


# Business2Business

A Guide For Employment Support Specialists

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## Introduction



### Recommended Use of this Training


- The primary audience is Employment Support Specialist (ESS), Job Coaches, and supervisors.
- This document is best used as an interactive training. The slides provide summary information with additional content/scripting in the notes section.
- Please use the content in full and with attribution to the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University.

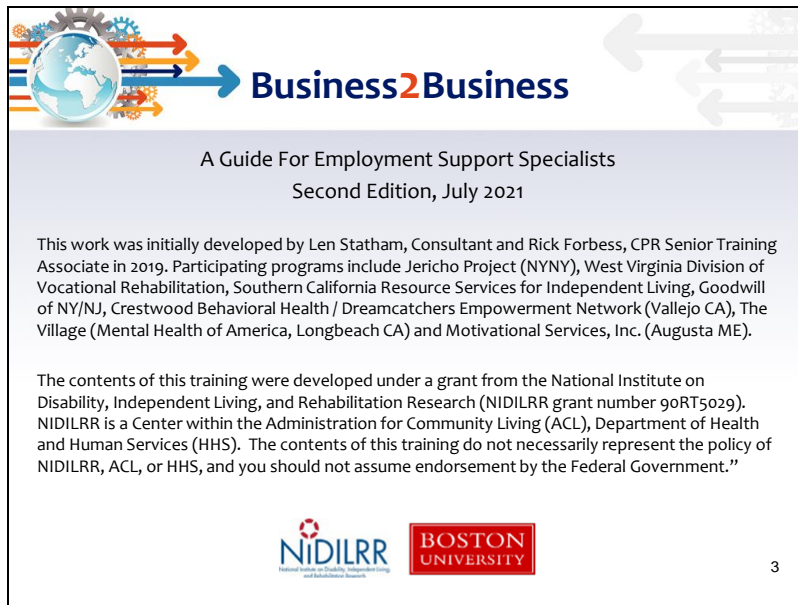
## Title Slide



# Business2Business

A Guide For Employment Support Specialists





The contents of this (insert type of publication, e.g., book, report, film) were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90RT5029). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this (insert type of publication, e.g., book, report, film) do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.”



## Welcome to Business2Business

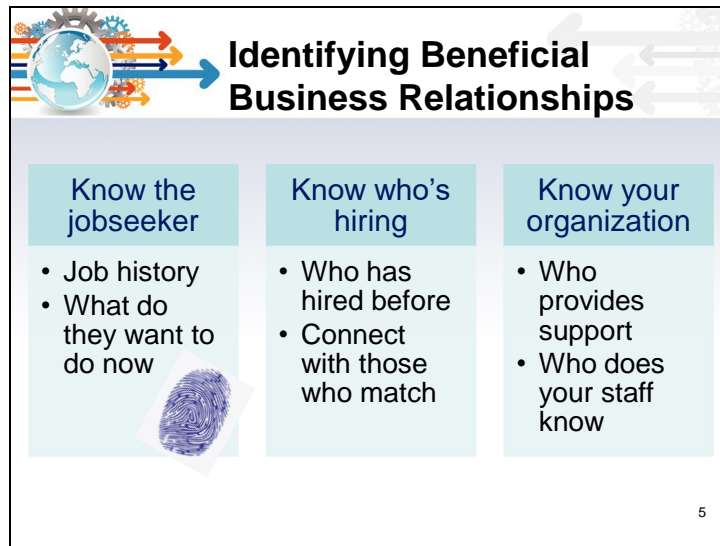
- A training for
  - Employment Support Specialists (ESS)
  - Colleagues
  - Supervisors
  - Funders
  - Stakeholders



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Welcome to Business2Business. The guide was initially developed as an online technical assistance response for organizations providing employment and vocational recovery services. The original project team included Rick Forbess, Project Director; Marianne Farkas, Joan Rapp, Maria E. Restrepo Toro, Kim Mueser as consultants. Originally titled “Helping People Get & Keep Meaningful Jobs: A Compilation Guide for Employment Support Specialists,” this guide will introduce you to tools and methods for engaging and building relationships with the very businesses with whom individuals utilizing employment support services might find successful employment. The guide is just one tool of many that can expand your knowledge and skills so that you may become a more effective Employment Support Specialists while at the same time helping businesses improve their bottom line.

As more people with disabilities enter the workforce, developing sustained and meaningful relationships with businesses is more critical than ever. Helping them recognize the benefits they could enjoy by hiring employees of all abilities is vital to your success. This guide will provide you with the information you need to begin helping businesses employ people of all abilities. How and why hiring people of all abilities is good for business and where to find qualified employees. This process is a way to ensure a company can enjoy the benefits of a reliable, effective, and efficient workforce.



## Identifying Beneficial Business Relationships

Non-profit organizations often live hoping that if they build it, people will come, and if they build it, people will want to get involved and do business with them. But in today's world, it takes a lot more than hope to get people invested in what you do, and it takes a plan.

But many agencies get stuck on attempting to create the perfect plan. Or they never get around to putting one together. Crafting a plan is necessary, quick, and effective, and this plan begins with identifying key business relationships.

There are three essential factors in the identification process:

### Know the Jobseeker

The identification of potential businesses starts the minute the jobseeker walks through your door. During your initial intake or assessment, you will begin to build your business list. What type of jobs has the person had in the past? What kind of employment are they looking for now? The answers to these questions will begin to tell you who you should be reaching out to. Additionally, start thinking about what other businesses are closely aligned with these and reach out to them as well.

### Know Who's Hiring Whom?

Find out all you can about the businesses in your area. Start with the businesses that closely align with the jobseekers' needs, but don't stop there. Begin researching companies in your area. Find out who has a reputation for hiring individuals with

disabilities. Often, this information can be found on the business website. Research the key players in the company and connect with them on LinkedIn and other social media outlets. Connect with local, state, and federal government agencies such as the Department of Labor, the Small Business Association (SBA), and the Chamber of Commerce to learn and connect with businesses that match your needs.

### **Know your Organization and Staff**

All you need to know might already be known inside your organization. Everyone conducts business daily, including your staff. Start building a contact list based upon the social network within your organization. These potential employers are more likely to do business with you because they know someone from your agency.

Business contact networks can also be built through participating in clubs, activities, civic and religious groups, and other social activities. Ask staff to share these contacts as well as a way to increase opportunities to connect with businesses.

Additionally, your organization does business with other businesses. With whom does your organization do business? Where do they purchase their office supplies? Paper products? Cleaning supplies? Put your organizational purchasing power to work!

Once you have gathered all of this information (and there should be a lot of it), rate the favorability of each potential employer using the following criteria, you should be able to determine areas of strength and weakness within your network of business-to-business relationships.



### Favorability of Potential Employers (sample only)

Employer	Community Connection?	Job Variety?	Personal Connection?	High Desirability?	Score
Mick's Upholstery Shop	2	4	4	3	13
Costumes-r-Us	4	4	3	5	16
Hospital Laundry	5	3	2	2	12

Scale: 1 is low, 5 is high

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Well connected: Has good relationships with other businesses who are potential employers or people who are well known and held in high regard

Low redundancy: A business that offers types of employment that increases the variety within your network of potential employers

Strong connection: Close personal bond with key people within the business

High desirability: Business has characteristics that reflect preferences of the jobseekers with whom you are working

[Spend time reviewing the table. It's a tool, but the score doesn't make the decision, it is just a indicator.]



## Building Business2Business Relationships

After selecting the businesses you want to target, the next step is building relationships with these businesses. As is the case with the work you do with jobseekers, relationships are key. Recognize that it takes a dedicated amount of time and energy to build practical, strong, and lasting business relationships. These relationships don't happen with one visit or even two encounters, and it is worth the investment in time to nurture these relationships.

Often, Employment Support Specialists make the mistake of asking first and listening second. We can't just "take" in our business relationships. Like any other relationship, there is a "give and take." Develop ways to make the relationship mutually beneficial. Selectivity, consistency, and engagement are essential for creating great business-to-business relationships.

The following are five ways you can build lasting business relationships:

### Be Authentic

This sounds simple, but often Employment Support Specialists make the mistake of planning out a sales pitch ahead of their initial meeting. While you must say the right things, it's even more critical that you be the right person – that is yourself. Employers want to do business with individuals to whom they can relate. A "sales pitch" is an unwelcome infomercial. It does not invite conversation, nor does it connote a two-way relationship.





## Common Goals and Values?

- More than a 'bottom line'
- Find out what the company may be interested in
  - READ their website
  - What are the values?
  - Do they have a foundation?
  - Do they support causes?



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### Identify Common Goals and Values

Businesses are more than their bottom line. They are made up of people that make personal decisions every day. While it's important to connect with businesses about how you value their "bottom line" and have the common goal of helping them increase it, it is equally important that you connect on other matters.

Find out what the company may be interested in or support. Perusing the company website may give you insight as to what the company values. Do they have a foundation? Do they support any causes? The answers to these questions can be found on their website, offices, or the places where they do business.

Remember, no family is immune to the impact of mental health concerns. Mental illness occurs in many families, and most individuals know someone that has experienced mental health concerns. Your cause could be their cause! Additionally, keep in mind the interests that you can share with them when the time is right.



## Don't just tell, SHOW!

- Have testimonials from other businesses
- Tell the story of
  - Successful placement
  - Reduced hiring and training costs
  - Increased retention
  - Meeting marketplace needs
  - Job sharing



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### Don't Just Tell – Show!

You have an incredibly valuable service to offer them, but the company may not know it yet. Informing them about what you do is not enough. You need to show them. Connect them with other businesses that you have experienced success in the following areas:

- Successful placement
- Reduced hiring and training costs
- Increased retention
- Responded to marketplace needs
- Introduced job carving as a way to cut costs

These are all potential ways you can help the business, but you have to show them. Consider developing a portfolio that presents a visual representation of your agency's successes and awards.



## Get personal. Listen!

- What inspired you to go into business?
- What was the business or company like when you started?
- What do you like about what you do?
- How do you approach problems or situations?



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## Get Personal

If you really want to know the people, ask them out for coffee so you can talk more personally. Listen for what they value. Ask them questions like the following:

- What inspired you to go into business?
- What was the business or company like when you started?
- What do you like about what you do?
- How do you approach problems or situations?

These questions lead to greater insight and a deepened relationship. These questions might also lead to a friendship where sharing personal stories outside of the workplace is acceptable.



## Connect with others

**“Serving is the new selling.”**  
trendwatching.com

- Drive business their way
- Toot their horn for them
- Leverage social media
- Be there when they need you
- Connect them with other businesses that are pitching in

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### Connect Them with Others

The greatest compliment in business is a referral. Sharing your contacts and connecting people that can help them with their business is a great way to create lasting business relationships. You can also become a customer yourself; drive customers to their website or place of business. These are ways you can serve their business.

According to Trendwatching.com, “serving is the new selling.” Connecting with businesses on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter is a way to show your support of the business and serve them by driving your contacts to intersect with them.




## Managing Business Relationships

Managing business relationships is an art unto itself. Many businesses have Business Relationship Managers (BRMs) whose job is to keep the business relationship alive and good. Employment Support Specialists will be responsible for managing the relationship, be accountable to the customer for performance. Still, they will also act as an advisor and advocate, facilitating that two-way communication, including any required translations (human services to business). Specific individuals should be identified and responsible for managing the relationship and customer satisfaction.

Next, decide upon the method of engagement and communication that you will individualize with each business contact you have. The following engagement strategies are casual but practical:

- Business lunches
- Cards for meaningful occasions (anniversary of the company, promotions, etc.)
- Coffee drive-by for the company's support staff. These are the gatekeepers. Keep them happy.
- After permission, send them information about their business or hobbies. This lets them know you are still interested and are looking out for them.
- Once connected with them through social media, like or comment on their posts. Stay visible.
- Continue to drive business their way.

All of these strategies are effective, but it's important to pace the relationship. You don't want to become a pest or overly ambitious in your engagement.



## Making the business case

- Job retention
- Dependability
- Flexibility
- Attitude
- Motivation
- Pre-screening
- Training
- Pre-insured
- Expand market share
- Employment morale

(Source: US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy and [www.thinkbeyondthetable.com](http://www.thinkbeyondthetable.com) )

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## Making the Business Case

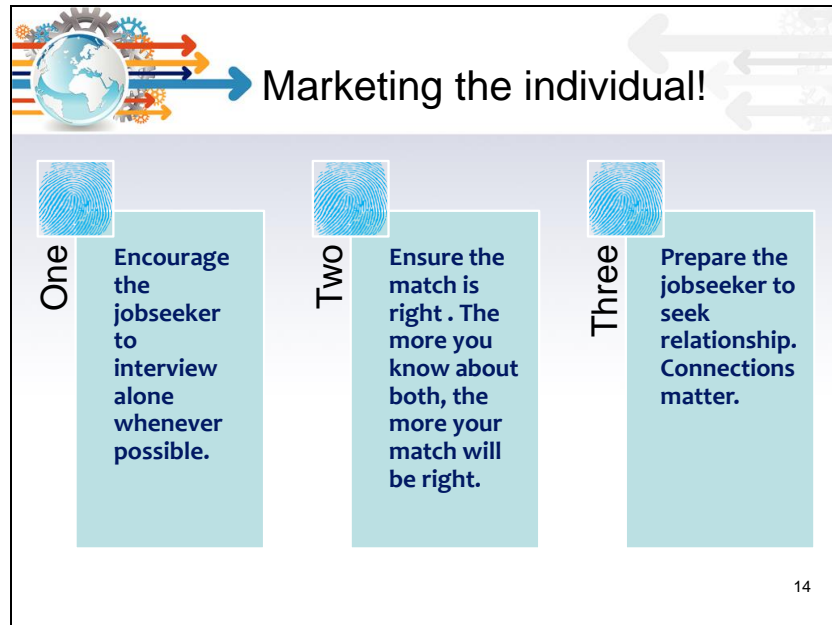
You have selected the business and learned all you can about them. You have formed relationships with key personnel. It is now time to make a case for hiring. Below are some general facts you can use to make the case.

- **Job Retention:** employees are known for being loyal to their employers and often remain at their jobs for years, thereby reducing turnover
- **Dependability:** employees with disabilities have lower rates of absenteeism; reports of perfect attendance are not uncommon
- **Flexibility:** when asked, employees will often fill in for co-workers who have missed their shifts
- **Attitude:** employee pride is demonstrated by coming to work with a positive, can-do attitude
- **Motivation:** employees report to work every day ready, willing, and able to perform
- **Pre-screened:** every effort is made to pre-screen candidates for employment to ensure that the applicant meets the minimum qualifications of the job and it's a job the person wants
- **Training:** if needed or desired by the employer, the person can be trained to the employer's specifications by skilled job coaches, thereby reducing employer training time
- **Pre-insured:** workers are often (but not always) pre-insured with health benefits

- Expand Market Share: employees with disabilities can relate better to customers with disabilities, representing \$1 trillion in annual aggregate consumer spending
- Employee Morale: many businesses report that employing people with disabilities increases the morale and productivity of every employee.

(Source: US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy)

The timing of when you make your case is critical to your success. There are no hard and fast rules about this other than to get to know your business first. Lay the groundwork and form relationships before you go in for the “ask.” As part of your introduction, the company will know what you do and, perhaps, know the “ask” is coming but will soon realize that the relationship is more important than the transaction that will take place.



## Marketing the Individual

While establishing solid and enduring business contacts, you have also been preparing the jobseeker to be ready when an opportunity arises. As Richard Bolles states in *What Color is Your Parachute*, "The person who gets hired is not necessarily the one who can do the job best, but the one who knows the most about how to get hired." Since you have a relationship with the business, you are now able to give the jobseeker the most relevant information about the company and the best way to get hired. If you have laid the groundwork in your business development well, the business will be expecting to meet the jobseeker at some point.

There are three rules to keep in mind as you market the individual to a business.

1) Encourage the jobseeker to interview alone whenever possible. - After you have laid the groundwork for a mutual relationship with a business, and the business owner or manager expects to meet the job seeker, it is your job to get out of the way. Prepare the job seeker as much as possible for a successful encounter.

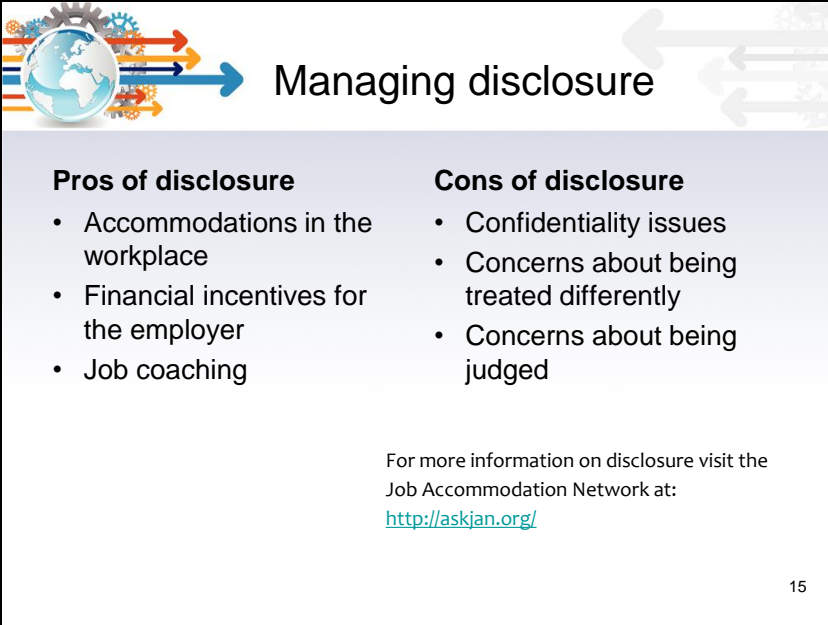
Businesses that see the jobseekers as independent are much more likely to hire them. Even if the jobseeker makes a few mistakes, it is still better for them to go alone. A mistake or two can be explained by you after their meeting; overprotecting them cannot.



If the job seeker can't engage alone, try and appear in a not intrusive manner and more like a friend introducing a friend to a contact.

2) Ensure the match is right – With your knowledge of the business and the jobseeker, ensuring the match should be easier. Doing so will allow the job seeker to present relevant information to the job and won't waste the interviewer's time. Remember, the business has already given you all you need to make the job match. If you find it difficult, don't be afraid to engage the business again.

3) Prepare the jobseeker to seek relationship – Just as it was essential for you to develop a relationship with the business, it is equally essential that the jobseeker realize that it is all about establishing a connection. Preparing the jobseeker to be personal, engaging, and likable will help facilitate a smooth interview.



The slide features a graphic at the top left with a globe, gears, and arrows. The title 'Managing disclosure' is centered at the top. Below the title, the slide is divided into two columns: 'Pros of disclosure' and 'Cons of disclosure'. The 'Pros' column lists three items: accommodations in the workplace, financial incentives for the employer, and job coaching. The 'Cons' column lists three items: confidentiality issues, concerns about being treated differently, and concerns about being judged. At the bottom right, there is a link to the Job Accommodation Network website.

## Managing disclosure

Pros of disclosure	Cons of disclosure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodations in the workplace</li> <li>• Financial incentives for the employer</li> <li>• Job coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidentiality issues</li> <li>• Concerns about being treated differently</li> <li>• Concerns about being judged</li> </ul>

For more information on disclosure visit the Job Accommodation Network at:  
<http://askjan.org/>

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## Disclosure

When individuals start a new job they often experience anxiety. It's something we all experience. Individuals are expected to learn new skills and routines, interact with new people and make decisions. One of the biggest decisions people make is whether or not to disclose their illness. To disclose or not to disclose – that is the question.

It's essential to give the person you're working with some guidance on this significant decision.

### The Pros of Disclosing

**Accommodations in the workplace:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act require employers to provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace. These and other laws also protect against job discrimination. But to benefit from this law, Individuals must inform and provide documentation regarding their disability. Usually, the human resources director is an excellent place to start this conversation.

**Financial incentives for the employer:** Employers are eligible for tax breaks and sometimes subsidies if they hire people with disabilities. Research also shows that people with disabilities perform well and are less likely to job hop. These are some

reasons the jobseeker may want to consider disclosing their disability to the hiring manager and the human resources manager.

**Job coaching:** If the jobseeker discloses their disability, they will be encouraged to provide more support if needed. The employer will be more open to bringing in a job coach. A coach can provide on-site support and other resources that can help them succeed in the workplace.

## **The Cons of Disclosing**

**Confidentiality issues:** Individuals worry that if they tell their employer, word will get out, and all of their co-workers will know about their disability. There is a remote chance of this happening. Still, human resources officers know that information about a worker's disability must remain private and that employers can get in trouble for breaking that rule. Most likely, your client's co-workers won't hear about their disability unless they tell others that are not bound by confidentiality. It's important to make that distinction.

**Concerns about being given less responsibility:** Individuals may worry that they won't be trusted to take on substantial projects if they tell their boss about their disability. They may also be concerned that disclosing their disability could lead to being passed over for a promotion or a raise. Help the job seeker understand their rights at work and how anti-discrimination laws are designed to prevent employers from doing these kinds of things.

**Concerns about being judged:** This is more common than you think and is often overlooked when discussing the idea of disclosing. Feeling that one is being judged can affect job performance and increase anxiety, but the truth is everyone who starts a job is being judged on their performance. Stress this truth as an everyday activity, and individuals will be less concerned that they are being singled out.

For more information on disclosure visit the Job Accommodation Network at:  
<http://askjan.org/>



## Supervision for the Employment Support Specialists

- Use a standing agenda
- Meet as a group
- Share rapid updates
- Rotate presentations
- Split to focus on problem solving and skill building



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## Supervision

### Supervisor's Role in Mentoring the Work of Employment Support Specialists To Build and Maintain Employer Relationships

The Employment Support Specialist Supervisor is in a critical position to ensure that the best employment outcomes are realized for the users of services at that agency. In a nutshell, their influence on employment services begins with their role at mentoring/educating Employment Support Specialists to grasp and practice the specialized and skillful tasks used to develop and maintain relationships with employers.

In some ways, this process is similar to the clinical work the person has experienced throughout their services. Newly hired workers are first carefully observed and assessed in a focused manner informed by their new duties. A significant period of exploration and learning hopefully involves studying manuals, having skills modeled, role-playing, and then trying the newly formed skills out in the community with real employer contacts. While the first employer contacts are done under the wings of the supervisor or more experienced staff, eventually, the recent hire progressively takes over the reins of the work.

Another essential role of the supervisor involves ongoing supervision of each Employment Support Specialist's work. One aspect of this is to review the Employment Support Specialist's contribution to the Employer Contacts tracking sheet. Those contacts are prioritized to favor visits to businesses that reflect the types of jobs that

people on the Employment Liaison's caseload look for. However, exploring a few new companies with a vision toward future client preferences is also encouraged.

A supervisor is encouraged to do whatever is possible to make the Employment Support Specialist experience each other as a cohesive team through weekly team meetings. Group supervision adds the component of peer supervision to the professional growth and support of the team.

The agendas of meetings could include:


- Who got or lost jobs?
- Share job leads and comparing notes on receptive employer contacts
- What are new businesses moving in?
- Which businesses in town hire people with criminal records?
- Which businesses are receptive/supportive to people struggling with substance use?
- Arrange for coverage for each other when away from work
- Regular problem solving of specific jobseeker vocational situations
- Rotate presentations. For example, each staffer presents a jobseeker in rotation
- Use or be trained in one particular problem-solving model
- Planning for ongoing training around building employer relationships and other skills
- Watching videos of job development
- Group study of specific chapters in vocational training manuals or related approaches
- Overview of recovery approaches, psychiatric rehabilitation, and Individual Placement and Support (IPS)
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace

Each of the elements identified in this guide can be further explored and developed. To assist in this process, utilize the following resources.



## Resources

- At [Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation](#), the work is guided by the most basic of rehabilitation values: First and foremost, persons with psychiatric disabilities have the same goals and dreams as any other person.
- The [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. The site has information for employers, individuals, and others.
- [Individual Placement and Support \(IPS\)](#) is an employment service that helps more people with mental illness obtain employment than any other type of vocational program.
- [Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#) The Department of Labor's office of disability employment policy to provide leadership, develop policy and initiatives, and award grants furthering the objective of eliminating barriers to the training and employment of people with disabilities." 29 USC 567b



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<https://cpr.bu.edu/>

<https://askjan.org/>

<https://ipsworks.org/>

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>



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## A Guide For Employment Support Specialists Second Edition, July 2021

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# Identifying Beneficial Business Relationships

## Know the jobseeker

- Job history
- What do they want to do now



## Know who's hiring

- Who has hired before
- Connect with those who match

## Know your organization

- Who provides support
- Who does your staff know



# Favorability of Potential Employers

(sample only)

Employer	Community Connection?	Job Variety?	Personal Connection?	High Desirability?	Score
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# Building Business Relationships

- Be Authentic
  - Avoid the 'sales pitch' Tell a story





# Common Goals and Values?

- More than a 'bottom line'
- Find out what the company may be interested in
  - READ their website
  - What are the values?
  - Do they have a foundation?
  - Do they support causes?





# Don't just tell, **SHOW!**

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  - Successful placement
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  - Meeting marketplace needs
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# Get personal. Listen!



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# Managing business relationships





# Making the business case

- Job retention
- Dependability
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- Attitude
- Motivation
- Pre-screening
- Training
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- Expand market share
- Employment morale

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# Marketing the individual!



One

**Encourage the jobseeker to interview alone whenever possible.**



Two

**Ensure the match is right . The more you know about both, the more your match will be right.**



Three

**Prepare the jobseeker to seek relationship. Connections matter.**



# Managing disclosure

## **Pros of disclosure**

- Accommodations in the workplace
- Financial incentives for the employer
- Job coaching

## **Cons of disclosure**

- Confidentiality issues
- Concerns about being treated differently
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