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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT | TOOL 3.1

IDENTIFY MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE INDUSTRY

TOOL 3.1

Use this worksheet as a starting point for identifying major issues in your industry. Employers will be more willing to invest their time and effort in supporting your program if they also benefit in return. You can demonstrate to businesses in your industry that you understand their needs by identifying the major issues they face. Address these issues in events that you host for local employers, even if they are not directly about their workforce. Instead, focus on helping these businesses grow. When they need to hire more workers, they will already see you as a valuable resource.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

Job developers, employer engagement staff

SOURCES OF INDUSTRY INFORMATION

You should first talk with existing industry partners about their concerns as well as current changes and trends they would like to understand better. This will provide critical background information on their primary workforce and overarching business needs. Supplement these conversations by keeping up with reliable key sources of information. Use traditional and real-time sources of labor-market information to track important data, such as hiring demand in your area and the skills and certifications sought by employers. Identify journals and websites that provide relevant news on key employers in your region, and be sure to stay current on their publications.

LIST YOUR MOST VALUABLE SOURCES

Sources of Labor Market Information: _____

Trade journals highlighting key regional employers: _____

Reports and agendas from industry events: _____

Websites for blogs and news on industry associations that represent key regional employers: _____

Publications, news, and releases from chamber of commerce and economic development organizations: _____

TOP ISSUES ACROSS BUSINESSES

Employers must navigate a number of factors that impact the success of their business, and you should be aware of the major issues. Use the events that you host for employers to address their most pressing concerns.

LIST THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUES BY CATEGORY

Legislative (state or federal): _____

Local or county administrative: _____

Technological changes: _____

Financial or economic trends: _____

Changes in leadership (e.g., new agency heads, new elected officials): _____

Workforce Issues (e.g., recruiting new workers, incumbent worker training): _____

International Trade: _____

Challenges with supply chain: _____

Other: _____

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EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT | TOOL 3.2

HOST AN INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC BRIEFING

TOOL 3.2

Industry briefings provide employers with an opportunity to expand their network into a workforce community, access political value, meet potential customers, and learn strategic information. Ultimately, these briefings must be truly meaningful for employers. A successful event is one where business representatives leave feeling that the event was worth it; your organization does not need to have gained something in the short-term. Because these events are valuable to businesses, they are an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that your organization is a partner worth having at the table. Don't be afraid to host an industry briefing that is not focused on workforce. Instead, focus on whatever issues matter most to local employers.

Use this tool to effectively prepare for and implement an industry briefing. The worksheet walks through planning event logistics, selecting speakers, designing the agenda, and connecting to businesses. The tool also provides tips on successful approaches to each of these program elements.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

Job developers, employer engagement staff, program managers

SECURE A TOPIC AND SPEAKER THAT WILL DRAW YOUR AUDIENCE

The centerpiece of an industry briefing is a strong speaker presenting about an issue important to the businesses you would like to attract. Reach out to potential speakers early in your planning process—popular speakers might have limited availability.

Topic: _____

A wide variety of issues, current events, or industry advances could be discussed in the briefing. The event could be particularly meaningful to the business community if you have findings on the industry trends and skill needs that you could present, discuss, and confirm. This type of data could be drawn from interviews you have had with employers or LMI.

You should already have a sense of what matters to your industry. If not, use Tool 2.5 to develop a list of potential topics to address in this event.

Relevance of topic to this audience: _____

Before you finalize a topic, consider its value to the attendees. Talk to several key businesses to make sure this is a topic of interest to them:

- » _____
- » _____
- » _____

Speaker: _____

Be ambitious when seeking a speaker, reaching out directly to recognized experts. Three criteria should guide your selection process. Pick someone who:

- » Attendees do not have access to on their own.
- » Has deep enough information to be valuable to a knowledgeable attendee.
- » Presents well—not all experts are good speakers!

A successful speaker can work in a variety of capacities. Some potentially desirable speakers include government affairs staff, elected officials, mayoral or county staff, local economists, and academics from local universities.

CONNECTING TO BUSINESSES

You should be connecting to businesses throughout the planning and implementation of the event. Reach out to businesses in advance of the meeting to ensure strong attendance, and use the event itself to create more opportunities for connection. Then follow up after the event to maintain the relationships that you have built.

MARKETING

Use as many strategies as you can to invite a large number of relevant businesses. Keep track of your efforts to make sure that you are casting a wide net:

Email lists: _____

This should be your primary method of sending information. Send save the dates and reminders in addition to the invitation.

Targeted phone calls to key businesses: _____

Social media efforts: _____

Ask your advisory board to invite their LinkedIn networks and other professional networks.

Promotion by industry associations or local chamber of commerce: _____

Ask for, and pay careful attention to, RSVPs. Collect email addresses and telephone numbers, as they will be helpful to you even after the event.

LOOKING FORWARD

You should continue to build relationships with attendees after the meeting. Follow these tips to begin your outreach:

- > At the event, offer participation in a LinkedIn or Google Group to continue the dialogue
- > Follow up after with a thank you, a summary, and any presentation slides

SAMPLE INDUSTRY BRIEFING BREAKFAST

EVENT LOGISTICS

Target industry: Environmental protection, clean energy, water quality

Event date: Tuesday, April 15

Expected number of attendees: 40

Location: Law Offices of Partner and Partner

- » Seating (will it hold all the attendees?): 80 (yes)
- » Audiovisual capacity: _____
- » Accessibility to employers: _____

Menu: Coffee, muffins, pastries, orange juice, fruit salad

Budget:

| EXPENSES | REVENUE AND FUNDING SOURCES |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Food | Donated by P&P Law Firm |
| Room rental | Donated by P&P Law Firm |
| Speaker honorarium | Not requested |
| TOTAL: \$0 | TOTAL: \$0 |

SECURE A TOPIC AND SPEAKER THAT WILL DRAW YOUR AUDIENCE

Topic: Changing leadership and policy priorities at the Department of Energy

Relevance of topic to this audience: The Governor has recently appointed a new Commissioner of the DOE, and there is strong interest in hearing the Commissioner speak about policy priorities, legislative initiatives, budgets, and progress on existing activities.

Suggested by advisory council members at meeting on February 1.

Speaker: DOE Commissioner (not yet confirmed)

DESIGNING THE AGENDA

Bringing it all together: the agenda

| TIME | ITEM | SPEAKER(S) |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 7:30 a.m. | Registration and Networking Breakfast | |
| 8:00 a.m. | Welcome | Paula Director, Our Program (OP) Sarah Lawyer, Partner and Partner |
| 8:15 a.m. | Keynote Presentation | DOE Commissioner Greenlight |
| 8:30 a.m. | Panel Discussion | Current Employer (moderator), OP employer target 1, OP employer target 2, OP employer target 3 |
| 9:15 a.m. | Question and Answer | Current Employer (moderator) |
| 9:45 a.m. | Thank You and Adjourn | Paula Director |

Marketing

Email lists: Water quality industry employer list, clean energy industry employer list

Targeted phone calls to key businesses:

Social media efforts:

Promotion by industry associations or local chamber of commerce: State Environmental Business Council

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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT | TOOL 3.3

CO-HOST AN EMPLOYER-FOCUSED NETWORKING EVENT

TOOL 3.3

Education and training providers often host networking events such as career fairs for their students, but you could benefit even more by looking beyond events with an employment focus. Co-host an industry networking event that brings together a wide range of players from across your targeted industry. For example, an event in the solar industry could connect manufacturing and sales firms, installation companies, electrical contractors, banks, accounting firms, and law offices. A successful event for you is one where a wide range of attendees find the event helpful, leading these organizations to think of you as a valued partner who understands their needs and industry.

Use this guide to plan networking events as simple as a cocktail party or as elaborate as a vendor fair. This tool provides tips for each stage of event planning, including partnering with co-hosts, setting event objectives, selecting an event type, and inviting employers.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

Employer engagement staff

CO-HOSTS

Organize networking events with multiple co-hosts whenever possible. By partnering with others who have a similar interest in bringing industry people together for networking, you can attract the widest possible audience.

Type of organization: Many types of businesses and organizations contribute to an industry, and as many as possible should be represented as attendees at your event. Two types of partners stand out as particularly beneficial co-hosts:

- > **Four-year universities and community colleges:** These institutions are the perceived source of workers by businesses. Partnering with them will be a draw to employers and will give you credibility. This also helps establish a personal connection, as many invitees may have attended one of these institutions.
- > **Industry associations:** Partnering with the appropriate industry association signals to your invitees that you are "one of us." This buys credibility, even with businesses that are not association members.

Roles: Not all co-hosts have to share equal roles in preparing the networking event. Make it easy for partners to co-host, even if that means they are just lending their name and you are doing all of the work. Roles could also include contributions such as an event space or speaking as part of the formal agenda. Be sure that everyone shares expectations about each partner's role.

Keep track of your co-hosts. Are the organizations represented the types that would be most helpful to you? Do you agree on the role that each partner will play?

| PARTNER NAME | TYPE OF ORGANIZATION | ROLE |
|--------------|----------------------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

OBJECTIVES

The design of the event will depend on what you and your co-hosts need from the effort. Gather information about your individual objectives and desired attendees, and use that to set common goals for the event. Once you have settled on event objectives, check them with employers that you already work with or other key members of your intended audience.

| CO-HOST | OBJECTIVE 1 | OBJECTIVE 2 | OBJECTIVE 3 | KEY ATTENDEES |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Common Goals | | | | |

PICKING AN EVENT

Many event types can serve as networking opportunities, and they range widely in complexity and cost. Select an event type that is the simplest way to meet your objectives, only going with more complex events if you have a specific reason to. In addition to considering your common goals, use operational and target audience criteria as a guide for selecting an event that works best for you.

As you compare events, consider:

- > What are your operational constraints in terms of staff time and costs? The more constraints you have, the simpler an event you need.
- > Who are you trying to attract? High-level people require a higher-value event that is targeted to their needs.

| EVENT TYPE | | PRIORITY: OPERATIONAL SIMPLICITY |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Cocktail party | Meet-and-greet to enjoy food and beverage and exchange names |  |
| Issue roundtable | Participants discuss common issues and report out | |
| Speaker or panel discussion | Leaders present about key industry issues, with networking before and after | |
| Minimal vendor fair | Key businesses and service providers exhibit their services | |
| Full vendor fair | Businesses and service providers bring exhibit booths or tables | |
| Mini-conference | 1/2-day or full-day event involving speakers, panels, booths, food | |

GETTING THE RIGHT EMPLOYERS TO ATTEND

The most important part of a networking event is who attends. Focus attention on who you invite and how you will reach out to key attendees to get the right audience at your event. Use this table to help you consider who your priority industry leaders are. Invite not only a mix of attendees within the industry, but also representatives from supporting industries such as law firms, accounting firms, and consultancies. The chart below includes a few sample types of organizations, but you should define your own organizational priorities. As invitees RSVP, keep checking your attendees against this list so you can continue your marketing efforts until you reach your target audience.

| ORGANIZATION TYPE | WHY IMPORTANT | WHO IS REPRESENTING? | SUFFICIENT REPRESENTATION AT LEVEL NEEDED? |
|---|---------------|----------------------|--|
| Major employers and service providers | | | |
| Sales firms | | | |
| Law offices, accounting firms, and other support services | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

ACTION STEPS

Based on the roles that you set with your co-hosts, create a joint action plan for organizing, marketing, and hosting the event. This table includes examples of key activities, but you should add the logistical and content items needed for your event.

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | ORGANIZATION OR PERSON RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Secure speaker for introductory remarks | Industry expert desired | | |
| Space for the event | Provided by co-host? | | |
| Send invitations and follow-up with key attendees | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |