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Larry Robbin Executive Director

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larry@larryrobbin.com www.LarryRobbin.com

UNDERSTANDING THE ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

- 1. Level 1 relationships – There is a transaction that leads to the business hiring someone from your program. This is a cooperative relationship. There is engagement, but it is relatively minimal compared to other types of relationships.**
- 2. Level 2 relationships – Your organization and the business have multiple interactions and work in a synchronized way. This could involve something like developing ongoing work experience or on-the-job training opportunities. This is a coordinated relationship.**
- 3. Level 3 relationships - Your organization and the business become deeply involved in an ongoing seamless relationship. This is a collaborative relationship. It significantly changes the way the business and the youth workforce program operate. Developing apprenticeships, work based learning and career pathways are examples of Level 3 relationships. This is a transformative relationship.**

At high levels of Level 3 relationships, businesses become champions of the youth workforce organization. They provide on going support, initiate new ways of working together and donate time and money to the organization.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS

<i>LEVEL 1 Cooperative</i>	<i>LEVEL 2 Coordinated</i>	<i>LEVEL 3 Collaborative</i>
<p>First hire at targeted employer is successful.</p> <p>Employer satisfaction survey is positive.</p> <p>Employer agrees to become a joint program and employer paid internship site.</p> <p>Employer is connected with another employer.</p> <p>Manager of workforce program meets with employer.</p> <p>Employer sends another job lead.</p>	<p>Employer makes two more hires, gets more interns and all evaluations are positive.</p> <p>Employer agrees to come to the program to tour and speak.</p> <p>There is a meeting with employer contact, their boss, workforce manager and workforce program business board member.</p> <p>There is interest in working together on a higher level doing customized training for the employer.</p>	<p>The customized training is successful.</p> <p>Employer is invited to the workforce program board meeting to discuss their business.</p> <p>A proposal is made to the employer for a donation to the program to support new services.</p> <p>Employer donates money to the program and in addition gives the program its old computers.</p> <p>The employer initiates ideas about how to work together on an ongoing basis including helping to organize a Business Advisory Board.</p>

**ACTIVITIES THAT CAN HELP
FOSTER BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**

- 1. Arrange a site visit to your agency.**
- 2. Have a lunch/meeting with your employer contact and their boss. Possibly involve a business board member from your program.**
- 3. Develop internship, job shadowing, work based learning and/or work experience program.**
- 4. Offer to let the employer use your space for presentations to their customers or for business meetings.**
- 5. Work to jointly get media coverage about your work together.**
- 6. Ask the businessperson to do some volunteer activity with your program such as speaking about their business and industry, reviewing applications, doing mock interviews, mentoring etc.**
- 7. If their business is big enough, ask for a tour for your job seekers.**
- 8. Offer to train their personnel in your areas of expertise and/or develop fee for service training for them.**
- 9. Give employers a place on your web site to advertise their business. Ask for a link from their web site to yours. Put their information out in your program. Ask for permission to put your literature on display in their place of business.**
- 10. Give them a certificate of recognition as a partner that can be displayed in their business.**

A FEW OF THE MOST COMMON REASONS
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES DON'T WORK

- 1. The youth workforce program did not have a well thought out and detailed plan for employer engagement. The youth program improvised deepening the relationship and this led to a scattered approach, wasted time and missed opportunities.**
- 2. The youth employment program staff did not understand the perspectives, priorities, needs, culture and ways of working of a profit making business. This resulted in the business not seeing the youth employment program as a part of their world and this became a barrier to engagement.**
- 3. Not everyone involved in the partnership in the business was equally committed to making it work. This uneven commitment led to problems in the development and implementation of the partnership process.**
- 4. There were no measures in place to evaluate how the partnership process was working at various points so problems were not addressed.**
- 5. The youth workforce organization was too slow in responding to the changing realities of working together and/or the needs of the employer.**

RESOURCES AND REPORTS ABOUT BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Reimagining Employer Engagement Toolkit

Strategic Employer Engagement: Building Dynamic Relationships with Employers in Teen and Young Adult Employment Programs

Employer Engagement Toolkit: From Placement to Partners

The Goals and Dimensions of Employer Engagement in Workforce Development Organizations

Next Generation Industry Engagement

Toward a Shared Investment Approach to High Demand Workforce Training

By Design Engaging Employers in Workforce Development Organizations

Sector Workforce Intermediaries: Next Generation Employer Strategies

Industry Engagement Toolkit 2017 California Workforce Development Board

Increasing Employer Engagement: Facing the Challenges and the Realities

Business Engagement Collaborative

This is the Department of Labor website on business engagement.

It is filled with useful reports and resources.

<https://businessengagement.workforcegps.org/>

Materials From WIOA Regional Business Engagement Workshops

<https://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/2018/04/wioa-collaborative-business-engagement-regional-workshops/>

Scaling Industry Partnerships

<https://nationalfund.org/initiatives/industry-partnerships/>