**Business Research Protocol**

*Erin McGuire, Sam Walker, Chris Schilling*

**Target Populations:**

Business owners, South Bend employers

* Memorial Hospital
* Notre Dame HR
* Manufacturing industry
  + Lippert Components
  + Injection molding business
  + Thor Motor Coach
* Healthcare industry
  + Memorial Hospital/Beacon Health Systems
* Distribution Centers
  + TireRack
* Food Product
  + New Carbon Co.
* Small entrepreneurs
  + SB Brew Werks
* Job seekers

**Goal:**

* Identify the greatest challenges in workforce tech readiness
  + Explore the way they currently assess tech readiness
  + Discover the tech needs of South Bend small business entrepreneurs
* Investigate potential for internal workforce development
  + Tech skills businesses are looking for/want/currently have in their employees
* Understand where tech roles open up for greater opportunity

**Research Methodology and Techniques:**

1. Card Sort
2. Business/Work Development Center Observation
3. “Build Your Ideal Employee”
4. Intercepts

**Card Sort:**

**Task Overview:** Understand what tech skills business owners or job training center staff think are most important for their employees. We will sort cards based on employee qualities by technical and soft ranging from undesirable to desirable. This will help us gain a better comprehension of the values of a company, so that we can help better align their recruiting efforts with appropriate applicants. We will gauge the difference between the way words convey a certain value to them versus the way they interact with their employees and coworkers. Hopefully, the card sort will display industry priorities with technology.

**Process:**

1. Lay out skill cards on a table and ask participant to choose the ones they think are most important for a potential employee.
2. Ask the participant why they chose specific skills, if they have trouble finding candidates with those skills, etc.
3. Ask participants to identify which skills or qualities they find are lacking in their company
4. Find the needs and fulfill them by aligning with desired employee values

Questions

1. Explain why you ranked these skills the way you did.
2. Why are these skills more important to you than some of the others?
3. What challenges do you face finding employees with these skills?
4. What skills do you think the majority of your employees currently have?
5. Do you currently have any opportunities to develop your employees’ skills?

**Things to Document:** Audio/video record interaction, photos of final card sort with notes on reasons.

**Business/Work Development Center Observation:**

**Task Overview:** Observe interactions at Business and Work Development centers examining important technology in the environment. Make appropriate observations, documentation, and question choices in order to understand their tech skills and everyday tasks. Ask questions about certain areas of their work.

**Process:**

1. Shadow employees in technical positions and observe their behavior
2. Discover where they are overworked and need relief
3. Observe process/task inefficiencies
4. Observe emotions throughout the day (when are they frustrated, excited, indifferent...)

Questions:

1. What task are you working on?
2. What is frustrating or challenging about completing this task?
3. How much of your day to day requires use of technology? How did you acquire the skills to operate/complete this task?
4. When you think of technology, what comes to mind? How do you feel about technology?
5. Are there skills you wish you had that might make your job easier?

**Things to Document:** Audio/video record interaction

**“Craft your Ideal Employee”:**

**Task Overview:** This task would involve providing employers with a few of their job postings and asking them to piece together what their ideal employee would be based on these postings. We will ask them guiding questions along the way to aid in the expression of their needs and wants referring to their specifics mentioned in the document. The guiding questions will allow us to bring the conversation back to technology needs. The employer will then be asked to think about their “ideal employee” for a week with a small notebook. Every time the employer feels their “ideal employee” would have helped, the employer will need to write down what was the problem at that moment and which skill of the employee would he/she have used.

**Process:**

1. Provide 3 job postings from employer
2. Ask employers to expand upon the postings and what they were looking for in an individual. How do they assess these qualities?
3. Have the employer describe their ideal employee, as imaginative as possible
4. Consider the “ideal employee” for a week and document moments where the “ideal employee” was needed in a notebook
5. Elicit feasible skills and qualities from the ideal in order to fit the needs of the company’s recruiting process

Questions

1. What were you looking for in an individual in these job postings? How do you assess these qualities? In a resume, in an interview, in a testing scenario?
2. How would you define these skills and levels of proficiency?
3. How does this “ideal employee” differ from your current employees?
4. When do you think this employee would be helpful in your everyday work?

**Things to Document:** Audio/video record interaction, take notes on the job posting, how they piece together the ideal employee, moments where “ideal employee” help was needed

**Intercepts:**

**Task Overview:** This will help us get both sides of the equation in reference to job search and recruitment. It will allow us to better understand who might be filling the roles we create/discover when interacting with businesses.

**Process:**

1. Intercept job seekers at WorkOne
   1. Why are you at WorkOne? What type of job are you looking at/applying for?
   2. How would you describe your tech abilities?
   3. Do you hope to use technology in your career?

Questions

1. What brought you to WorkOne today? What types of jobs are you looking at/applying for?
2. Have you been here before? Tell me about that experience.
3. How would you describe your current tech abilities?
4. Do you hope to use technology in your career?
5. Did you know much about WorkOne before arriving?
   1. Was the journey here (from idea to arrival) satisfactory, why/why not?

**Things to Document:** Audio/video record interaction, take notes on their answers