

## Job Development Exchange

# 10 Tips to Address (*and prevent*) Employer Misperceptions

1. Anticipate Common Misperceptions
2. Research and prepare responses
3. Approach your work from a business perspective
4. Increase your knowledge about the labor market
5. Develop, track and measure performance metrics
6. Seek to understand and clarify misperceptions before addressing them.
7. Acknowledge and personalize your responses
8. Meet each employer where they are at
9. Make it easy for employers to engage
10. Develop and implement continuous improvement efforts

### 1. Anticipate Common Misperceptions

Common misperceptions include:

- Performance/Productivity concerns
- Safety concerns
- Health/Medical concerns
- Impact on Co-workers/Customers
- Direct/Indirect Costs (accommodations, longer training time)
- Consider framing these as questions or statements you may encounter i.e. “we have a lot of dangerous equipment around here.”

### 2. Research and prepare responses

Use a variety of sources

- Kessler/NOD Survey on Employment of People with Disabilities provides employer input on many of the common misperceptions. <http://2010disabilitysurveys.org>
- Examples from your organization and business customers

### 3. Approach your work from a business perspective

- Use business language: [See Guide Rehab to Business Language](http://tacesoutheast.org/network/idx/docs/Rehab_to_Business_Language.pdf)  
[http://tacesoutheast.org/network/idx/docs/Rehab\\_to\\_Business\\_Language.pdf](http://tacesoutheast.org/network/idx/docs/Rehab_to_Business_Language.pdf)

- Know the features and benefits of your services and frame them from a business perspective. Example: Promote recruitment assistance (or help finding employees) versus job development.

#### **4. Increase your knowledge about the labor market**

- Being knowledgeable about the labor market will allow you to focus conversations and propose solutions on meeting labor force needs versus “disability”.
- Use information from your local economic development and workforce development offices to learn about new/expanding businesses, hiring trends, gaps in workers/workers skills, etc.

#### **5. Develop, track and measure performance metrics**

- Use your organization’s data for marketing and to help address misperceptions.
- See Performance Metrics for Employment Services Organizations (*\*\*coming soon*)

#### **6. Seek to understand and clarify misperceptions and/or concerns before addressing them.**

- When presented with a misperception or concern, ask questions to clarify and determine if it is real or perceived i.e. did they experience something first hand or is it something they heard about.

#### **7. Acknowledge and personalize your responses**

- Blanket responses are not effective
- Be specific. Example: If there is a concern about safety, use your organization’s data i.e. “over the past two years there have been no reported accidents or safety concerns by businesses we have worked with who have workers in similar positions”

#### **8. Meet each employer where they are at**

- For the most part, misperceptions and concerns are due to a lack of experience. Through your initial meetings and informational interviews ask questions to gain an idea of what their experience level is in terms of employing people with disabilities.

#### **9. Make it easy for employers to engage**

- The best way to address concerns and change perceptions is through experience.
- Rather than trying to convince them to hire someone, provide easy ways for them to engage at their own pace. For example, if an employer has little or no experience you could propose low risk, low commitment ways for them to engage i.e. talking with other businesses, doing informational interviews with job seekers, provide job shadowing and other work experiences.

## **10. Develop and implement continuous improvement efforts**

- Provide highest level of customer service
- Seek feedback from employer customers on performance
- Use input to develop and implement performance improvement plans