

Business Relations Units: What We Know So Far From the Demand Side RRTC

JDVRTAC Forum on Business Relations Unit

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Demand Side RRTC

- Partners: Alabama, Nebraska, Vermont, CSAVR, Dennis Moore
- Research activities: Surveys, Index of Practices, VT Progressive Employment Learning Collaborative (VT, NE, FLB, ORB, ME), NE Middle Skills Initiative, AL LMI Dashboard Study, Data Analysis.

Wave II

- The 2014 survey was the first activity in a series of web- surveys and in-depth interviews
- In-depth interviews or wave II slated to begin in the Spring
 - Select participants based on responses provided in Wave I
 - 45 to 60 min. telephone interviews

We are seeing some distinct models

- Two units working in parallel.
- Expansion of local teams to include business relations persons.
- Specific persons with Business Relations functions to support the local offices.
- CRPs filling this role, in whole or in part.
- Combinations of the above!

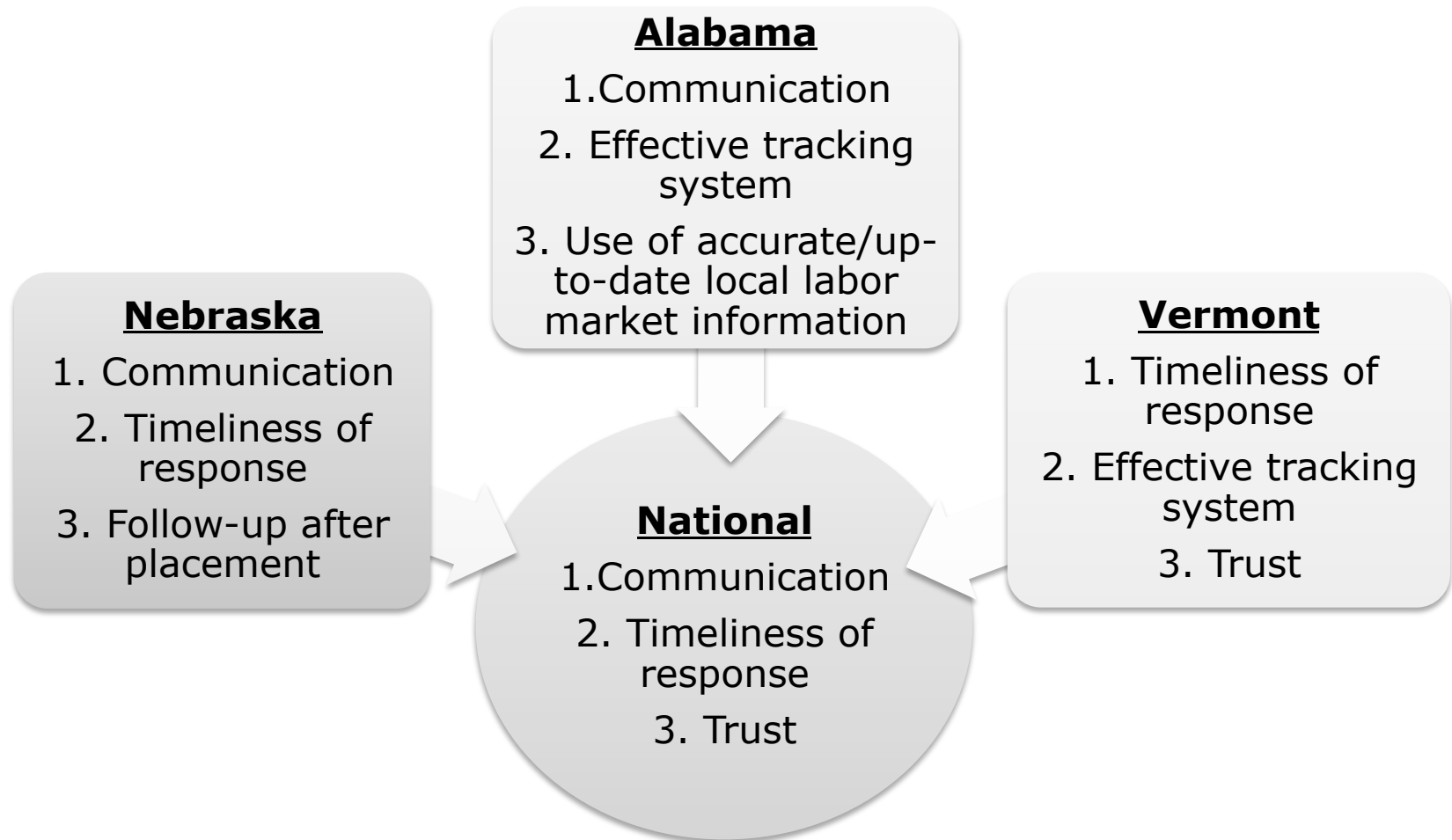
Mini Poll!

- Who has had a formal business relations unit/function for more than 10 years?
- Who had a business relations function for less than 10 but more than 2 years?
- Who has recently built one in the last two years?
- Who is currently starting to build one?

Mini Poll 2

- Who has a business relations unit with staff that report to a BR lead?
- Who have business relations folks embedded on local teams are report through to Field Services Directors
- Who has a central or regional BR person (s) who do not have supervisees?
- Who contracts this function out to CRPs in whole or in part?

Top 3 Components Considered Most Important to Managing Business Relations

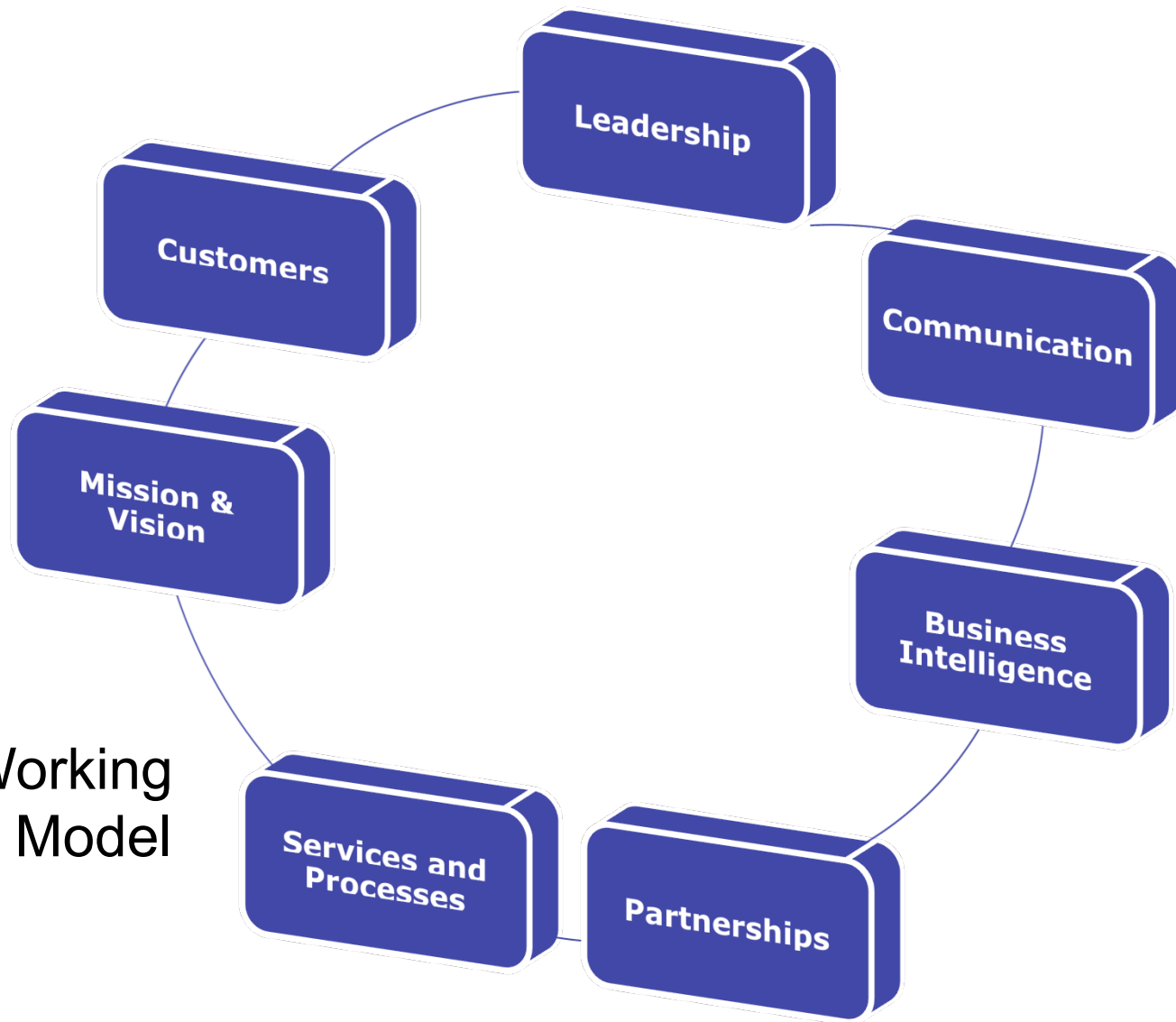


**So you want to build or expand a BR
Function...
The Big Picture
Why This Might Help You!!!**

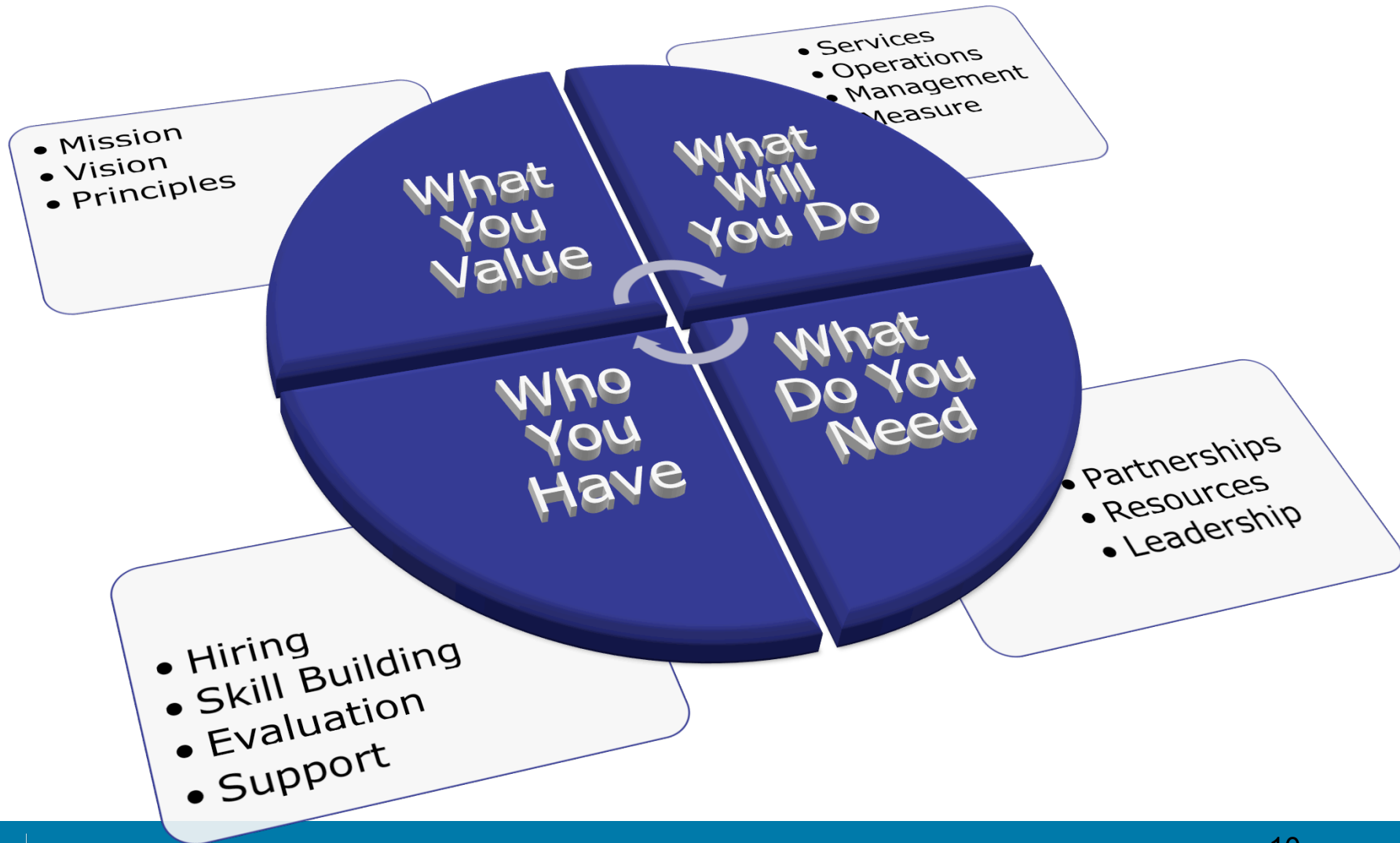


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The Working
RTAC Model



Mission, vision, and beliefs

- Survey Tidbit: 89% (59 of 66) of SVRAs reported serving businesses as VR customers....
- But what do you all mean by that?

What You Value

As you have business as customer...

- Does it alter your mission?
- Is the “customer” status of business understood agency wide?
- Are any values in conflict?

Respondent 1

We have instituted a Consultative Sales approach to business development. Rather than approaching business when we have a need (a candidate to place) we have shifted our focus to **developing relationships** with businesses and **offering an array of services**, and identifying **how we can meet the hiring needs** based on what we learn as we **nurture the relationship**. We see our **role as very similar to that of a staffing agency**, providing recruitment and retention support, flexible tools for businesses to meet candidates through worksite training and work experiences.

Respondent 2

Dual customer with **business being the second customer**. Business relations means **development and maintenance of partnerships** with business that are mutually beneficial, where we **provide products and services** that meet their needs, all in relation to disability.

Some questions to ponder

- How does your state define the term “business relations” in the context of VR?
 - As a service to a customer?
 - As an outreach process?
 - As an extension of a HR function for businesses in your state?
 - All of those?

Who Do You Need?



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What Talent Do You Need?

- What latitude do you have to hire, recruit, create new job descriptions?
- Is this a career development option?
- What sort of OJT training support?
- How do you evaluate performance?

Staffing and Organizational Structure

- **25 combined or general VR** agencies have a POC who spends 100% of their time dedicated to business relations
- **7 VR Agencies for the Blind and Visually Impaired** have a POC who spends 100% of their time dedicated to business relations.

- **70% (46 of 66)** of SVRAs have specialized VR staff (staff that spend more than 50% of their time) implementing business relations strategies
- **55% (11 of 20)** of agencies for the Blind and Visually Impaired have specialized staff performing the same functions

POCs quick stats:

- 31 out of 67 had a business background
- 36 out of 66 are NOT CRCs.
- 41 out of 67 have a Master's degree

POCs quick stats (BVIs):

- 9 out of 20 had a business background
- 10 out of 20 are CRCs
- 12 out of 20 have a Master's degree

Staffing and Organizational Structure

- VR counselors, Job placement specialists, Regional points of contact, and VR administrators also have BR responsibilities
- **52** VR agencies use external resources/staff (e.g. CRPs) for BR
 - **16** of which are agencies for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Key qualifications that BR staff must possess:

- Experience developing effective relationships with business
- Knowledge of business and employment practice
- Experience with disability related issues and solutions in the workplace

Skill sets that BR staff possess:

- Top 3 responses:
 - Marketing and outreach
 - Understanding VR services available to businesses
 - Business development

Training requirements for BR staff

- Most SVRAs have something specific for business relations staff
- Examples include:
 - ACRE and CESP Certification
 - DSB Business Relationship Training
 - Training on the 36th IRI Business as Customer and CSAVR VR-NET Peer Network 7 modules

What Will You Do?



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Business Relations in Action

- New services?
- Different way of delivering your current services?
- What implications does it have for your internal operations?
 - Contracts with vendors?
 - The order of things.

What are SVRA's doing?

- 48 have business relations programs or initiatives in place
 - 11 had more than 3 business relations programs or initiatives in place
- 35 SVRAs have business relations programs or initiatives related to section 503

Business Relations Programs and Initiatives (BVIs)

- What are BVIs doing?
 - 10 have business relations programs or initiatives in place
 - 0 had more than 3 business relations programs or initiatives in place
 - 6 BVIs have business relations programs or initiatives related to section 503

Providing Services to Businesses (Top 4)

Services	N	%
Staff training (e.g., disability awareness, ADA/employment laws)	54	93.1%
Pre-employment services (e.g., internships, training)	54	93.1%
Financial supports (e.g., Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), barrier removal)	51	87.9%
HR/Staffing (e.g., recruitment or retention supports)	49	84.5%

BVIs: Providing Services to Businesses (Top 4)

Services	N	%
Accommodations (e.g., work site assessment, assistive technology)	16	80%
Pre-employment services (e.g., internships, training)	15	75%
Staff training (e.g., disability awareness, ADA/employment laws)	15	75%
Financial supports (e.g., Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), barrier removal)	14	70%

Providing Services to Businesses

Services	N	%
Marketing and outreach	41	70.7%
Compliance support (e.g., EEOC and affirmative action)	40	69.0%
Diversity programs	34	58.6%
Universal Design (e.g., contracts/facilities, information technology)	26	44.8%
Product development	8	13.8%
Legal services (e.g., Labor relations, policy development, risk management)	6	10.3%

BVIs: Providing Services to Businesses

Services	N	%
HR/Staffing (e.g., recruitment or retention supports)	12	60%
Diversity programs	11	55 %
Compliance support (e.g., EEOC and affirmative action)	11	55%
Universal Design (e.g., contracts/facilities, information technology)	10	50%
Marketing and outreach	10	50%
Product development	4	20%
Legal services (e.g., Labor relations, policy development, risk management)	2	10%

Engaging in business relations activities (Top 4)

Activities	N	%
Participating in business networks	56	96.6%
Establishing business partnerships	55	94.8%
Marketing to businesses	54	93.1%
Maintaining contact with business after initial contact	53	91.4%

BVIs: Engaging in business relations activities (Top 4)

Activities	N	%
Establishing business partnerships	15	75%
Marketing to businesses	15	75%
Participating in business networks	15	75%
Maintaining contact with business after initial contacts	13	65%

Engaging in business relations activities

Activities	N	%
Organization employer recognition events	44	75.9%
Involvement in federal contracting	42	72.4%
Hosting business job fairs or hiring events	41	70.7%
Sending thank you cards to business partners	41	70.7%
Maintaining electronic databases to track business contacts	38	65.5%
Administering business satisfaction survey	17	29.3%
Other	3	5.2%

BVIs: Engaging in business relations activities

Activities	N	%
Involvement in federal contracting	13	65%
Maintaining electronic databases to track business contacts	12	60%
Organizing employer recognition events	11	55%
Sending thank you and holiday cards to business contacts	10	50%
Hosting business job fairs or hiring events	9	45%
Administering business satisfaction survey	4	20%

How do you build Institutional Capacity so that you are effective?

- Partnerships
- Leadership
- Resource Development
- Communication Strategies

Marketing, Outreach, and Business Contacts

- Visibility of POC, services offered, and agency:
 - 32 out of 65 SVRA websites provide the POC's contact information
 - 55 out of 64 SVRAs have the services that they provide listed on their website
 - 30 out of 63 SVRAs provide links to other state employment websites on their website

Marketing, Outreach, and Business Contacts (BVIs)

- Visibility of POC, services offered, and agency:
 - 7 out of 19 BVI websites provide the POC's contact information
 - 16 out of 19 BVIs have the services that they provide listed on their website
 - 15 out of 19 BVIs provide links to other state employment websites on their website

Marketing, Outreach, and Business Contacts

- Managing business contacts
 - 26 out of 64 SVRAs use an electronic contact management system
 - 33 out of 63 SVRAs collect “other” data from businesses, for example:
 - Federal contractor status
 - Basic business profile
 - Detailed job descriptions
 - Placement data, number of hires etc...

Marketing, Outreach, and Business Contacts (BVIs)

- Managing business contacts
 - 7 out of 19 BVIs use an electronic contact management system
 - 10 out of 19 BVIs collect “other” data from businesses, for example:
 - Job descriptions, and benefit packages
 - Business needs, and job site analysis
 - Job descriptions, hiring process, and job postings.

Labor market data in BVIs

- 89% of BVIs (N=17 out of 19) reported they use LMI
- 3 of 16 (19%) agencies reported that they use real-time LMI
 - The 3 agencies also reported using traditional LMI

You are not just building BR capacity...

- You are altering how people interact.
- You are changing the types of services you deliver.
- How do you enable people to move rapidly to act on timely actionable intelligence from BR staff?
- How do BR staff know the talent pool that is your client base?

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