

# Catholic Community Services



## **“I Work, We Succeed”**

### **Business Luncheon Guide**

*How to Turn Your Company’s Business Connections into  
Employment Opportunities for Adults with Intellectual  
and Developmental Disabilities*

---

***I Work, We Succeed***  
***Business Luncheon Guide***

**Table of Contents**

Business Luncheon Introduction.....	3
Event Preparation: Invitation.....	4
Event Preparation: Presentation Materials .....	6
Event Preparation: Presentation Assignments .....	8
Presentation Structure.....	9
Event Day .....	10
Business Luncheon Follow-up.....	10
Summary.....	12

# ***I Work, We Succeed***

## ***Business Luncheon Guide***

### **Introduction**

The “I Work, We Succeed” (IWWS) model is designed to present an effective and consistent overview of how the supportive employment program can provide value to business owners. Often our industry jargon doesn’t translate well from a business owner’s perspective, so we recognize the need to change the way we present our information to clearly demonstrate both our process and our understanding of business owners’ needs. For example, the term *discovery* is simply jargon to a business owner and does not paint a clear picture of the first stage in identifying and cultivating the skills and value our job seekers can provide in a work setting. Instead of using the term *discovery* with business luncheon attendees, we describe the process as a 90-day job-readiness program that focuses on skill-development and employee development aimed at helping individuals prepare for future employment opportunities. Our focus with this model is not that we are serving clients, but supporting job candidates who can potentially increase efficiencies for business owners. Proper, relevant information will lead to curiosity and build solid relationships with potential employment partners.

It is our hope that this manual will help provider organizations and independent job developers place adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in individual supported employment without having to cold-call hundreds of businesses. The current model of visiting businesses you barely know is neither efficient nor effective anymore. However, hosting business luncheons will help you connect businesses you already know and their contacts to the people you are supporting to find meaningful employment. This manual will help your team identify effective ways to present the benefits of your supported employment program to business owners and managers.

### **The IWWS model consists of four parts:**

The Invitation -- Identifying and engaging target audiences

Marketing Materials -- Preparing video resumes, PowerPoints, and handouts;

Presentation Assignments and Event-Day Logistics

Business Luncheon Follow Up

# *I Work, We Succeed*

## *Business Luncheon Guide*

### **The Invitation**

The first step is to decide whom to invite to our presentation. To do this we first review each job developer's caseload of individuals to identify the industries where the customers are seeking jobs. Maybe it's landscaping or warehouse work. By having a clear understanding of where your clients would like to work, we can structure the presentation to the specific needs of the industry in which we are seeking job placements.

Next, we look internally at community partners and businesses we know who have businesses that meet the interests of the people we are helping to find employment. The goal here is to find a strong match before we have the individual and the business meet each other. Our experience has shown that an individual will stay employed longer in a job they enjoy and are motivated to do rather than remain at a job in which they have little to no interest. We recommend inviting 10-14 businesses with the expectation that 3-4 of them may not be able to show up.

The invitation to the business luncheon is very important. This is a job that should be done by a program director or someone who already has a relationship with the business contact. The invitation process involves four points of contact: the initial invitation, save the date reminders, confirmation of attendance, and email reminder.

- Initial invitation: Three weeks before event. Our goal with the first point of contact is to build interest in the benefits of the program. Identify the decision makers from the organization. You may have a wonderful rapport with the front desk employee, but they won't be the one to approve a job placement.
- Save the Date: Two weeks before event. This step can be completed using a postcard or email. A postcard is an effective way to create a visual reminder of the upcoming event.
- Confirmation: Four days before event. A phone to each of your invited guests to confirm the number of people attending.
- Reminder Email: An energetic reminder one day before the event.

## ***I Work, We Succeed Business Luncheon Guide***

### Helpful Hints:

- ✓ Invite warm leads; make sure you've already developed a rapport with the business.
- ✓ Leave brochures or other program marketing materials when you initially invite guests.
- ✓ Ask for suggestions for other businesses to invite.
- ✓ Research your target audience; know your guests and anticipate their business needs.

# *I Work, We Succeed*

## *Business Luncheon Guide*

### **Presentation Materials**

Once we've identified our target audience, we need to decide how to structure the marketing materials that will be presented. This piece of preparation involves coordinating with customers and existing businesses, and scheduling filming to give yourself ample time for scheduling adjustments.

The presentation materials consist of creating testimonial videos, printing specific handouts and completing a PowerPoint presentation.

Testimonials: A live business testimonial during the presentation is ideal. Whether or not this is possible, the presentation should have two short videos, which should be developed before invitations are sent due to the time involved in scheduling interviews and producing the videos. Videos should highlight the benefits of hiring adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The first video should be a success story of someone you support working in the community today. The second video should be of a specific individual seeking employment today. We found that a helpful third video is a business testimonial, but this is not a requirement. Below showcases the video with detail:

- Success Story: Highlight a client who is currently employed and how that client positively impacts the business. Examples: less wait time, increased profit, expanded customer base. Ideally this will be filmed at the client's current place of work with feedback from coworkers or a supervisor.
- Current Job Seeker: Highlight a client who is currently seeking employment engaging in tasks that align to their natural skill sets.
- Business Testimonial (Optional): Interview a business owner or manager who has employed one of your current clients to share how the client has impacted the business.

Information Packets: Business owners will receive a lot of information during the luncheon event. Giving them information to look over once they leave is very helpful, so we have created a take-away business folder to give each attendee. Each folder includes the following:

- Current job seeker's resume:
  - Skill-based format highlighting areas of interests;
  - Recommendations: use quotes from present volunteer supervisors;
  - References: list contact information;
  - Contact information: provide employment specialist information.

## ***I Work, We Succeed Business Luncheon Guide***

- Employment Specialist Bios:
  - Length of employment with agency
  - Overview statement identifying what an employment specialist does
  - Training and skills
  - Education
  - Contact information
- Organization's Employment Brochure
- Supporting documents for community-based employment
- Resource materials for businesses to reference:
  - Myths and facts of employing adults with I/DD
  - Business benefits to hiring adults with I/DD
- Employment Specialist Business card

PowerPoint Presentation: The business luncheon has a PowerPoint presentation utilized to help transition through the talking point. Photos and videos are used in the PowerPoint presentation to help the audience get a visual of the capabilities of the people we serve, and how they are productive employees who are motivated to work. Specifically, photos of individuals working are used to share success stories with the luncheon attendees. And, videos are used to showcase one individual who is currently looking for employment, and to highlight a business who has had a great experience employing an adult with an intellectual and developmental disability.

# *I Work, We Succeed*

## *Business Luncheon Guide*

### **Presentation Assignments**

Once the guests have been invited and the marketing materials are complete, it's time to structure the presentation.

The presentation consists of assigning the following presentation roles to members of your organization:

Host: This speaker leads the welcoming and ice breaker activities. The host also assists with smooth transitioning between topics and introduces the speakers.

Historian: The historian talks about the changes in the I/DD community and ends their presentation with highlighting the changes that occurred from the employment first initiative.

The Visionary: The visionary paints a vivid picture of the preferred future.

Story Tellers: The story tellers describe the supported employment concepts of discovery, job development and job coaching by talking about a specific customer's experience.

Schedule presentation dry-runs (At least 2 for first Luncheon)

- Schedule 1st dry run at least one week prior to the official luncheon;
- Review guest list, presentation flow, and room set up;
- Confirm catering for luncheon.



# ***I Work, We Succeed***

## ***Business Luncheon Guide***

### Presentation Structure

Introduction and Ice Breaker Activity (Host): The introduction and ice breaker activity sets the tone for the luncheon and helps the group become more comfortable with each other. The ice breaker activity is used as an opportunity for guests to introduce themselves and share an experience about their early career.

“What did you learn from your experience with your first job?”

Historical Overview and Employment First (Historian): The historical piece of the presentation is designed to talk about the history of the I/DD population. The presentation should focus on the historical aspects of the workforce in general. For example, working on the family farm and then the transition from the industrial revolution that created institutions for I/DD. Avoid using jargon such as “inclusive work environment.” Simplify the Oregon 1st initiative to focus on opportunities and contributing to the workforce.

Preferred Future: Discuss what you hope the future looks like for your clients in terms of community based employment.

Story Tellers: Identify two people within your supported employment program for this section.

Program Beliefs: We want to match employment services to strong statement beliefs that emphasize benefits to employers. Remember to incorporate statement beliefs into each highlighted story as the speech is developed to reinforce benefits and create an organized presentation flow. Above all, avoid social service jargon and focus on business language, e.g., *“We believe each and every individual we serve has a unique and natural set of abilities and talents and can provide meaningful contribution in an integrated employment setting in the community.”* (Discovery)

*“We believe communities embrace people who are working and contributing productively. Our program strives to match an employer’s needs with the customer’s natural abilities for successful, mutually beneficial placement.”* (Job development)

*“We believe that successful job placement involves long-term support for our customer’s success and growth, and this support will strengthen existing business relationships.”* (Job coaching)

Story tellers develop presentation highlighting program assumptions.

# *I Work, We Succeed*

## *Business Luncheon Guide*

### **Event Day Logistics**

- Prepare the room for the Business Luncheon – food, lighting, seating;
- Welcome guests
  - Observation: Guests seemed to be more comfortable starting to eat when we, the hosts, have already opened our lunches and started eating.
  - Make mental notes regarding attendees: any unique qualities, conversations or observations that can be brought up during the follow-up calls to make phone call conversations feel more genuine.
- Present to attendees following the Benevon fund-raising model:
  - Ice Breaker exercise- Help people think back to their first jobs.
- Stay to thank guests and share contact information and confirm contact info.
  - Remind attendees that they will be receiving a call within the next couple of days.
- Clean up the room.

### **Business Luncheon Follow-up**

The Luncheon follow-up consists of building upon three points of contact, each contact ending with an Ask.

#### **#1- Call attendees and Ask about experience, request **business tours**:**

- Follow up to occur within 48 hours of presentation;
- Write brief outline;
- Insert personal notes from initial conversations/closing conversations;
- Make the business tour feel like a small ask instead of a commitment to hire someone;

#### **#2 - Tour businesses and Ask if they would accept a **workplace analysis**:**

- Before touring the business, re-familiarize self with the interests, skills, and limitations of personal caseload and the caseload of coworkers.

#### **#3 - Perform workplace analysis and Ask for a **working interview**:**

- Do a market analysis of other businesses in the field (Manta.com and Yelp can be helpful resources);

## ***I Work, We Succeed***

### ***Business Luncheon Guide***

- Pay attention to noise level, overall set up of the business (could someone with ambulation barriers navigate successfully? Could this be a trigger for someone with autism?) Consider skills necessary for job duties;
  - If the employer does allow us out to the workplace, they tend to have an idea of what tasks they would want to hire for, but it can be helpful to look for other things that could be developed into a position as well;
  - If the business is not a good match for caseload, don't force it. Explain that we would rather make a good match and ask if they would allow us to contact them again when we have someone that fits the skill set they are looking for;
  - If the business is a good match, propose job duties and request a working interview for those job duties.
- Complete working interview, request final Ask – **job creation opportunity**
    - Prepare customer with social protocols and simulate job duties as a practice run for working interview;
    - Negotiate with employer to develop mutually beneficial business relationship.

# ***I Work, We Succeed Business Luncheon Guide***

## **Summary**

The “I Work, We Succeed” Business Luncheon model is a point of entry event to help adults with I/DD gain employment in the community through business-to-business relationships. The luncheon event is a great way to build on existing relationships to learn about current job openings in the community, positions that might be opening in the near future, and how jobs might be created that are not currently in place for a business. The process to host a business luncheon involves several steps:

- Identifying the sample of individuals who are looking for employment;
- Identifying and inviting businesses that have jobs that match the interests of the job candidates;
- Developing a high-quality presentation that catches the audience’s attention through individual success stories, business testimonials, and the benefits of employing adults with I/DD;
- Hosting the business luncheon in an inviting space that allows questions and feedback to be provided;
- Following-up with each business to learn more about their work and how a potential job candidate could help add value to their company.

Planning, developing, and hosting a business luncheon takes time for the provider agency that pays off quickly when individuals are hired in community jobs where their talents and interests match the needs of the business community. The “I Work, We Succeed” Business Luncheon model can create new opportunities that are a win-win for the business community and the individuals they employ. It is our hope that provider organizations across the state of Oregon use this model to further the implementation of the Employment First Initiative in the towns, cities, and counties they do business.