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Abstract

The Department of Rehabilitation has a program in place called Job Club for incoming clients. This project is a consolidation and revision of the current Job Club training presentations that is a part of the Department of Rehabilitation's employment process. The Job Club training provides training in Soft Skills, Resume Writing, and an understanding of Professionalism in the sense of current Western American Culture. Unfortunately, the problem with the Job Club training was that it did not effectively communicate information to the audience. The contributing factors of this problem was that the presentations were very lengthy, lacked visual aids, had poor grammar, and were not in an organized fashion. The consequences of this is that the audience was not receiving the current information, would be overwhelmed with information, and would not be giving their full attention to the content. The new organization of these presentations and the amount of content was adjusted, as well as the addition of new information, and visual aids has created a new Job Club training. This new training is more vibrant, interactive with the audience, is condensed to a length that is manageable, and has the most current and important information pertaining to the employment process. This new revisions of the Job Club training has not been introduced to its intended audience as it is being adjusted and refined to promote the best information for the clients of the Department of Rehabilitation.

Key words: Soft Skills, Job Club, Professionalism, Resume Writing, Training.

Agency & Communities Served

The Department of Rehabilitation is a state agency whose mission is to “work in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities” (DOR 2020). The Job Specialist department of the DOR specializes in working in collaboration with consumers to secure desired employment positions. Consumers are able to secure employment positions by setting employment goals and creating objectives to meet goals, researching the industry and the educational backgrounds of individuals already in the goal employment position, as well as assimilating to professional work culture with the practice of Soft Skills which include Teamwork, Attitude, Critical Thinking, and Communication. The Department of Rehabilitation works closely with High schools and High School and College aged students activities such as pre employment planning that focuses on preparing for the transition from high school to college or from college to the work for depending on the consumer’s needs. Another tool that is used to assist young consumers is Job Exploration Counseling where students are able to take internships or volunteer positions to gain a better understanding of the position as well as first hand experience in an employment setting. The DOR also offers self advocacy training to reinforce their self confidence for leadership roles and stand up for themselves. Another service that the DOR offers is helping individuals who are SSI or any type of government assistance that want to enter or reenter the workforce but are fearful that they will lose their benefits if they obtain a employment position. This is done by looking at what kind of assistance the consumer is benefiting from, the reason for the assistance, and assisting consumers in understanding the impact of employment on cash and health benefits (DOR 2021). The main consumers of the

Department of Rehabilitation services are individuals with disabilities who are entering, reentering or want to change their career and are in need of guidance in meeting their employment goal. According to data collected by the Department of Labor in 2020, “Across all age groups, persons with disabilities were much less likely to be employed than those with no disabilities” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021). Having a realistic understanding of the current climate of employment settings and incorrect stigma related to persons with disabilities, it is important to see that people with disabilities are a minority subculture of the United States whose individuals may need help navigating foreign avenues in order to secure a healthy and happy living environment.

Problem Description

The Department of Rehabilitation has a training program in place called Job Club. Within the Job Club, clients of the DOR learn important skills and best practices when going through an employment process. Content includes understanding one's own body language, how to interact with hiring personnel, how to disclose their disabilities, and Soft Skills needed for once employment is obtained. Unfortunately there is a problem with the Job Club training, it is not effectively communicating information to its audience. Contributing factors to this issue are that it is unorganized, lacks visual aids, lacks current information, and it is too long to expect the audience to stay attentive during the entire duration. The consequences of the problem is that the clients of the DOR are not able to retain the information and put it to use and are not getting current information. Because the method of educating them on needed employment topics has been neglected, they are not getting the best understanding of Soft Skills use, how to go about creating their resume and cover letter, and how to navigate an interview.

Having Soft Skills training prior to an employment process aids an individual dearly as Soft Skills is one the “most desirable traits an incoming employee can possess” (Lau, 2021, p.1). Soft Skills is one of the top priorities of the Job Club training as they are of great use in any employment opportunity as well as help in the individual professional development.

Contributing Factors

The DOR’s primary way of educating their clients with the information of Job Club is through power point presentations. With a large majority of the clients of the DOR being on the Autism Spectrum, their attention span plays a large role in the interaction with the Job Club presentation. A study on *Attention Function and Dysfunction in Autism* by Greg Allen and Eric Courchesne, found that “Impairments of attention are among the most consistently reported cognitive deficits in autism (Allen, 2001, p.1).” For the reason of compromised attention span in the clients of the DOR, the length as well as the organization of the PowerPoint presentations can negatively affect the audience in absorbing information.

Another contributing factor is the lack of current information. A study done by the J Williams Staffing group found that “Not one industry leader got to where they are today by doing the same thing, the same way, for their entire career. (Williams, 2020, p.1)” This is important because it shows that work environments are ever changing and people need to adapt to their work environments. That is why it is important that the Job Club presentation have the most up to date information to provide DOR clients, so they have the skills to make change in the employment journey.

This is where you should have your research on your contributing factors. Each contributing factor should have research to back it up with proper APA citations. You should have about three contributing factors.

Consequences

The consequences of this problem has to do with the cognitive abilities of the client's at the agency. Because of the overwhelming unorganization of the Job Club training coupled with its length and lack of current information, the consequence is that they are not able to possess a solid understanding of the content, let alone practice and refine the skills of the Job Club. In a study questioning whether or not *practice makes perfect* by Henny Boshuizen found that "Before someone becomes an expert in a field, many years of theoretical education and practical training have passed (Boshuizen, 2020, p.3)." The Department of Rehabilitation does not expect their clients to be experts on what works for them after one training, but is it imperative that they are retaining the information from the Job Club.

Another consequence is that since the information within the Job Club training is out of date they clients are not getting correct information. With the current pandemic and the use of virtual working being so prevalent, is it imperative for clients to understand best practices and common issues when working and interviewing virtually. In a report done by Harvard Business college they look at the COVID-19 pandemic and remember it as "COVID-19 forced many companies to send employees home—often with a laptop and a prayer (Gerdeman, 2021, p.2)." Clients of the DOR need information on how to navigate the current situation we are in because it is very unique to what we have experienced before.

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
It is unorganized.	The Job Club training at the Department of Rehabilitation is not effectively communicating information to its audience.	Clients are not able to retain the information and put it to use.
lacks current information.		Clients are getting correct information.
it is too long to expect the audience to stay attentive during the entire duration.		

Capstone Project Description and Justification

Capstone Project

The Professional Soft Skills is a series of slideshow presentations with the intention of helping prepare individuals entering or reentering common professional places of employment. These presentations will be broken down into three different sections with each section having common topics. Topics will include the use of soft skills such as leadership, body languages, the use of networking. As well as interviewing skills including how to present yourself professionally and how to highlight one’s education and previous work experience to be applicable for the desired position. Lastly, how to stay motivated in the employment process, how to disclose disabilities, and how to feel comfortable assimilating to professional employment positions. By going through all the wonderful information provided by the DOR

and organizing it into an easy to digest fashion, that is also visually appealing while still having the most important information pertaining to the employment process.

Project Purpose

This project will be a complete revision of the Job Club training program and will be easy to follow with each section being organized and having common information. The unorganization of the Job Club training made it very confusing and hard to navigate. By ensuring that there is a flow and a common goal of understanding, it is bettering the effectiveness of information being communicated.

Project Justification

By having an organized format with easy to digest information, visual aids, and worded in a fashion that is easy for anyone to understand it ensures that the audience will be able to understand and retain information. A study by a group called Education Corner, looked at the process of remembering information and found that “Organizing information into logical categories is one of the most effective ways of improving recall and memory (Education Corner, 2016, p.1).” By having information in an organized fashion, it makes it easier to retain information and recall that information at a later date. This is certain for any individual but is very essential for individuals with learning disabilities and those who are on the autism spectrum.

Project Implementation

All the information will be taken into account, analyzed and put into a section that it makes the most sense to be in. Once all the information has been put into its own section, it will be analyzed once more to ensure that it is current and is worded correctly. Then the information will be sorted within each section to ensure that the section's flow makes sense to the audience. Once all the information is verified in the correct sections, visual aids will be added to reinforce the message of the content as well as keep the audience's attention. Once all the information has been sorted, organized, added new current information, and visual aids have been added, the Job Club training has been updated.

Assessment Plan

To measure the merit and worth of the training there will be a pre and post test to measure the audience's understanding on the topic of Soft Skills, use of interview processes including resume writing and interview interactions, and disclosure of disabilities. The pre and post test will be compared to show whether there is growth in the audience's understanding of the topics.

Expected Outcomes

Because Job Club is already a current process of the DOR, It is expected that clients will receive new information but with the new revision to Job Club, their understanding of information will be better and make them better at using these tools in real employment situations. It is expected that the Job Club participants will have a more enjoyable time with the new revised version of Job Club.

Project Results

The project has not been introduced to clients of the DOR. In a trial test with a randomized group of college students, there was a pretest and post test as well as a verbal feedback after the presentation. The results showed that the audience felt all the information with the presentation was important, was presented in an understandable fashion, the visual aids helped reinforce the messages, and the length of the presentation did stay within reasonable length.

Conclusion & Recommendations

If the program were to be implemented into the Job Club process, it is important that the agency staff that is presenting has had practice in presenting the information and communicating it to the audience. Even though the presentation has great information in an easy to understand fashion, it is still important that the presenter has practice presenting and communicating the information.

Personal Reflection

I learned that even within state agencies, there can be processes that can be overlooked. When I had first seen the state of the Job Club presentations, I could not believe that they were being used to help clients build an understanding of soft skills and the overall employment process. The biggest limitation was the inability to sit face to face with clients and walk them through the new version of Job Club and then make more revisions depending on their feedback. This limitation was overcome by holding a group to test the content and organization on. The

broader issue this project related to is the advocacy for individuals with disabilities. It can be very discouraging at times for an individual entering a new work environment. This change can be made more difficult by individuals who do know to treat people of disabilities fairly. More that could be done if to provide communities with information on how widespread disabilities are and how anyone can have a disability or need accommodations in a work environment.

Advice for future capstone students would be that you can do it. It is just seeing a problem, and getting the best understanding of the problem, meaning who is involved, who can make that change and what has to be done to make that change.

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Appendix A

Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
Take all Job Club information in to account.	Virtual		Sean Richardson
Analyze information and put into sections.	Virtual		Duane Bradford
Adjusted information to correct, simple grammar.	Virtual		Duane Bradford
Sort each section so that it flows correctly.	Virtual		Duane Bradford
Add visual aid to reinforce the message of presentations.	Virtual		Duane Bradford
Turn Slide over to agency for final adjustments and additions.	Virtual		Duane Bradford

All the information will be taken into account, analyzed and put into a section that it makes the most sense to be in. Once all the information has been put into its own section, it will be analyzed once more to ensure that it is current and is worded correctly. Then the information will be sorted within each section to ensure that the section's flow makes sense to the audience. Once all the information is verified in the correct sections, visual aids will be added to reinforce the message of the content as well as keep the audience's attention. Once all the information has been sorted, organized, added new current information, and visual aids have been added, the Job Club training has been updated.