Working With Employers

A workshop presented for PEN International by Linda Iacelli and John Macko
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Center on Employment
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Rochester, NY
Agenda for the Workshop

- Challenges of assisting students and graduates to find employment in their field
- Marketing to Employers
  - Features/Benefits Exercise
- Employer Development
  - Practice Call to Employer Exercise
- Employer Training
  - Excerpts from *Working Together* Workshop
- Reflection and Goal Setting
What are challenges students face in finding employment?

- Ignorance of deafness
- College not known
- Concerns about communication/safety
- Concerns about effort involved vs benefit to the company
Examples of Barriers/challenges

- Phone/relay hang-ups to student calls to employers
- How to get employers to come to us?
- Relatively small number of companies recruiting on campus
- Non-response to employment advisor initiatives by phone, letter, e-mail
NCE Approach-Defining Terms

- Marketing – raising awareness of NTID among employers
- Employer development – building and maintaining relationships with employers
- Employer training – “Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People” to increase comfort in hiring and working with deaf persons
NCE Marketing Plan

- Communications (letter, e-mail, phone/tty)
- Website
- Media
- Publications
- Presenting/Exhibiting at conferences
Employer Development Strategies

- Telephone/tty calls (from leads)
- Company visits
- On-campus orientations
- Follow-up calls and e-mails
- Co-op visits
- Consultations
- Token gifts (giveaways)
Working Together: Program Goal

To build bridges of understanding between deaf and hearing employees so that the most productive and mutually beneficial work relationships can be developed.
Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Working Together
  Program Overviews
  “Working Together” videotape

Understanding Deafness
  Deaf Awareness Quiz
  “Understanding Deafness” videotape
  Deaf Culture
  Listening Exercise

BREAK

Essentials of Communications
  Basic Communication Principles
  Communication Barrier Exercise
  Speechreading Exercise
Agenda (cont)

BREAK

Integrating Deaf Employees
  Principles of Integration and Accommodation
  Integration and Accommodation Exercise
  Job Accommodations

Goals and Evaluation
  Reflection and Goal Setting
  Training Program Evaluation

Conclusion
Deaf Culture in the Workplace

- Identity
- Language
- Values and Beliefs
- Rules of Behavior
Basic Communication Principles

- Communication with a deaf person involves sensitivity, common sense, and courtesy.
- Effective communication is a joint responsibility of hearing and deaf people.
- Always feel free to ask, “What can I do to make it easier for the two of us to communicate?”
- There are many ways to communicate; the situation determines the preference.
Communication Barrier Exercise

Discussion topics:
- Getting acquainted
- Plans to see a movie
- Plans for a department picnic
- Discussion of a current issue
**General Communication Strategies**

- Get the deaf person’s attention before speaking
- State the topic of discussion
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Look directly at the deaf person when speaking
- Do not place anything in or over your mouth when speaking
- Maintain eye contact with the deaf person
- When speaking, avoid standing in front of a light source
General Communication Strategies

- Use open-ended questions
- Be courteous to the deaf person during conversation
- First repeat, then try to rephrase the statement
- Use pantomime, body language, and facial expression to help communication
- Choose an environment that is conducive to communication
- Take time to communicate
Group Communication Strategies

- Let deaf employees determine the best seating arrangement in order to see the speaker and interpreter
- Provide new vocabulary in advance
- Consider the layout of the room to provide good communication
- Avoid unnecessary pacing or speaking when writing on a blackboard
- Use interpreters during group meetings
- Use visual aids
Group Communication Strategies

- Make sure deaf persons do not miss vital information
- Repeat questions or statements made from the back of the room
- Slow down the pace of communication to facilitate understanding
- In the discussion, allow full participation by deaf persons
- Have minutes or notes taken for later reference
Principles of Integration and Accommodation

- Joint planning for integration and accommodation of a deaf employee in the workplace is most successful.
- Consider integration and accommodation in all phases of employment.
- The role of the supervisor is critical.
Principles of Integration and Accommodation

- Effective integration strategies benefit all employees and contribute to the success of the organization.
- Accommodations differ for each situation.
- Deaf employees have a right to equal access information.
- Reasonable accommodations are federally mandated.
Job Accommodation

Services:
- Interpreters
- Telecommunications Relay System
- Notetaking, Debriefing
- Captioning

Telecommunications:
- Pagers, TTY, Fax

Computers:
- TTY Software, E-mail, Videoconferencing, ICQ
Job Accommodation

- Assistive Listening Systems:
  - Telephone Amplifiers, Induction Loop
- Signalers:
  - Telephone Ringers, Doorbells, Fire Alarms
- Other Accommodations:
  - Supplemental Written Materials
  - Hearing Dog
  - Buddy System