

QUATSEE COURSE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

LESSON 6

2nd PHASE OF S.E. (A): JOB FINDING, CONTACT WITH THE MARKET AND EMPLOYERS.

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this lesson, you should:

- Be able to analyze the main features of the economic and labour market environment.
- Learn some techniques of sales and marketing of their services.
- Learn to look for a job and interview and meet with employers.

Introduction

Read again the story of Isabel and judge how important it would be for her to find a job...

1

I am Isabel, I was born in Lisbon, I am already 26. My life has been a bit tricky since I came to this world because I showed up with cerebral palsy without telling anyone... It is time to find a job and start being a woman like any other, I see many girls that work and have some savings in bank in order to do things in life, they have projects. I do not have neither savings nor projects because I can only aspire to go to ASPACE -where I am treated very well, I must say this- but I can only aspire to get trained and get trained, so as to get trained again later in a new course or other activities, which are always necessary, of course. But what I really want is to do things outside and I count for something ... I have the need to feel that I have finished a formative stage in my life and I start another, as an adult, with my working life, my incomes, but not pensions but from my work. I notice about everything, see and hear perfectly well, get excited and I laugh when I make jokes, think a lot, I am an expert moving with my wheelchair, and I have some computer skills. Furthermore, I also like having fun with my friends, traveling, reading, etc... I think I am useful for many jobs, but so far I could not get any of them...

"... So far I could not get any ..." and I wonder: has anyone helped her to find a job?, probably not. Isabel is immersed in an excessively rehabilitation environment, away from the community where the context and professionals do not perceive her as a citizen, with the pressure of the future that comes up and the projection of her life with all her rights, but rather as a taxable person receiving care services at a special centre.

But the truth is that Isabel has clear interests and desires emerging that should be taken into account and neither her family nor her close professionals can ignore. Among her aspirations, she would like to have an independent life for a day, like other girls with her age, having an income and a job that allows her to feel useful and contribute to the development and construction of society. Therefore, we conclude that on the way to independent living, there is, as an inescapable means, attaining a job.

This job is not going to appear magically or miraculously, it requires a hard, consistent and systematic work, and a change of the approach in Isabel's programme. This new path we will start with her is *Supported Employment*. Therefore, the best news that professionals can give to Isabel is that, from now on, they will hear her voice and, according to her desires, they will turn her sight to the community, so as to help her to find a job.

This change of perspective requires courage and commitment in the direction of the institution and the professionals who work there. They must overcome fears and insecurities, deal with criticism and internal resistances, face failures and misunderstandings, etc. Now, Isabel will not work in the special centre, but in the community: supported employment is applied in the community..., schedules and agendas will be more flexible, different places will be visited, interviews with different people, brochures and presentations will be devised, conditions will be agreed, etc...

But before getting started, we should focus on the **technical competences** that professionals must demonstrate in the job finding:

- Contact agencies and institution related to economy and employment: business associations, trade unions, chamber of commerce, public employment service, employment ministry, etc.
- Identify the most important economic activities in the region or locality or the ones which generate more jobs in order to know the growing companies, the ones which are in decline and those which are stable.
- Browse ads in local newspapers, web portals in the area, and the yellow pages of the telephone directory so as to have information about the type of companies operating in the environment and on the supply and demand of employment.
- Establish an information system to gather all the data and keep up all relations with the business world.
- Describe in a dossier, with a suitable graphic design, the services offered by the mediating entity to the entrepreneurship and people with diverse abilities.
- Find information on companies before to visit them and get quality interviews.
- Contact employers properly and using different strategies.
- Making the presentation of services offered to different employers and audiences.

Let's start with a brief description of the integrated processes in this phase of supported employment.

Employment is an important part of this system. If there is no employment in the open market, the process of labour inclusion cannot start. Therefore it is not surprising that this system always invests time and energy in finding suitable jobs for candidates.

This phase of supported employment activates the processes that lead to finding the right job, which certainly exists somewhere in the market

for each person.

*The candidate is
the protagonist of
the search*

Among these processes, we can cite the following

*Analysis and
strategies*

1) **Incorporation of the candidate to the job finding:** a job should not be searched if the candidate does not know that. The job finding is directed by the candidate, from his/her interests, preferences and possibilities. Support professionals and people in his/her "circle" are a team with a very specific goal: work together with the person to find a job in the community. We will have to train the candidate in social skills, interview techniques, prepare his/her presentation, search engines, etc. He/she must be incorporated to the job programme involved in the job finding, and he or she cannot ignore it.

*Dissemination
and seduction*

2) **Analysis of the labour market:** we must know the characteristics of the local market and surrounding areas, predominant products and services, enterprise movement, areas and growing areas, etc. Compulsory visits will be: Chamber of commerce, trade associations, trade unions, public and private employment offices. We must consult studies published by banks or financial institutions on the labour market situation and the state of the local economy. Other necessary operations: daily review of press announcements, web portals, radio, television, etc.; scanning the yellow pages of the telephone directory, to have an overview of the number and variety of nearby businesses; make a list of upcoming business contacts, etc.

*Good connections
in the community*

3) **Marketing and interviews:** This process refers to the presentation to employers of the services provided by the supported employment organisation and its purpose. We must be careful

*Public
recognition*

in the quality of the presentation materials; we must be honest: fulfil what is promised; use a professional and positive vocabulary, not paternalistic; the dress and punctuality also matter; we need to spread the idea that working on a project like this benefits the company in many ways; we must also provide all the legal information about contracts and benefits, etc.

- 4) **Social relationships generating employment:** in the job finding is very important to have good contacts that create jobs, so the job coach, or the job hunter should be well-connected in the community and it is better if they are presented to the interviews with the employer having good references of him/her.

- 5) **Feedback to entrepreneurs, gratitude and recognition:** whenever an interview has been conducted with good results, we should thank the employer for the welcome received and his/her willingness to collaborate in this innovative initiative; periodically, we must give a public recognition of the companies that provide jobs in the context of our supported employment service.

6.1 ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOUR MARKET

As we have said, when a programme or service of supported employment starts, the first thing we should do is an exploration and analysis of the most notable features of the economic and labour market in the area where it is to act. Each region has its own peculiarities and economic life booming or declining, according to the vicissitudes of history and according to the circumstances that led to that community to its current development.

Not an academic study of the market

In our attempt to analyse the labour market, we should not lose sight of our goal: we analyse it to have a sufficient knowledge of the market, place ourselves in the reality of the ground beneath our feet, and thus we can find the best jobs for our candidates.

A practical analysis

Therefore, it is not necessary to spend much time in the publication review, usually done by the bank or other entities, on the progress of the local economy, based on some economic indicators, but it is essential to collect data and information necessary to allow us to have an understanding of the main economic activities that create jobs in the community where we live.

Our research should lead to have a clear vision on how the local economic movement is distributed, which their flows and business tips are, how public administrations influence on the private economic activity, the difference between public employment and private employment, etc. All this will lead us to the knowledge of the fundamental features of the market and will give us the necessary evidence to make contacts and lines of work we should develop for the job finding.

Without an academic survey, employment could be found in

Mallorca

I will tell you a historical fact that happened to us in Mallorca. It was in 1988, when we took the decision to start a new service of supported employment. The disability sector, at that time, exhibited a seemingly convincing argument to justify its inaction in finding employment for labour inclusion of people with disabilities in the regular market: "*we cannot search for a job, because we lack of a market survey, we do not know which vacancies employers have or which their needs are.*" And the labour integration was postponed indefinitely before the apparent logic of this paralysing pseudo -argument. However, we proved that without a "market survey", a new line of labour integration could be started: we proposed to integrate during the first year of a pilot project 25 people with significant disabilities and we got 18 jobs (72% of target).

Elements of the practical analysis

Contact institutions

It was our attitude what led us to success in a difficult terrain (note that in those years, our economy was in times of economic recession and our unemployment rate was over 20%, one of the highest rates in the European Union). And despite this, we turned to the action, following the guidelines, not the ones from a great market survey, but the ones from a simple and practical analysis, with the following elements:

Analysis of current trends

1) Contact agencies and institutions that provide us useful information for the searching, for example, the *Public Employment Service* to get an updated movement of supply and demand of employment; with the *Chamber of Commerce*, to get a list of the largest companies and new companies in the area; with *business associations* to contact their partners; with *trade unions*, to give us clues about the economic health of companies and job creation in the region, etc.

Gather and update

information

2) Analyse market trends, through, for example, the study of *current vacancy announcements* appearing in print, radio, internet and television; or review of the *yellow pages* of telephone directories, to get a rough idea of the variety of companies operating in the city and county; or analysis of the *development plans* provided by governments or by city halls, and the incidence of the phenomenon of immigration, etc.

3) Summarize information in a card of labour market survey of the community, including at the end, a list of companies to visit. The card and the list should be regularly updated so they will be useful tools for the job finding.

6. 2 MARKETING AND SALES TECHNIQUES

In the job finding, effectiveness of the method is assessed by the results. This means that if good results are achieved, any method is valid and none will have a higher predicament than another.

Searching methods

1) *Cold search*

Table 1 shows two main methods of job finding: **cold search** and search **with references**, the first one includes those strategies that are used without previous notice: a phone call, sending an email or letter, or presenting in a company without warning. This method is the easiest, we can use it whenever we want, but, generally, is ineffective. It does not mean it does not work because we all have found a good job through this system some time.

2) *Search with references*

Search with references, however, can get more reliable results and a greater availability of the employer to support us in our goals. It is true that this is a more difficult and laborious method than the previous one in the previous step to obtaining an interview, because it requires a full investigation of relationships and most appropriate people that can contact and present us to the employer.

“Customized employment”

This second method is the one that should always be used, when trying to place a person with significant disabilities or from other stigmatized groups, requiring the negotiation of individual employment conditions, special adaptations, and a context of excellent natural supports, this is called *customized employment* according to customer specifications.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>GOLD SEARCH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Telephone ▪ E-mail ▪ Visits without warning 		<p>UNSURE RESULTS</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SEARCH WITH REFERENCES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Previous research ▪ Influence network ▪ Quality interviews 		<p>SURE RESULTS</p>

Table 1: Different methods of job finding and their consequences.

For job finding, we should know something about sales techniques, because when we present ourselves to the employer, we will offer him/her not a product to buy, but an idea and a service to participate.

Sale for mutual benefit

The sale is actually the exchange of a product, idea or service for mutual benefit of the seller and the buyer. We emphasize "mutual benefit" because in the act of selling we do not only seek to place our candidate, but we seek to cover specific needs of the employer, and that he/she is satisfied with our worker and our support services. It is a "win-win" proposal.

Good presentation

Offer an opportunity and services

Therefore, a good marketing must begin with a good presentation of ourselves and our services. First of all we must know what our mission is, know the services we offer and be positive in communicating our proposal, stating with conviction that an exciting opportunity is being offered for his/her company to participate in this social initiative.

Good marketing, good dossier

Supported

employment has 2 clients

Methods of exploration:

Letter

It is compulsory to carry a dossier of presentation with a good graphic design, concise, clear and not too long. Supported employment has two clients, on the one hand, the person with different abilities, and on the other hand, the entrepreneur. Both are recipients of our services and we should satisfy them, covering their needs.

In short, we could say that there are different methods of exploration or job finding, which are encompassed in the two groups mentioned above.

Telephone

MAIL APPROACH

- Send personalized letters announcing a phone call or visit.
- It lets us skip the filter elements.
- It is done by a motivational letter, where a call or visit is concreted.

Visit

TELEPHONE APPOINTMENT

- A call is made for an appointment.
- We are received at the right time.
- A prior preparation is made (equipment and personnel) and we only "sell" an appointment.

References

INDIRECT INTRODUCTION

- An unexpectedly visit is made.
- An interview or appointment is made or information is achieved.
- We must leave our business card with a message for the client if he/she cannot see us.

Door-to-door

BY DYNAMIC REFERENCE

- Ask for recommendations to introduce us to new customers.
- Provide names and reliable directions.

- The client is asked: Why do you trust us?
To whom could you introduce us?

In group

Furthermore, one can distinguish between methods "door-to-door" and "search in group"; door-to-door is the individualized search method, which is usually the most effective, because one presents his/her services here and now, to this employer, and he/she is responded to his/her concerns and questions in an individualized way. The search in group refers to acts of presentation of our project and services to an employer's assembly, and it has to do with dissemination and marketing activities. These meetings and presentations can be positive and, therefore, they are recommendable, because of these, new records may arise with individual entrepreneurs, to explain them in their company the details of our initiative.

Dissemination and marketing activities

In the whole process of marketing and dissemination, associated with the job finding phase, the following activities can be carried out:

- Organization of lectures and public workshops.
- Intervention in the media, writing articles on business, professional or trade union publications.
- Systematic use of media (newspapers, radio and television) and direct advertising.
- Direct Propaganda: brochures, flyers, posters, dossiers.
- Preparation of informative videos of our performances.
- Permanent intervention in acts related to employment, training and business.
- Approximation and constant information to government agencies related to our business: employment office, labour

Intensive marketing

Dissemination of results

Social marketing

inspection, Local Government, city halls, etc.

- Develop acts or create platforms of constant involvement of business and associated entities, etc.

At first, we must make a great effort of dissemination and marketing, for example, launch a new programme, but it is sufficient to influence disseminating the results achieved regularly and publicizing companies linked to our initiative, with the support of public administrations, etc. The public recognition of employers that provide jobs to disabled people and other supported groups is often an element highly valued by the business community in general, which means social marketing for their companies, a type of marketing highly sought today.

Social marketing and public recognition are definitely a side effect and added value that can be advanced as a complementary sales pitch, but it has a lot of weight. If dissemination is well done and we have an intermittent but constant presence in the media, it will not be necessary to search for jobs intensively, but the business community itself will call us and offer us new jobs.

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