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I-NABIR [Inter-National Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation] Forum - May 1999

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Charlie Harles <charlie @ harles.com>
05/07/99 09:44:06 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Jonathan M. Young/WHO/EOP.

cc:

Subject: Re: speaking invitation follow up

Jonathan - Can't get everything into e-mail but here was some of what I sent you.

You will be a participant in our National Forum. Becky Ogle will be the moderator. Other participants will be Fred Schroeder, RSA Commissioner, Pat Morrissey from Senator Jeffords office, Paul Marchand, CCD, Doug Fox, a local business person with MS, and one or two of our members who have Projects with Industry programs. The format has the moderator asking questions and having you interact with other panelists. You know Becky so you know it can be a free wheeling experience. There are no speeches and no need to prepare anything specific. The theme this year is, "Employment Services for People with Disabilities in 2010". Topics that are anticipated to be discussed include; how to significantly reduce unemployment for persons with disabilities, mainstreaming into workforce development, the impact of ADA, and the role of Social Security in rehabilitation. Your knowledge and experience will be one key to the success of the forum.

I sent you a short description of I-NABIR and the PWI program that most of our members have. They follow. I also sent you some articles on some of our member's programs but I can't send that by e-mail.

What Is I-NABIR ?

I-NABIR is the Inter-National Association of Business, Industry, and Rehabilitation. It is a private, nonprofit organization [Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code]. I-NABIR was formed in 1985 by a group of organizations which had Projects With Industries. These organizations felt it was important to have a forum to discuss issues of mutual concern and to promote the employment of persons with disabilities through cooperative arrangements between business, rehabilitation, and organized labor.

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organizations created just to provide PWI services. Members run the gamut of organizations providing employment related services to persons with disabilities, but the business and labor communities are active members as well.

Most major metropolitan areas are well represented and there are regional and statewide programs covering all states, including many rural areas.

Who Governs I-NABIR ?

I-NABIR has a Board of Directors with 19 members. They are elected annually, on a rotating basis, by the membership. Bylaws require geographic distribution and representation of all segments of the membership. The Board meets twice a year with an Executive Committee meeting more frequently.

Officers of I-NABIR include the Director of a college development director, a businessman who serves on a PWI Business Advisory Council, the executive director of a local PWI, the president of a private employment business, and the director of a rural PWI sponsored by a major university.

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I-NABIR contracts with Charles Harles of Washington, DC to be its Executive Director. Mr. Harles is an attorney with a disability who has more than 20 years experience in disability and rehabilitation issues. Prior to his association with I-NABIR, Mr. Harles was Associate Executive Director of the National Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, General Counsel of Goodwill Industries of America, and an Attorney-Advisor at the National Labor Relations Board.

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Projects are directly funded in 32 states. The 18 states without a direct funded project may be covered to some extent by a national or regional program. Within a state many PWIs are only able to serve a limited geographical area or serve special populations within a given geographic area.

PWI differs from other placement programs in several respects. First and foremost business is recognized as a full partner in the process. Business Advisory Councils are key to every aspect of the program from determining labor market needs to designing training that will meet employer needs. Many PWIs have also adopted a marketing approach to placements. Great care is taken to ensure that the needs of the employer are being met. Employers are the customer, or consumer, and placements will not occur if their needs are not being met.

PWI is the only program under the Rehabilitation Act where programs must meet standards and indicators of success in order to be funded or receive continued funding. PWIs must track the number of persons served and placed into competitive employment, the number who were severely disabled, the number who had been unemployed at least six months, and the weekly earnings of people placed into jobs. Many projects also track the number of person placed and served who had received Social Security Disability Income or Supplemental Security Income in the month prior to placement.

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Charlie
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I-NABIR National Forum

What will employment for people with disabilities look like in 2010?

Becky Ogle, director, President's National Task Force on
Employment of Adults with Disabilities.

Pat Morrissey, Senior Policy Analyst, Sen. Jeffords

Thomas Finch, RSA

Doug Fox, Fox Mortgage Associates, Oakton, VA

Paul Marchand, the Arc, Director. Governmental Affairs
Chair, Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

Geeta Balakrishnan, BDL Employment and Rehabilitation Services

Jonathan Young, White House, disability policy specialist

Rob McInnes, Diversity World

1-NABIR

Employment in 2010 -

Why such high rate of unemployment?

Paul - will never close the gap as much as want

- ① many people don't want to work
- ② Can't change attitudes enough - not much of a dent yet
- ③ Disincentives need to be eliminated
- ④ How to market + train for employment sector
- ⑤ Individual analyses

Geeta - operational point of view

- ① don't see the negative attitudes
- ② Literacy - general link to education

Secky - distortion s/t both dis + acquired

Doug Fox -

Attitudes of pubs as well as employers

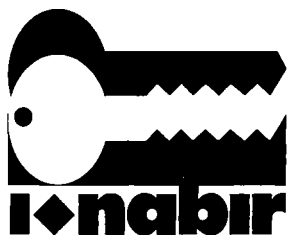
Tim Finch -

- ① Marketing -
- ② Competition - many govt agencies
compartmentalized funding
- ③ understanding
- ④ Collaboration

Jonathan —

Thanks for Taking time
out of a busy schedule to
be part of our I-NABIR
National Forum. I hope Becky
wasn't too hard on you
— but she can sure keep
a panel lively!

Charlie



PROVIDING KEYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

April 5, 1999

Jonathan Young
Associate Director for Disability Outreach
White House Office of Public Liaison
122 Old Executive Office Building
The White House
Washington, DC 20502

light yellow
(speaking
engagements)

Dear Jonathan,

You are invited to take part in I-NABIR's eighth annual National Public Forum on Monday May 10, 1999 Washington, DC. A dozen major national representatives of business, labor, government, and rehabilitation have been invited, including you, to participate in a lively forum with a professional facilitator to discuss issues concerning the employment of persons with disabilities. The theme this year is, **"Employment Services for People with Disabilities in 2010"**. Topics that are anticipated to be discussed include; how to significantly reduce unemployment for persons with disabilities, mainstreaming into workforce development, the impact of ADA, and the role of Social Security in rehabilitation. Your knowledge and experience will be one key to the success of the forum.

Participants in past forums have told us how much they enjoyed the format. There is no preparation required and you will have the opportunity to interact with other forum members as well as members of the audience. The format is loosely based on the format used in the highly successful public television series, *"Ethics in America"*.

The forum will take place at the Holiday Inn on the Hill, 415 New Jersey Ave NW. The forum will begin at 10:00 am and conclude at 12:00 pm. on Monday May 10. Please confirm with me at your earliest convenience that you will be able to participate as a forum member.

Please call the I-NABIR office at 202-543-6353 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

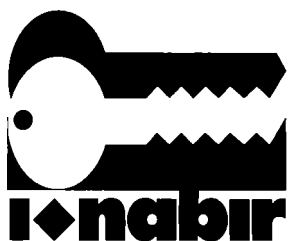

Charles Harles
Executive Director

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Inter-National
Association of
Business, Industry
and Rehabilitation

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PROVIDING KEYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Projects With Industry

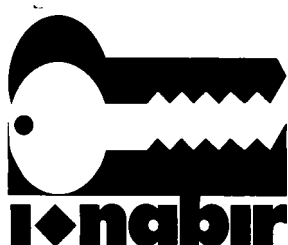
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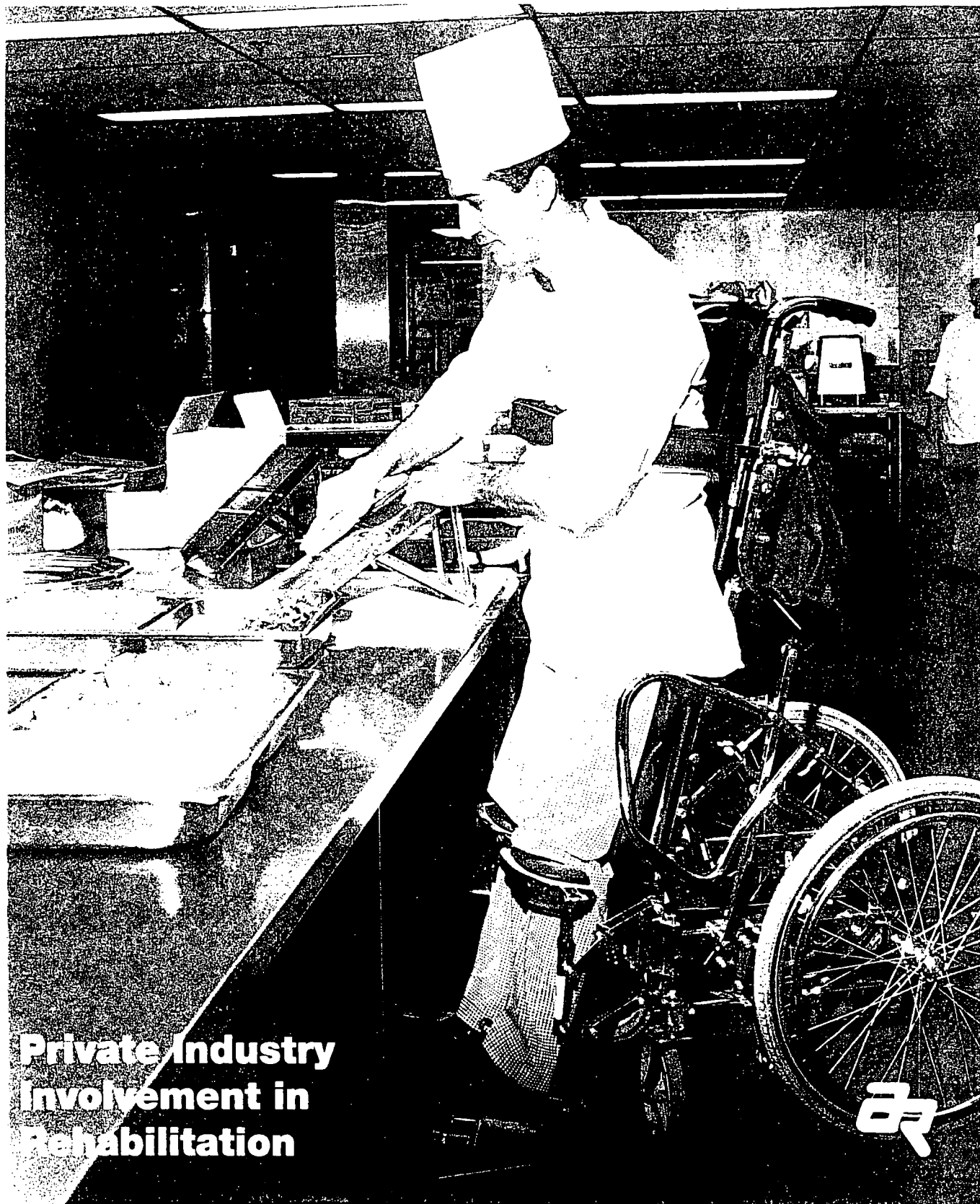
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AMERICAN Winter 1992 REHABILITATION



**Private Industry
Involvement in
Rehabilitation**



Private Industry Involvement in the Delivery of Rehabilitation Services

*Nell C. Carney, Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration*

Because the number one goal of public and private rehabilitation services delivery programs is the integration of people with physical and mental disabilities into the workplace and community, private industry has always played an essential role in the success of rehabilitation endeavors. With the provision of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, support for rehabilitation programs, research, and community participation, private industry has become an integral part of the equation that will ultimately translate to total equality for people with disabilities.

In 1973, the United States Congress, in recognition of the vital role of private industry in successful rehabilitation, established Projects With Industries (PWI) to promote greater participation of business and industry in the rehabilitation process. For almost two decades now, this program has provided people with disabilities training and work experience in realistic work settings to prepare them for employment in the competitive market.

Throughout its history, PWI has experienced steady growth, expansion, and success. The fiscal year 1993 federal appropriation for PWI is \$23.1 million. Grants are made to a wide variety of agencies and organizations, including labor and trade organizations, foundations, corporations, and rehabilitation facilities. Working closely with public vocational rehabilitation agencies, the PWI programs placed over 13,000 people with physical and mental disabilities into competitive employment last year alone.



Throughout the United States, business and industry leaders are supporting rehabilitation efforts by participating on private industry councils, business advisory councils, and employment advisory councils. In addition to contributions of advice on labor market trends, training needs, technology, and other employment issues, these leaders also promote the concept of the participation of people with disabilities in the total community. Many American corporations have established reputations as great leaders in promoting the employment of qualified workers with disabilities. In some cases, marching far ahead of traditional thinkers in the field of rehabilitation, corporate leaders have demonstrated the value of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the work force by employing qualified workers with disabilities, contributing to public education campaigns about disability, promoting civil rights legislation for people with disabilities, and

supporting research in the development of technology that accommodates the needs of workers with disabilities.

The Supported Employment Program (SEP) created by Congress in the 1980's, has been tremendously successful largely because of the receptiveness of private industry. The goal of this program, employment for people with severe disabilities in an integrated setting, could not have become a reality without the support of business and industry. Indeed, this support is the very essence of the program. Last year, over 50,000 individuals with severe physical and mental disabilities were placed in integrated employment in every setting imaginable—restaurants, hotels, hospitals, light industry, heavy industry, small business, large business, and everything between. Employers have opened their doors, their hearts, and their bank accounts to assure the success of this program. We are now seeing employers in private industry serving as mentors to employees with severe disabilities and co-workers serving as job coaches and peer supporters.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, one worker with a disability—any disability—participating fully in the labor force of private industry—any industry—is worth 1,000 public service announcements or pieces of literature in educating the public about the ability of all people with disabilities. Although almost too obvious to state here, without the full support and participation of private industry, public and private rehabilitation efforts over the past 73 years could not have been successful. The combined efforts of private industry and rehabilitation have become a powerful force in assuring the integration of people with disabilities into the workplace and the community. 

PWI—A Model for Job Placement

Charles Wm. Harles

Since its inception in 1968, the Projects With Industry (PWI) program, long recognized as one of the most successful means of providing placement services to people with disabilities, has placed more than 162,000 people with disabilities into competitive employment.

Where did this program come from and why has it been successful? PWI started with the idea that since it is business and industry that provide jobs, shouldn't they have a major role in job training and placement programs for people with disabilities? In 1968, Congress added authority to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act to allow the state vocational rehabilitation agencies to contract directly with business to provide job training and placement services.

The goals of PWI legislation are "to create and expand job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by engaging the talent and leadership of private industry as partners in the rehabilitation process, to identify competitive job and career opportunities and the skills needed to perform such

jobs, to create practical job and career readiness and training programs, and to provide placements and career advancement." (Section 621(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended).

The PWI program enjoyed its greatest development under the guidance of Tom Fleming, who directed the program for RSA in PWI's earliest years. As developed by Mr. Fleming, PWI has four key ingredients:

- Business Involvement
- Focus on Placement
- Cost Effectiveness
- Accountability

dations and associations formed by business leaders administer the project. Examples are the Marriott Foundation for Persons with Disabilities, The National Restaurant Association, and the Electronic Industries Foundation. All PWI's have Business Advisory Councils (BAC's). These BAC's are made up of representatives of private industry, business concerns, and organized labor. Rather than being a committee of figureheads who just lend their name to a committee that has little purpose, BAC's help identify job availability, the necessary job skills, and actual training needs that will meet the

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There are many models for PWI. A number of projects were developed and have evolved to meet special needs. In many cases, the PWI project serves a local geographic area and works with people with a wide variety of disabling conditions. Other projects work with people with specific disabling conditions, such as multiple sclerosis, visual disabilities, hearing impairments, and mental illness; and some projects have concentrated their efforts on a particular company or industry. The three organizations with PWI's featured in other articles in this issue of *American Rehabilitation* represent the program's diversity.

Business involvement has always been the hallmark of PWI. In some cases, businesses such as IBM actually run the program. In other cases, foun-

needs of business. (See article on Business Advisory Councils on page 26 of this issue—Editor)

Organized labor has also had a significant role in the development of PWI's. AFL/CIO and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers sponsor more than a dozen PWI's, mostly through local union lodges.

PWI focuses on placement and is thus a complementary program to the state/federal rehabilitation program under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Most of the people served by PWI's are clients, or have been clients, of the state VR program (all must be *eligible* for VR services). Some PWI's also work with people who have not traditionally been served, such as youth in transition from

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special education and elderly people with disabilities. A 1991 doctoral dissertation by Robert J. Lenaway, Executive Director, National Industrial Center for Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Portage, Michigan, concluded that PWI and the state VR program were complementary rather than competitive. His research showed that people with disabilities served by both PWI and VR had a much greater chance of successful placement than those served only by VR. It was found that VR was generally more strategically effective in disability-specific marketing and supply while PWI was more effective with customer service, screening, and training.

During FY 1991, the most recent fiscal year for which we have statistics, Projects With Industry placed more than 13,500 people with disabilities into competitive jobs at an average cost to the Federal Government of less than \$1,400 per placement. Seventy-two percent of those placed were people with severe disabilities. We know that these 13,500 people improved their income an average of \$186 per week. We also know from past statistics that approximately 22 percent of the people placed had been receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplementary Security Income (SSI).

Based on the above information, PWI projects return almost \$3.00 in the first year after placement for each \$1.00 spent on PWI. These are real savings based on contributions to Social Security and income taxes and savings resulting from people not having to rely on welfare programs. These savings are based on reports of actual placements and data reported for each individual. The 3 to 1 return is based on the first year of employment. Most of the people placed will hopefully be starting on many years of work and the savings can be multiplied many times over.

Projects With Industry is the only program under the Rehabilitation Act for which standards and indicators of success have been established and used. The standards were mandated by Congress and approved by the National Council on Disability. Since 1988 these

standards and indicators have been used to monitor the accomplishments of each program, and they will be used in the future to determine whether a program will continue to be funded.

Federal regulations require the following evaluation standards:

1) The primary objective of the project shall be to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment. The activities carried out by the project shall support the accomplishment of this objective.

2) The project shall serve individuals with disabilities that impair their capacity to obtain competitive employment. In selecting persons to receive services, priority shall be given to individuals with severe disabilities.

3) The project shall ensure the provision of services that will assist in the placement of persons with disabilities.

4) Funds shall be used to achieve the project's primary objective at minimum cost to the Federal Government.

5) The project's advisory council shall provide policy guidance and assistance in the conduct of the project.

6) Working relationships, including partnerships, shall be established with agencies and organizations in order to expand the project's capacity to meet its objectives.

7) The project shall obtain positive results in assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment.

Compliance with these six standards are measured by compliance indicators. (34 C.F.R. Pt. 379, Appendix)

Federally mandated indicators include:

- percent of persons served and percent of persons placed whose disabilities are severe;
- percent of persons served and percent of persons placed who had been unemployed for at least 6 months at the time of project entry;
- cost per placement;
- placement rate (projected and actual); and
- change in earnings.

Projects are given points depending on their level of success. There are min-

imum requirements for receiving points for each indicator and extra points are given when the project has been exceptionally successful.

With the advent of ADA and the new authority in the Rehabilitation Act, the PWI community is looking forward to increased levels of success in placing people with severe disabilities into competitive employment.

Bibliography

Lenaway, R.J. (1991). *A comparative study of employment outcomes of the projects with industry and the state/federal vocational rehabilitation programs*. Portage, MI: RPA Systems.

Endnote

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Partners for Independence

an industry managed job placement model



The Author, Molly Mannon, (left) discusses job placement services with Ronald Lockhart (seated), a PWI candidate who is hearing impaired. Assisting are Gwen Tracy, Coordinator, Washington Metropolitan PWI, and Carrie Quigley, interpreter.

Photo by Frank Romano 

Molly M. Mannon

On July 26, 1992, the employment regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became effective. For the first time ever, people with disabilities are guaranteed the same equal opportunities in employment that have been ensured to other Americans under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

This landmark legislation was not achieved without struggle; nor can the stroke of a pen by itself bring the spirit of the law to reality for 43 million Americans.

Realizing the importance of providing information on the concerns and

needs of people with disabilities if ADA is to have optimal impact and usefulness, and recognizing that no study has adequately identified factors that encourage or discourage compliance with ADA and the integration of people with disabilities into the workplace, the Electronic Industries Foundation (EIF)¹ commissioned the Gallup Organization, Inc., to conduct market research in 1991. We believed that if these factors and other concerns about the act were adequately identified and quantified they then could be adequately addressed.

The study was designed to assess attitudes of the business community and

people with disabilities toward ADA. During late 1991 and early 1992, Gallup polled 400 companies to research their attitudes and practices in regard to ADA². Despite the January 1992 deadline for compliance with certain provisions of ADA, our study found that most businesses had yet to remove barriers or improve accommodations for people with disabilities. Among the significant findings, over three-fourths of those companies polled stated that no special effort had ever been made to recruit people with disabilities. Furthermore, fewer than one-fourth of the respondents had any type of program or materials that would help supervisors or employees work effectively with people with disabilities. Even more interesting was the response of 50 percent of those polled who stated that the reason their company had not hired people with disabilities in the past year was a lack of qualified applicants. At the same time, over three-fourths of the respondents had not had any association with state vocational rehabilitation agencies, community-based organizations serving people with disabilities, or with other community-based rehabilitation agencies.

Based on these findings, rehabilitation agencies and other community-based organizations have a unique opportunity to help fill service gaps and at the same time further their own missions in placing or returning people with disabilities to gainful employment. Not only can they capitalize on their ability to offer specific interventions to help overcome barriers to complying with ADA, but they can also engage business and industry as partners to access employment opportunities. One only needs to look at EIF's success to see the value of this.

For over 16 years, EIF has field tested and applied an approach to help overcome barriers to competitive employment for people with disabilities. EIF's approach allows business and industry to take a leadership role in the development, implementation, and management of the placement of people with disabilities into jobs. This approach builds on a strong

relationship between business and industry and rehabilitation. Borrowing techniques from the "for profit" community, we have been able to foster mutually beneficial relationships with business and industry and influence and engage them in the hiring of qualified people with disabilities.

Program Design

Key to EIF's success has been the involvement of the workplace directly, with business and industry as partners, problem solvers, and users of program services. A major thrust of EIF's approach is developing and marketing a program of activities to remove barriers—all types of barriers—so that business and industry will commit to hiring qualified workers with disabilities.

EIF's placement process is market driven by employer needs.

A business relationship exists between our program and the people with disabilities it serves. In marketing terms, they are customers of EIF job placement services, and our role is meeting their individual needs for employment. However, EIF does not ignore other needs or replicate existing services. The service delivery system is well equipped to provide necessary referral and support services to help all job candidates reach independence. Furthermore, we support those services by working with people with disabilities who have received optimum benefit from traditional rehabilitation and social services and are now ready for jobs. EIF builds on its strength—access to employment opportunities through the direct involvement of employers—and remains employment focused in working with its candidates.

EIF's placement process is market driven by employer needs. Peter Drucker, the renowned management consultant, said: "If the marketing is

complete, selling is not necessary." This adage is certainly true in EIF's program. If the market research and assessment of employer needs has been adequate and if staff has effectively prepared and matched the "product" of the placement process—the person with a disability—to meet employer needs, the placement will take care of itself.

The marketing pitch to employers is positive, emphasizing the ability, not the disability, of applicants. EIF, like many others, knows that there are few jobs that people with disabilities cannot perform if they are carefully matched and trained for those jobs. We do not promote hiring a particular person to demonstrate affirmative action compliance or to exploit financial incentives. To EIF, the person with a disability should be hired if he or she is able to meet job demands, rather than out of a sense of misguided charity or just because of incentives.

Finally, EIF recognizes that a variety of barriers still exist that can handicap job candidates with disabilities. EIF seeks to remove barriers and disadvantages. Some barriers exist in the physical environment and some are within peoples' belief systems. These barriers can create disadvantages that further handicap people with disabilities in job search activities. Disadvantages such as skill deficits in finding and competing for jobs, disillusionment about the chances of finding employment, or lack of appropriate job skills needed to qualify for jobs can mean the difference between working or remaining unemployed. Even the very real limitations imposed by disabilities that preclude employment in certain types of jobs in some instances can be

Ms. Mannon is President of the Electronic Industries Foundation, Washington, DC, where she oversees organizational operations and programmatic activities that focus on advancing the independence and productivity for people with disabilities, youth-at-risk, economically disadvantaged people, and other underserved populations.

reduced or removed through interventions like job accommodation and access to assistive technology.

EIF's approach involves all those activities required to make a successful job placement, including the awareness work with employers and community agencies to open doors and build partnerships. The success of this process is a direct result of the involvement of business. In that way, the program has a strong business marketing orientation, industry leadership and management, and unique service components related to industry expertise.

Marketing Orientation

Marketing is identifying a need and meeting it. In placing people in competitive employment, EIF subscribes to this approach. We have three customer bases: the employer, the rehabilitation agency, and the person with a disability. First we deal with the needs of the employer as customer, because with-

out job opportunities EIF has nothing to offer its two other customers. We identify workers with disabilities who can meet existing employer needs and we work with rehabilitation agencies to assist the workers in acquiring the necessary skills. EIF then markets them to employers by capitalizing on positive rather than negative functional attributes and matches those attributes to the functional requirements of existing jobs. EIF's relationship with each candidate is a business one, although staff are well-equipped to provide the necessary referral and support services to assist job candidates in meeting all of their independence needs.

Industry Leadership and Management

Industry involvement in EIF's job placement program is manifested at several levels. Through the foundation's relationship with our parent organization, the Electronic Industries Associa-

tion (EIA), we are linked to electronic companies throughout the United States that provide a unique entree into the local business community. EIF uses this linkage to select a local industry leader, who is an EIA member, to act as initial chairperson of a local advisory group. The advisory group works to carry out the management functions and to provide advice and counsel to ensure that all aspects of the project are tailored to the needs of employers. This linkage promotes business ownership of the project and ensures expert management from the start.

The second and third levels of business and industry involvement are through functioning committees and subcommittees. The two major committees include an employment committee and a training committee. Subcommittees make up the fourth and final level of business involvement. They evolve out of the major committees as needed. For example, subcommittees may be formed for development purposes or for public relations.

Unique Service Components

Besides serving as a springboard for business management and marketing, the linkage to business can give any agency access to expertise that can be tapped to develop other unique service approaches, including job accommodation assessment and assistance and services that link employers and people with disabilities to resources to meet the requirements of ADA. For example, EIF's Rehabilitation Engineering Center (REC), a regionally based project which provides expertise and services on assistive devices and job accommodation requirements, serves as a clearinghouse for our projects on the most up-to-date information on assistive technology.

Another major service offered through EIF's program is information and resources on matters related to ADA. Numerous awareness training programs have been developed to facilitate compliance with the act, as well as guides to assist employers in such areas as interviewing and job accommodation.

Key Elements to Placing People with Disabilities into Competitive Employment

- Identifying personnel needs and skill trends of business and industry through a variety of market research techniques.
- Ensuring skill levels of people with disabilities are raised through industry-based training opportunities that can help produce a needed linkage with businesses and companies.
- Implementing marketing strategies with business and industry to promote hiring of people with disabilities.
- Continually providing community service personnel with information and working with them to identify materials, capabilities, and other requirements.
- Encouraging regular submission of job openings to area project by electronic and other participating companies.
- Facilitating working relationships among industry personnel, rehabilitation personnel, and other human resource programs to delineate job specifications.
- Communicating on a regular basis with business, industry, and community service organizations to review progress, identify problems, and promote continued support and interest in a national service delivery system.

Preemployment Plan

To be successful, a job placement program must be able to assist people with disabilities in learning the skills necessary to compete in *today's* job market and to enable them to become more confident and motivated to seek jobs. Without this, the lives of people with disabilities will not be enriched through increased earnings and the opportunity to share in the social and economic rewards of our society.

To achieve these goals, EIF follows a process that involves four stages and a variety of interventions designed to overcome barriers, reduce disadvantages, and open doors.

Stage 1: Referral

Referral is a three-step process that involves determining job opportunities and requirements, communicating these to community-based agencies to recruit people with disabilities, and screening candidates. The process begins with a job need, either a specific job order or an identified area of regular job opportunity. Job requirements are carefully surveyed and analyzed. If necessary, onsite job analyses are conducted, especially if there is some concern about the need for job accommodations. Prospective job candidates are carefully interviewed and screened using a standardized application and interview procedure. Job candidates who meet employer specifications are selected and referred to the employer for interviewing. Those who are not job ready are referred to the appropriate agency for needed services. Job-ready candidates are matched to appropriate job openings in the community.

Stage 2: Developing Job-Seeking Skills

Sometimes people with disabilities have missed some of the developmental vocational experiences, such as summer or part-time jobs, that result in job histories, work experience, and confidence about job finding. These deficits may concern employers and present obstacles in the job search process. Mak-

ing a positive impression on paper or in person is critical to this process. Presentation skills can be just the edge needed to secure a job.

Using the knowledge and experience of industry executives through an *Employer Discussion Panel* also provides innovative job-seeking skills training for job applicants. By sharing their expertise, this panel of corporate representatives helps job candidates increase their knowledge of the process of finding and keeping a job.

Teaching job-seeking skills involves a variety of techniques—modeling and demonstration of interview techniques, videotaped role playing, mock interviews with bona fide employers, and instruction, feedback, and support. Topics include interviewing and handling tough questions, completing applications, finding job leads, developing telephone skills and self-marketing techniques, writing resumes and cover letters, and negotiating and accepting job offers. Each candidate receives assistance in preparing a professional businesslike resume and is guided through the job search process.

Stage 3: Training

For some people with disabilities, job skills training may be required. For example, some candidates are not likely to find a job or they are likely to be chron-

ically underemployed without training. Others may need to update existing skills, or there may be a pressing need for skilled workers in a particular field and training could result in an immediate job or career development opportunity. Training is usually short term (2–6 months), but in some cases can take up to a year, is geared to overcoming a major barrier to employment—lack of job skills—and is recommended in an occupational area that matches the interests, abilities, and skills of the job candidate and the demands of the labor market. With its linkage to business and industry, EIF has been able to make solid recommendations based on existing employer needs for certain skills and to identify on-the-job and industry-based training opportunities. Referrals also are made to existing community resources such as community-based training facilities, private vocational schools, community colleges, or other training facilities.

Stage 4: Placement

The placement stage of the process involves matching the candidate to the job, providing interventions to facilitate the placement, providing followup services to ensure that the job match is satisfactory and intervening if any problems arise. EIF has developed several techniques to facilitate the job

Functioning Business and Rehabilitation Committees that Support EIF Job Placement Efforts

The *Employment Committee* is comprised of personnel managers from area companies directly responsible for hiring workers and people from rehabilitation services agencies and other human resource programs that are directly responsible for placing people with disabilities. They meet to share concerns and problems and develop ways to improve the placement process.

The *Training Committee* consists of representatives from participating companies and community resources. This committee's primary function is to develop and enhance existing training programs in the community and, if necessary, develop new training programs to meet specific needs. This committee also works closely with the employment committee when internship may be necessary prior to placement to provide candidates with new opportunities.

match process in addition to those described earlier.

Specialists at several sites are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and Signing Exact English (SEE). In addition to communicating with deaf and hearing impaired candidates and conducting special job-seeking skills training for those who sign, these specialists also are able to serve as interpreters to help bridge the gap between the hearing impaired or deaf candidate and a prospective employer when initial contacts are made or when an interview is being conducted. "Exceptional Candidates" lists also are regularly sent to members of the employer network to advertise job-ready candidates. Staff

employee. One-on-one sessions with both the employer and the employee are held either in person or by phone to provide interventions as needed.

Over the years, EIF's original job placement model has remained essentially intact, with new services added when needed to enhance efforts. Our accomplishments demonstrate EIF's ability to help people with disabilities and to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between industry and rehabilitation. Furthermore, they have brought much recognition to the foundation, including being named by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, as one of five model programs in the nation which

Post writer conveyed, most people with disabilities are not seeking charity but the opportunity to work, be productive, and lead economically independent lives. Yet, for an employer to be willing to invest in any potential employee, the worker must meet the standards and requirements of the job, and that requires involving the workplace. With employers nationwide faced with an increasing shortage of skilled workers and with the nation faced with the implementation of ADA, such involvement takes on an even greater meaning for those of us involved in placing or returning people with disabilities to the workplace—one that not only will enrich the lives of these people but strengthen the country as well.

The EIF approach features specific interventions—referral, job seeking skills, training, job placement, and followup—to overcome barriers.

respond to each job order by examining the existing pool of job candidates and alerting all referral sources for additional referrals. Job candidates are referred to job openings for which they qualify. When no job openings are currently evident, individual candidates are marketed to employers through one-on-one presentations. Candidates are also involved in generating job opportunities, so that the job candidate, staff, and employers are all engaged in identifying job opportunities.

Finally, an integral part of the placement process and EIF's customer service orientation is followup. We maintain regular contact with the new employee and the employer to evaluate the success of the match. For example, in those cases where worksite modification may be required, employment specialists will conduct an assessment of the work station and recommend to the employer those accommodations that may be needed. Sessions also are held with the employee's immediate supervisor to provide guidance and any information the supervisor may need to assure the most appropriate working environment for the new em-

plify successful approaches to increasing competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities. But, the "bottom line" for evaluating success is not the number of awards received but rather the number of people with disabilities who are placed and the quality of those placements.

"The nation will achieve the full benefits of the new disabilities law only when employers allow all Americans to participate to the full extent of their abilities—not as 'disabled' employees, but as enabled contributors." These compelling words closed a recent *Washington Post* op-ed piece by a woman who does not consider herself disabled even though she has physical limitations. She said people with functional limitations are neither "pitiable" nor "heroic." "We are just average people trying to do the best we can." Her words capture the spirit of efforts to enhance the competitive employment of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are an important asset to our country. Yet, American industry is not benefiting from the purchasing power of competitively employed people with disabilities. As the *Washington*

Endnotes

1. EIF is the not-for-profit foundation of the Electronic Industries Association, the major trade organization representing electronics manufacturers in the United States. The foundation works to resolve issues of national and public concern on behalf of the electronics industry. For almost two decades, EIF has operated a national Projects With Industry program through 15 affiliate projects around the country. Local projects have been supported in part by funds from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), U.S. Department of Education. Since 1977, more than 11,000 skilled people with disabilities have been placed in the competitive workforce through EIF's program as a result of the partnerships developed with over 1,800 employers and rehabilitation agencies nationwide.

2. Findings from the first phase of the survey dealing with employer practices were released on March 17, 1992. Gallup also polled 400 people with disabilities. Results from this phase of the survey were released and published in August 1992. Using the results of this survey as baseline data, EIF plans to continue with its comprehensive study as the effects of ADA are felt. A followup survey will be conducted approximately 1 year after the regulations have been implemented. 

Business Advisory Councils in the Rehabilitation Process

Roberta Y. Housman, R.N., CRC

Projects With Industry (PWI) programs funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration are required to have a Business Advisory Council (BAC) functioning in a leadership capacity to the project. These BAC's may differ in terms of numbers of members or types of industries represented; however, the BAC generally reflects the local community and its labor market.

The National Center for Disability Services in Albertson, New York, has three funded PWI projects.

The first is a recently funded national program with five satellite sites located in independent living (IL) centers. The BAC's at these sites are just getting organized. However, there is general excitement on the part of both business and IL staff about the potential success of working together.

The second project, Twin Forks PWI, which is located in the most eastern portion of Long Island, provides placement services in a rural setting. This project has developed an advisory council that consists of primarily small employers. Although small in number, these employers actively assist project staff in acquiring employment opportunities for their consumers, despite a very high unemployment problem. By working together, they have scheduled meetings on the employment requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and agreed to make personal contacts with small business people who are unable to attend meetings but who need to understand ADA and be open to hiring people with disabilities.

The third project, Metro PWI, operates in the New York metropolitan area serving an urban and suburban population of people who are disabled. This project has a BAC that has been in op-

eration for many years. The general membership of close to 300 representatives of more than 150 companies is active in both hiring people with disabilities and in providing leadership and direction to the staff. This council provides input on new employment opportunities, training curricula and equipment, labor market trends, industry hiring standards, and direct assistance to consumers experiencing difficulty in obtaining employment. The active employer representatives provide opportunities for field trips to their facilities, provide practice interviews, and serve as mentors, technical reviewers, guest lecturers, and staff advisors.

Consumer involvement has increased in recent years as graduates of the center's programs have been named by their employers to serve on various BAC committees.

This BAC is organized to include an executive committee, subcommittees for each training area, a special placement committee for consumers experiencing difficulty in obtaining work, and a general advisory membership group that meets for purposes of awareness training and employment of people with disabilities.

Consumer involvement has increased in recent years as graduates of

the center's programs have been named by their employers to serve on various BAC committees.

The center, through its PWI projects, provides employer services and support both locally and nationally. At the local level, services include placement, followup, and technical assistance on accessibility, reasonable accommodations, and disability awareness. At the national level, the project utilizes the network and services of the center's Industry-Labor Council (ILC), which is a membership organization of over 181 major corporations and labor unions. ILC membership services include an information hot line, monthly mailings of relevant books and articles, accessibility surveys, membership service meetings, conferences, and seminars. ILC members have taken a leadership role in establishing the five national PWI satellite site BAC's.

Project staff and business advisors provide ongoing technical assistance to other projects, employers, and inter-

ested parties. Technical assistance has been provided to large and small employers, rehabilitation professionals in both the private and public sectors, and professionals in the field of special education, who are responsible for assisting in the implementation of successful transition from school to work practices. Participating employers sharing their knowledge and experience with other employers are a vital key to the

success of the PWI partnership.

In March 1992, Mr. David Engel, as the chairperson of the National Center's Metro Projects With Industry program, was invited to testify before the Select Education Subcommittee, Education and Labor Committee, United States House of Representatives. Mr. Engel encouraged the expansion of the PWI program throughout the nation. He has been actively involved in every aspect of a PWI program and is the Vice President of Finance for Bertan Associates, Inc., of Long Island, New York, an electronics manufacturer of a high-voltage power supply. His company employs over 120 people in such jobs as electronic assemblers, electronic technicians, engineers, and support staff. Through its involvement in the Projects With Industry program, this firm has employed over 20 PWI job applicants.

Mr. Engel told the Committee that labor projections indicate that the growth of American business will be not in the large multinational firms, but rather in the small to medium-sized companies. It has been noted that small to medium-sized companies have been the hardest to reach with information on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the "how-to's" regarding employment of people with disabilities, because they do not have layers of management staff who can attend or travel to meetings and conferences or have the support training staff of the larger companies. Mr. Engel believes that the PWI program provides an ideal mechanism for such outreach and involvement.

He stressed three major points.

One is the experience that business people acquire by participating on a



Ingrid Jiminez is a business skills trainee at the National Center for Disability Services and is preparing for employment by studying software for personal computers. When proficient in dBase, WordPerfect, Lotus, and DOS, she will be assisted in obtaining employment by the PWI Business Advisory Council.

Projects With Industry Business Advisory Council. They gain knowledge and insight into the needs and issues of employing people with disabilities; at the same time, they are able to impart their expertise and technical knowledge to the rehabilitation staff. By being involved in such areas as development of training curricula and planning Business Advisory Council awareness meetings, the PWI directly affects the operation of a company. The workshops

and conferences provided through the Business Advisory Council are applied, practical and realistic.

He gave as examples workshops that he and his colleagues benefited from, including "How to interview a person with a disability," "How to work with an interpreter to share or obtain information from someone who is deaf," "How to cost effectively remove barriers to employment," and the basic requirements of ADA.

His second point was that, through his active participation in a Projects With Industry program, he has had the opportunity to impact directly on the quality and quantity of services that are available to people with disabilities and to assure that the outcome of these services is employment. He stated that as a business person involved in corporate finance and a taxpayer, he is concerned with the bottom line. "PWI, with its indicators and standards, is one human service that is truly cost-effective—the return on this investment is paid back in actual dollars. As a taxpayer, I can support programs like this. I can justify the dollars spent," he said.

An example of this active participation by Mr. Engel and his colleagues is the electronic technician training program offered at the center. Mr. Engel and several corporate representatives identified a shortage of trained electronic technicians existing in one local area. Through their efforts of preparing

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a training curricula that would graduate qualified people, assisting in providing technical reviews to assure that the training program was meeting industry standards, and providing opportunities for employment for the graduates, they successfully demonstrated the value of business participation in the rehabilitation process. This type of activity can only take place at the local level, since it is specific to the needs of the local business community.

Mr. Engel's third point was the flexibility of the PWI program. He described it in terms of being able to respond to labor needs as they develop, thus permitting rehabilitation and business and industry to meet the future employment needs of people with disabilities in a timely and cost-effective manner.

An example of this flexibility is the work of a newly formed Center Business Advisory Subcommittee working toward the development of a laboratory assistant training program. Over the past 2 years, several major clinical, research, and testing laboratories relocated to the Long Island area. These companies brought their employment needs to the PWI Advisory Council and stated that they had identified a labor shortage of people trained in laboratory assistant work. With corporate knowledge and expertise, their contribution of equipment, and assistance in obtaining private support, this training program is planned to open in January 1993.

It is difficult to measure the benefits provided to rehabilitation by corporate involvement and a Business Advisory Council. Projects With Industry measures involvement through the amount of time business people spend working with the project's staff, the dollars saved by corporate contributions of equipment, and the increased number of job placements that occur due to the efforts of Business Advisory Council members in providing access to the hidden labor market. Beyond that, the active involvement of the corporate community leads to an overall community level of acceptance of ADA and its requirements.



Robert Gonzalez, a trainee at the National Center for Disability Services currently enrolled in their Personal Computer Training Program, studies a spreadsheet program which will help him return to a supervisory job. The center's active PWI Business Advisory Council helps to assure that the curriculum used is up to date and effective in preparing students for today's jobs.

In 1991-92, the center placed over 250 people into jobs in the New York metropolitan area. This was despite a growing recession and increasing rate of unemployment. Without the Business Advisory Council and its leader-

ship and commitment to employing people with disabilities, this task would have been impossible. **AR**

Ladders to Accommodation

Ninia R. Downs

Ladders to Success, a Projects With Industry (PWI) program operated by the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) in Ohio and West Virginia, demonstrates the willingness of business to carry out the spirit and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

After building partnerships between businesses in the hospitality industry and the offices and staff of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC), Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), and Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI), *Ladders* coordinates the resources of BVR and BSVI with business and compounds the strengths of all.

Basically a placement and training program, and often a transitioning program, *Ladders to Success* assists workers with limited functional abilities to acquire jobs, to train on the job, and to move into full-time, competitive employment. Business provides the jobs, training, salary, and benefits, while ORSC provides screening, referrals, training, placement, and follow-along services. Working together in this way since 1985, both have applied valuable and ingenious accommodations in many instances.

Bob Evans Farms, Inc., and ORSC became partners through *Ladders to Success* in January 1991, when the company designated one store in Columbus as a training site and one employee as a trainer.

Store managers throughout the district interviewed candidates and hired workers referred by ORSC. The hiring manager paid the new employee's wages and shared the cost of wages for the job



Nichelle Bivens, Ladders program participant, clears and sets tables in a busy Bob Evans Restaurant. (Photo by Robert Bradley)

trainer with ORSC. The new worker trained for 8 weeks and then went to work for the hiring manager.

Although managers were pleased to get their employees back fully trained, the company soon became aware of problems. Employees trained in one store and sent to another had difficulty learning new procedures and with leaving their friends and having to make new ones. Problems occurred for some in being far from home. Others had transportation problems. Some simply could not do a good job. Older employees and staff had problems accepting the new workers; staff orientation to the program was clearly needed.

Bob Evans suggested a major change in program design by asking that all its stores in the Central Ohio area become training sites and that the training of new employees be accomplished through a buddy system. The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission and the Ohio Restaurant Association, spon-

sors of *Ladders to Success*, agreed to these changes.

To support the redesigned program, *Ladders* staff arranged for special kinds of training, such as *Windmills*, which helps participants examine and modify common judgments about people with disabilities, and *Training For Action*, which explains program design and operation to program personnel from Bob Evans, BVR, and BSVI. Three sessions were delivered to store managers, staff, and "buddies" from 31 restaurants and to counselors, supervisors, and employer services specialists from

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ORSC area offices. A management team consisting of a Bob Evans corporate manager, a representative from rehabilitation, and a *Ladders* representative from the Ohio Restaurant Association was formed to direct the program.

Many of the problems cleared up. After job training, employees with disabilities continued work in the stores where they trained; most increased the number of hours they worked; and many became full-time employees. Fellow employees in the stores were ac-

customed to them and the new workers were accustomed to their fellow employees. Bob Evans tailored *Ladders to Success* and its company for people with disabilities. The positive changes in program design caused countless smaller changes in company policies and practices. Managers and line supervisors took on new knowledge, methods, and values; they began accumulating and reporting new data; they accepted job coaches as part of their standard operations and sometimes as learning capacity specialists. In return, they had a pool of skilled, able employees for high turnover, hard-to-fill, essential jobs in the restaurant industry.

In 1985, McDonald's in Ohio established a partnership with the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission to hire and train people with severe disabilities for entry level jobs. McDonald's already had a hiring and training program—*McJobs*—for people with disabilities. The partners merged *McJobs* and *Ladders*, and the business began hiring and training people referred from the *Ladders* program.

This partnership brought in new and enriching elements to both programs. First, the McDonald's staff began more intensive interaction directly with vo-

catapult and mustard dispensers for people with cerebral palsy. It is the goal of the *Ladders-McJobs* program to hire youths still in school so that, like other teenagers, they too may have jobs.

Other successes—less measurable, but nonetheless important—are the intrinsic benefits accrued to ORSC from this experience. For example, the agency acquires detailed knowledge of the needs and pressures of business and the host businesses gain an understanding of the values and sensitivities of vocational rehabilitation.

A more traditional application of *Ladders to Success* has taken place in several hotels in Ohio and West Virginia. In this model, a trainer-supervisor is hired and trained by the host business in such jobs as desk clerk, maid, laundry worker, and groundskeeper. The trainer-supervisor in turn participates in the screening and hiring of people with disabilities referred by ORSC. The trainer-supervisor trains new employees to do the quantity and quality of work required by the hotel. The trainer welcomes the new employees each morning, assigns the jobs, and shows the workers their duties and how best to accomplish them. After training, which can last anywhere from 3–6 months, depending upon abilities and

complexity of the job, the new workers are ready for full-time, competitive employment. Trainees continue either working for the host business, or ORSC placement staff find positions for them with other employers in the community.

The trainer-supervisor is part of the hotel staff, attends management meetings, and acts as a staff supervisor as needed. The bond between the business and the rehabilitation agency is a close one. Problems receive prompt attention; solutions most often are prescribed in-house. Sometimes it is the private business which must make changes; at other times, rehabilitation officials have this function. Active dialogue between the partners encourages efficient and more effective solutions. In time, the mutual adaptations become part of the business routine and the hotel becomes a dependable and consistent training site.

However, program operation in the hotel industry also has its drawbacks: for example, there are the problems of seasonal off time and reduced hours, and there can be changes in ownership; all of these can exact a toll on the program.

Over the past 7 years, *Ladders* has operated in two hotels in Ohio and in the McLure House in Wheeling, West Virginia. The program has served people from all disability groups, including people who are blind or visually impaired; are deaf or hearing impaired; have amputations or orthopedic disabilities; or have cerebral palsy, mental illness, alcohol and/or drug addiction, mental retardation, epilepsy, neurological problems, learning disabilities, sickle cell anemia, arthritis, and heart and kidney diseases. Program participants are between 15 and 62 years of age; most (84 percent) are severely disabled (but 100 percent of the participants since March 1991 have been severely disabled); 54 percent are multiply disabled; and 66 percent have never worked before.

Since 1985, businesses in the *Ladders* program have hired and trained 570 workers, 377 of whom have completed the training programs and continued employment.

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After job training, employees with disabilities continued work in the stores where they trained; most increased the number of hours they worked; and many became full-time employees.

signed as a three-tiered structure: at the local and corporate level the program is tied to the business and the community through the local BVR and BSVI offices and the education system; at the state level it is tied in with the area offices and the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission's central office; and at the community level, a team is formed of the host business, site trainers (job coaches), local counselors, and placement staff of the community office of BVR.

Through designated liaisons and area managers, the program is tied into the area BVR office. Salaries for the job coaches and performance evaluations are most often managed through the area office and the business. All ORSC programs are funded, evaluated, and supported through contracts with the area offices of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and the central office of ORSC. Operational program management is supplied to the programs through a program director with the Ohio Restaurant Association.

The programs are supported by a Business Advisory Committee, which includes the executive board of the Ohio Restaurant Association, the president of one international trade union, secretary-treasurers of two local trade unions, human resource directors at McDonald's regional offices, hotel corporate staff, and corporate managers of Bob Evans Farms, Inc. Both the Ohio Hotel and Motel Association and the Ohio Restaurant Association have officially endorsed the programs.

The future of *Ladders to Success* looks good for several reasons.

Funding is one reason. Thanks to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education, the programs received a 5-year Projects With Industry grant which will continue for the next 4 years. At the state level, additional financial support is provided by ORSC and the Ohio Restaurant Association.

Need is another reason. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that food preparation and service jobs will swell 37 percent by the year 2000. The National Restaurant Association predicts the industry will be short 1.1 million workers by the year 1995 if the industry continues to depend on the traditional work force. Turnover in the industry is high and the labor pool is shrinking.

Management strategy is another reason. The placement by the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission of program management within the Ohio Restaurant Association, a nonprofit organization, encourages impartial service to the needs of both business and rehabilitation. The third-party approach of impartiality and objective attention to the needs of both is likely to avoid some of the mistakes of the past which have affected one or both parties.

Ladders' strategy of coordinating the state vocational rehabilitation resources with business instead of competing against them ensures *Ladders* of a dependable place in the world of public service as well as private business.

The severity of disability now handled by ORSC has increased, which makes it difficult for *Ladders* to work; but, with industry's demonstrated willingness to accommodate the needs of special workers, the resources of rehabilitation engineering, steadily improving training techniques, and patience, these difficulties can be overcome.

Ladders has done much in Ohio to lead the hospitality industry into conformity with the Americans with Disabilities Act, especially in the area of breaking down psychological barriers and prejudices. *Ladders* has broken new ground in gaining the cooperation of unions and in establishing affiliations with trade associations. With an expansion of its Business Advisory Council to include other industries, the development of training, and an increase in job placement capability, *Ladders* can set the pace for other businesses in Ohio and neighboring states. 

Ladders to Accomodation

(Continued from page 32)

In this program, a wide base of support is available to help business solve problems encountered in accommodating the needs of workers with limited functional abilities. *Ladders* is de-