the CRP to provide job placement, job-site training and follow-along services for the individual as needed or requested. It is important to note, than when an assignment is made by Manpower with an end-user and the position is a temporary placement, Manpower is the employer of the individual with a disability. Thus, the representative from Manpower communicates with the end-user and works in consultation with the representative from the CRP to address any training or support needs that may benefit the individual. Any advocacy with the end-user originates from the Manpower staffing specialist, who relies on his or her own expertise and knowledge gained from working collaboratively with the representative from the CRP to address employer questions.

The partnership is not only building Manpower's capacity to address the diverse needs and abilities of individuals with disabilities but helping to develop Manpower's capacity and expertise to engage prospective employers in supporting people with disabilities in their workforce. This is especially important in overcoming commonly expressed employer misconceptions about the work potential of people with disabilities and working with rehabilitation agencies. When given the choice, many representatives from business and industry have indicated that they place increased value and credibility on information and assistance derived from colleagues in the business and industry versus human service or government agencies (see, e.g. [11,12,17]).

When an individual is placed by the Manpower staffing specialist into a temporary assignment the staffing specialist continues to identify other assignments to ensure that the individual with a disability does not experience any periods of unemployment between assignments and to facilitate the transition into additional assignments. Some individuals with disabilities may not like the uncertainty of long-term employment with different employers, work settings, and job

responsibilities. Yet, other individuals with disabilities welcome the opportunity to experience new job environments and duties as well as exert increased control over their work schedules. For persons with chronic mental illness or multiple sclerosis, these employment assignments might work quite well given the episodic and reoccurring nature of these disability diagnoses.

In instances where the individual with a disability may not be able to secure employment via the partnership, the CRP is conducting job development for the individual, concurrent with the on-going partnership activities. Due to a variety of factors, such as types of businesses and job opportunities that drive the local economy, it may not be realistic to think that placement will be made by the partnership. In those instances, more customized job search procedures are being implemented by the CRP. For instance, a job seeker with a disability expressed a desire to work as a chef in a restaurant. However, the local Manpower office did not have a history of, or current, assignments with restaurants or businesses where a need for a chef might arise. The job seeker would continue to be served by Manpower and the partnership but it is more likely that the employment specialist from the CRP would initiate job search activities with local restaurants to identify employment opportunities.

In two localities, the Manpower and CRP partnerships, have been in existence for over three years. Preliminary data as to the effectiveness of the partnerships in securing employment for persons with disabilities is encouraging [18]. Six other localities are participating in an experimental study that investigates the effectiveness of the public-private partnerships for improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities and are in the initial stages of partnership development and implementation. Employment outcomes to be analyzed include length of time until job placement, wages, job retention, hours worked per week, and fringe benefits.

4. Project Search

Another successful, widely recognized, public-private partnership that has helped facilitate employment and long-term job retention for individuals with significant disabilities is Project Search, operating out of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC). Approximately nine years ago, several forces transpired to prompt Erin Riehle, Clinical Director of the Emergency Department at the time, to consider hiring persons with disabilities to address a

reoccurring performance problem and personnel need within the emergency department. During her tenure as clinical director, Ms. Riehle experienced difficulty in retaining motivated employees who were committed to maintaining a well-stocked emergency department containing all of the necessary supplies that would facilitate the efficient operation of the hospital's ER department. Ms. Riehle had little difficulty attracting qualified employees for these positions but she often found herself engaging in these activities far more frequently than she desired due to the continuous turnover associated with the stocking positions.

At the same time, senior management at CCHMC was attempting to implement an organization-wide diversity initiative into their hiring practices. In her position as clinical director, Ms. Riehle would be responsible for implementing the diversity initiative within her department. In brainstorming ways to implement the diversity initiative, she encountered a policy statement from the American College of Healthcare Executives that CCHMC had also adopted. The statement reflected the role and importance that healthcare organizations have in increasing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and advocating on their behalf. Due in part to CCHMC's customer base, Ms. Riehle recognized the fact that there were very few individuals who could serve as role models in the workplace for children with disabilities who accessed healthcare services at CCHMC.

The coalescence of these factors led Ms. Riehle to seek support from and engage community partners to address her department's human resource needs and increase the diversity of her department by including people with disabilities in her work unit. These partners included Great Oaks Institute of Technical and Career Development and Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD). Great Oaks, a career and technical education (CTE) center, serves approximately 36 local education agencies in Cincinnati and surrounding localities. The CTE center serves over 6,000 youth in full and part-time programs per year as well as over 70,000 adults through its workforce development program. The Hamilton County Board of MR/DD provides educational, vocational, and residential services to thousands of individuals with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.

Working with representatives from these agencies, Ms. Riehle spearheaded the development of the public-private partnership based on the needs of her business unit or a demand-side approach to facilitating employ-

ment for persons with disabilities. The model contrasted with the traditional rehabilitation agency model which often translated into CCHMC representatives interacting with numerous human service agencies and professionals who provide employment services to people who experience barriers to employment. Prior to Project Search, Ms. Riehle describes the challenges in working with 13 different agencies that supported individuals with disabilities at CCHMC. She explains that she had to interact with representatives from the various agencies and that often involved 13 job developers, 13 job coaches, and 13 follow-along people representing different agencies with diverse organizational philosophies and personnel expectations (e.g., different dress codes, training backgrounds, policies, etc.).

Project Search would provide a single conduit for organizing and delivering employment services, in collaboration with the community, and deliver them in an effective and accountable way as an integrated part of the work site [13]. The partnership created a model which would build on the collective expertise of personnel within the business (employer), educational agency (Great Oaks), and the rehabilitation agency (Hamilton County Board of MR/DD). They worked to cultivate their relationships between participating agencies in a systematic manner, with an emphasis on developing a mutually beneficial "effective partnership".

The resulting partnership, Project Search, operates out CCHMC, with staff provided by each of the partnership participants. In her role as Director of Disability Services, Ms. Riehle serves as the overall director of Project Search. Great Oaks provides job developers and job coaches while the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD supplies an on-site employee to provide follow-along services. The presence of an on-site rehabilitation professional to provide post-employment support services offers several benefits to insuring the success of the partnership. First, having a person on-site to provide follow-along saves money and is much more efficient because the individual can follow a larger caseload. Each employee receives a minimum of eight hours of follow-along services per month of employment. The on-site presence of rehabilitation professionals also allows for additional support for employees in adapting to inevitable daily changes in their jobs in a dynamic workplace. Lastly, having instant access to a human service professional that is knowledgeable about the employees support needs and preferences, as well as the individual being readily available to work through problems that arise, often prevents small issues from escalating into major issues that might ultimately

lead to termination (e.g., working with employee assistance to obtain counseling services for behavioral problems).

At the present time, there are approximately 60–70 people with disabilities working at CCHMC through Project SEARCH. All but one of the employees reports directly to their departmental supervisor, not to Project SEARCH personnel. On average, participants in the program earn over \$8 per hour, have access to full-employee benefits and work 33 hours per week. CCHMC offers an extensive benefit package in which both part and full-time workers are eligible for benefits. Ms. Riehle indicated that in the last 3–4 years, more Project SEARCH employees are beginning to give up their government benefits, primarily Supplemental Security Income and receive hospital benefits.

Project Search's job development strategy is targeted toward "... identifying the most complex jobs that are routine and systematic", says Ms. Riehle. For example, employees placed by Project Search prepare trays for operating rooms; maintain incubators in the neonatal intensive care unit and stock equipment in the emergency department. Individuals also work in the dental clinic and lab administration, where two individuals with significant physical disabilities are responsible for collecting and delivering lab specimens to various locations throughout the hospital. In an effort to maximize opportunities for workers with disabilities to interact with nondisabled coworkers and to reduce any resemblance to an enclave, the partnership has established limits for the number of Project SEARCH employees working in each department. One of the goals of the partnership is to have people with disabilities filling 3% of health care positions at CCHMC [13].

On-site interviews conducted with senior management and key program personnel within CCHMC reflect managements' perceptions that Project Search represents a viable business unit with adds value to the hospital's core services. The project is effective in meeting the personnel needs of the employer while also helping to support the employer's diversity initiative. The human resource director at CCHMC believes that the networking and the personalities of the people in Project SEARCH contribute to the partnership's success. In addition, she stresses the importance of the organizational culture of CCHMC where inclusion is valued and supported by top management.

5. Why should rehabilitation agencies engage the business community and what benefits exist for employers?

As social and economic forces impact business practices, the significance of delivering effective employer-driven, employment services (i.e., demand-side model) is of increased importance. In today's competitive global marketplace, employers are looking at ways to maximize their human capital in order to increase productivity and profitability. Many have identified the importance of a qualified and well-trained workforce as a critical factor to sustained growth and competitiveness [4,14,16]. It is quite possible that the skill of an organization's workforce may be one of the last sources of competitive advantage. As such, employers have intensified their recruitment and retention efforts in an attempt to attract and keep qualified and productive employees.

Yet, employers are not having an easy time recruiting to fill current and projected openings. Findings from a recent study commissioned by the Center for Workforce Preparation, an affiliate of the United States Chamber of Commerce, revealed that 68% of the 1,800 participating employers reported experiencing either very severe or somewhat severe problems in recruiting qualified employees [4]. Employers' expressed difficulty in recruiting qualified applicants was almost universal across industries including government/non-profit, manufacturing, health/social care, wholesale trade, and construction and retail trade. When one considers these findings and the potential reality of a projected labor shortage, employers may find it increasingly more difficult to identify and retain qualified, committed employees.

Employers are not only looking to attract applicants with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to compete in a global marketplace but they are also looking to attract those individuals who can benefit from on-going training and professional development to sustain the firm's competitive advantage. The hallmarks of a high-performance organization include on-going commitment to innovation and adding value; motivating every member of the organization; and accommodating workers' different learning styles [8]. These areas represent opportunities for rehabilitation professionals to target in presenting the business-case for the establishment of public-private partnerships.

Recruitment of qualified employees, designing and delivering training that addresses the unique learning styles of an increasingly diverse workforce, consult-

ing with employers to address workplace disability-related issues, facilitating return-to-work, and identifying effective workplace supports should all be within the realm of rehabilitation professionals' expertise. In an effort to develop and sustain effective rehabilitation and business partnerships that truly address the needs of employers and promote employment and retention of individuals with disabilities, the call for rehabilitation agencies to move beyond the traditional rehabilitation emphasis on job placement services has intensified [3,7,17]. In addition, as various social and economic forces impact business practices, many corporations have been rethinking their traditional approaches to philanthropy and seeking forms of engagement that are of higher impact and of greater business relevance [1]. Yet, having the knowledge and expertise to address employer needs in the areas identified does not insure active employer participation.

6. Critical components of effective business-rehabilitation partnerships

There is limited empirical evidence that documents the critical components of sustainable business and rehabilitation partnerships. Furthermore, much of the existing literature on effective partnerships in general is not based on scientific evidence but the "tacit knowledge" derived from the experiences of partnership participants [20]. This also holds true for much of the work regarding effective business and rehabilitation partnerships. The limited evidence generated from two qualitative studies conducted with rehabilitation providers and employers reported similar findings (e.g. [3,6]).

For example, findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with rehabilitation professionals and employers identified six themes related to the establishment, development, and maintenance of partnerships [3]. These themes include: (1) a commitment to community responsibility by employers; (2) competency in service delivery by the agency in terms of responsiveness, reliability and consistency; (3) trust between the agency and the employer; (4) a customer focus by agencies; (5) exchange of benefits between employers and agencies; and (6) extensive period of working together in an effective and satisfying manner (2001). The vast majority of these themes are represented in the preceding case studies. The lone exception being the lack of an extensive history between Manpower and the participating CRPs, as these partnerships are still evolving in the various localities.

secondary factors that support or advance the Alliance Drivers (e.g., focused attention, communication, organizational system, mutual expectations); and Challenges represent dimensions of the partnership that represent significant challenges to partnership effectiveness (e.g., creating mission and vision fit, building the value construct, managing the relationship, institutionalizing the alliance).

The final component of Austin's Cross-Sectoral Collaboration Framework is the Collaboration Value Construct which focuses on assessing the value of the partnership and its activities to the partnership members. The Collaboration Value Construct relates to the nature of resources transferred and involves assessing the benefits of partnership participation but also evaluating the opportunity costs associated with participation. Austin describes the magnitude of the Collaboration Value Construct along three dimensions of resource transfers including: generic, core competencies, and joint resource creation (2000). Undoubtedly, the partnership is much stronger and offers greater sustainability when mutual benefits exist for partnership members.

We can describe several of these forces as they pertain to the Manpower and CRP partnership due to the role of project staff from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention at Virginia Commonwealth University in the development and implementation of the partnerships in each locality. For example, Alliance drivers include a commitment to improving the labor force participation of individuals with disabilities, shared organizational values that embrace inclusiveness and diversity, and the facilitation of personnel connections between staffing specialists with local Manpower office and rehabilitation professionals within the CRP through a mutually respected organization. Because many of the Manpower and CRP partnerships are in the initial stages of implementation, on-going continual learning is occurring. This is especially evident in addressing concerns by employers who may hire individuals with disabilities through the partnership program.

Therefore, the implementation of the Manpower and CRP partnerships are not without challenges as many Manpower staffing specialists address questions raised by skeptical end-users (i.e., prospective employers) regarding the capabilities of workers with disabilities. This example presents a challenge to the partnership but also an opportunity for the partnership to continue to evolve as partnership members support each other in addressing employer concerns. For instance, the rehabilitation professional addresses the concerns raised

by the end-user by communicating the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities and the opportunity for on-site support and training assistance to facilitate successful employment outcomes to the staffing specialist with Manpower, who in turn communicates with the prospective employer.

7. Conclusion

When attempting to engage the business community to promote the participation and retention of persons with disabilities, it is important for the rehabilitation agencies to recognize the value of the services that they provide in light of employer needs. From the descriptions of the rehabilitation agencies initial efforts to engage the business community prior to the passage of the ADA to the evolution of business and rehabilitation partnerships described in the Manpower and CRP partnerships and Project Search it is evident these public and private partnerships have the potential to engage participants beyond the philanthropic stage of Austin's Collaboration Engagement Continuum [1].

Yet, rehabilitation professionals must understand both the challenges and opportunities that they may encounter in attempting to develop effective and sustainable partnerships with business and industry. Effective public-private partnerships are just as diverse as the people with disabilities that seek employment and career services from rehabilitation agencies. It is not "a one size fits all approach" but instead an approach that is based on the unique contributions that each partner can deliver that facilitates the accomplishment of shared goals based on similar organizational values and missions.

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