Career Networking for Students with a Disability

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Overview

- Rationale behind the project
- Networking and information interviewing process
- Recruitment of participants
- Engaging with participants
- Results and what we learned
- Discussion, Q & A

Rationale: Why Students with a Disability

- People with a disability have lower employment rates compared to people without a disability.

- People with a disability often have additional barriers to career development.

- * Career Industry Council of Australia. (2012). *Effective Career Development Services for Young People (15-24) with Disability*. Final report, February 2012. Miles Morgan Australia Pty Ltd.

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011

Barriers to Career Development

Barriers to career development for people with a disability include:

- Negative attitudes and misconceptions about themselves and their abilities.

- Beliefs and expectations for the future are heavily influenced by attitudes of immediate support network.

- Lower participation in career development activities, e.g. volunteer work, workshops, networking, mentoring.

- Issues around disclosure and discrimination.

- Accessibility to the built environment and affordable transport.

Rationale: Why Students with a Disability

CICA* Recommendations:

- Student centred process

- Equip students to be self-determining and self-managing.

- Expand support networks.

- Seek student feedback.

•* Career Industry Council of Australia. (2012). *Effective Career Development Services for Young People (15-24) with Disability*. Final report, February 2012. Miles Morgan Australia Pty Ltd.

Referral based networking
and
Information interviewing

Rationale: Why Coach People to Network?

VISIBLE JOB MARKET

20-40% of jobs are advertised

Hidden jobs market is accessed via networking

HIDDEN JOB MARKET

60-80% of jobs are *never* advertised

Referral Based Networking

Meeting people you know **personally**, or on a **referral basis** to:

- Seek advice or guidance about how to find wo_ your chosen field

- Research the industry and job rol_

- Research individual org_
  processes, decision m_

Note – this is different from asking people for assistance to find work

Referral Based Networking - Advantages

- No 'cold calling" strangers

- Asking people you already know to help you to access people you don't know to receive <u>relevant</u> advice or guidance

- Targeting your contacts – it's about connections – 6 degrees of separation!

- If your contact can't help, they can refer you someone who can provide advice, guidance or other information

Referral Based Networking - Process

- Make a list of names of contacts – no assumptions
- Goal.... set up a short face to face meeting (15-20 mins), initially with people they already know – the information interview
- Meetings are set up by phone contact
- A phone contact script is prepared and rehearsed
- Emphasis in phone contact – purpose of meeting is to gain information and guidance, **not** help in finding work
- Prepare questions to ask during the interview
- Prepare personal commercial

Sample contact script – known contacts

Hi John/Mary, how have you been?

The reason for my call is that I'm looking to find out more about …….industry, or …....…type of job role (i.e I'm doing some research, don't want/need you to find me a job)

I recall that you have some knowledge about this (industry/job role), and would appreciate your advice & guidance. When can we get together?

OR

Do you know someone who works in that industry or type of job that you recommend I might speak to?"

Contact script – referral

"Hi, my name is (………..).   Elizabeth Jones suggested I contact you.

Briefly, the reason for my call is that I'm seeking advice/guidance about a career in ..…….industry.

Elizabeth spoke very highly of you. She indicated you have wide experience in this field, and thought that you would be an extremely valuable source of information about the industry (or this field).

I want to emphasise that I'm not asking you for a job, but I would appreciate your advice.

Are you open to the idea of meeting with me for 10-15 minutes?"

Networking – information interview

- The contacting script should indicate the purpose of the meeting is research related

- Categories for research questions during the meeting could include:

  - State of the industry
  - What the work is like
  - General questions about your contact's career and advancement
  - Money and career advancement
  - Skills and experience required
  - Fitting in – lifestyle, personality, career pathways
  - More information sources i.e. Other contacts to approach

Disclosure plan

Given that a face to face meeting is the goal.......the student will need to have plan for disclosure of their disability (where relevant)

Personal commercials

Reasonable to expect that during meetings students would be asked to give a little background on themselves e.g.

- What they are studying, and why

- What they were looking to do in their career

- Key strengths e.g. why they felt suited to their career choice

- Key motivators behind their career choice

Recruiting participants for the project

Recruitment of participants

- **Word of Mouth (Disability Advisers)**

- **Career Services Email**

- **Career Services jobs board**

- **Disability Services Blog**

- **Promoted to participants at careers/employment forum**

- **6 students expressed interest**

(1750 students with a disability currently enrolled at UniSA, Of which 1263 study internally).

Recruitment of participants

- **6 students expressed interest** = 0.005% of internal students with a disability.

(1750 students with a disability currently enrolled at UniSA, of which 1263 study internally.)

Process:

1. We requested an expression of interest.

2. Students emailed their expression of interest.

3. We contacted students to set up an initial meeting to further explain the process and provide information.

Engaging with participants – initial meeting

Initial meeting:

- overview of the meeting, no pressure re involvement

- exploration of career aims/aspirations

- current approach to job search

- discussion of perceived barriers to employment

- explanation of networking process

- sought agreement re participation

- completion of a short pre-questionnaire (purpose to identify potential barriers or issues to be addressed in coaching)

- set their homework – list of names, scripts, next meeting date

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a very high level of awareness of my strongest employability skills and capabilities		66%	33%		
I have high levels of confidence in being able to communicate my skills and capabilities to employers		33%	66%		
I am able to confidently explain to potential employers why I have chosen my particular field of study		66%	33%		
I have high levels of awareness about the type of employment, or job roles to which I might be suited			66%	33%	
I am able to explain why this type of employment or job role is appealing to me		66%	33%		
I have high levels of awareness about organisations who might potentially employ me		33%	33%	33%	
I have begun to develop a list of organisations who would be my preferred employers		33%	66%		
I have a good understanding of how my preferred employers recruit their staff			33%	66%	
I have well developed networking skills, including the ability to expand my network at will			66%		33%
I am confident in approaching a variety of people for networking purposes			66%		33%
I am able to confidently conduct an information interview		33%	66%		

Follow up meetings

Reviewed and discussed:

• lists of contacts

• contacting scripts

• information interview questions

Student Profiles

- **Kate**

- **Luis**

- **Sonja**

- **Violet**

- **Matthew**

- **Cherry**

Project results, feedback, learnings

Student Feedback and Results

Student feedback:

- Pre-survey x3

- Informal feedback

- Post-Survey x1

What we Saw

- Arrived with poorly defined job targets and prospective employers.

- Skill-building: developing script, listing strengths.

- Able to name some potential employers.

- Ability to name some career aspirations/preferences.

- Introduced to My Future online tools.

- Better understanding of attributes they need to promote.

Something to consider

- Point at which students left program

What We Learned

Students may need:

• skills training around social skills, self-confidence, presentation, anxiety....possible involvement of counselling team

• direction to complete career planning activities e.g. self assessment

Students may benefit from peer-to-peer support to practice scripts, and make phone calls.

Discussion

- Your comments.......the suitability of this approach to job search for students with a disability?

- How might the process need to be changed for different cohorts of students (e.g. different programs of study, different types of disabilities)?

- Suggestions for how the program might be enhanced to better prepare participants for the workforce?