

Employer Engagement Toolkit



Toolkit Overview

Employer engagement isn't just about filling vacancies - it's about building relationships. It means understanding what businesses truly need and connecting them with job seekers who are ready, willing, and capable. It's about turning short-term placements into lasting, mutually beneficial partnerships.

This toolkit offers job developers simple, human-centered tools and strategies to help connect with employers, build trust, and maintain strong relationships over time. The goal is to move beyond only transactional job placements and foster long-term partnerships that work for both employers and job seekers.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit provides a structured approach to building and maintaining relationships with employers, ultimately leading to more successful job placements and career advancement opportunities for job seekers. By utilizing this toolkit, job developers and employment consultants can improve their communication, understand employer needs, and create tailored strategies for connecting qualified candidates with suitable positions.

It is a source of useful tips, templates, cheat sheets, and strategies to initiate connections with employers and throughout the partnership building process. Each stage of the engagement journey below features tools to help with self-reflection and learning, so you can adapt them to your own style and for the communities you serve.

Look out for these symbols to guide you as you learn and implement various ideas and strategies.



Worksheet



Resource



Template





From transactional job placements to build long-term partnerships

Think of employer engagement as a journey - outreach gets you in the door, onboarding earns their trust, and retention builds loyalty.

Employer Engagement Journey Map



Stage 1: Discover - Identifying Potential Employers

Identifying potential employers means more than making lists—it requires understanding labour trends, local hiring needs, and building trust through networking and community connections. Job developers must stay informed and tailor outreach, recognizing that small businesses are key partners in creating meaningful, high-volume employment opportunities for youth and job seekers.



Organizational Employer engagement assessment



LMI Information

Stage 2: Explore – Outreach & Communications Plan:

Strategic outreach is about mindset, positioning, and leveraging existing relationships. Job developers should begin with known employer connections and personalize their approach. Effective outreach solves employer problems, builds trust, and strengthens partnerships. Recognizing existing networks helps teams uncover opportunities and create meaningful engagement that leads to sustainable employment outcomes.





Helpful Tips

- Personalize every message
- Focus on solving employer problems
- Follow up consistently



Developing an Employer Outreach Plan



What to Consider When Drafting an Employer Outreach Plan

Possible Marketing Methods That a Job Developer can use for Effective Employer Engagement Outreach



What Effective Marketing Methods Are You Using?

Stage 3: Connect - Understanding Employer Needs for Their Talent Pipelines

Understanding employer needs requires not just individual company outreach but also awareness of industry-specific hiring trends and challenges. Different sectors face unique pressures, from credentialing requirements to skill shortages, which directly influence how employment programs should be designed and delivered.



Practice Activity: If I Were the Employer

The Needs Wheel

Employer Reality Check Activity Worksheet



Using Labour Market Information

Pain points check list

Suggested Questions to ask Rural Employers when trying to engage



Sector Needs Assessment Templates – Childcare, Social Services, Skilled Trades, Retail & Hospitality





Stage 4: Engage – Presenting an Employer – Centred Plan

While identifying employers interested in IES services is an important first step, the real value lies in the relationships built over time. Understanding an employer's needs and interests opens the door to deeper engagement—some may be looking to hire specific demographics, while others might be open to advising on program design or sharing industry expertise with job developers and job seekers. This is why pitching your services effectively is crucial. Your pitch should clearly communicate your Employer Value Proposition—highlighting how your services benefit the employer and why partnering with your employment agency makes good business sense.



[3-Step Overcoming Objections Tool](#)

[Readiness for Developing Employer-Centric Messaging](#)

[Job Carving](#)

[Elevator Pitch Tool](#)



[Inventory of Existing Employer Relationships](#)

Case: Recognizing that [Karis Disability Services](#) was consistently recruiting, we identified it as a strategic employer to engage with. We had previously partnered with Karis through our Connections Program, where they accepted placement students—primarily newcomers and individuals receiving social assistance. This existing relationship gave us a natural entry point.

To explore deeper collaboration, our Director of Employment & Training Services leveraged a personal connection within Karis. That contact helped facilitate an introduction to their Human Resources department, which opened the door to more meaningful engagement.

This warm outreach approach not only strengthened our credibility but also accelerated the partnership building process, allowing us to align our services with Karis's ongoing workforce needs.





Stage 5: Sustain - Placements, Retention, and Relationship Building

Employers play a vital role beyond hiring. They help shape workforce programs by sharing industry insights, co-designing training, and offering mentorship, internships, and job shadowing. Their involvement ensures programs stay relevant and practical, while strengthening the talent pipeline and creating real opportunities for job seekers.

This is what Janet Paul, HR for Karis Disability Services had to say about their collaboration with TNG after implementing the Pathways to Developmental Service Worker Training Program:

“The partnership has been an instrumental one in that it has fed into the organization’s strategic priorities. Connecting with communities is a focus along with recruitment and retention. The value this partnership brings to our frontline teams has been remarkable. The participants bring an eagerness to work. They come ready and prepared to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, transferable skills and abilities. This has been impressive”.



[Employer Engagement Continuum Worksheet](#)

[Needs Analysis Worksheet: Sustaining Employer Relationships](#)



[Sustaining Employer Relationships – Do’s & Don’ts](#)





Stage	 Worksheet	 Resource	 Template
Discover	<u>Understanding Employer Engagement</u>	<u>LMI Information</u>	
Explore	<u>Developing an Employer Outreach Plan</u>	<u>What to Consider When Drafting an Employer Outreach Plan</u> <u>Possible Marketing Methods That a Job Developer can use for Effective Employer Engagement Outreach</u>	<u>What Effective Marketing Methods Are You Using?</u>
Connect	<u>Practice Activity: If I Were the Employer</u> <u>The Needs Wheel</u> <u>Employer Reality Check Activity Worksheet</u>	<u>Using Labour Market Information</u> <u>Pain points check list</u> <u>Suggested Questions to ask Rural Employers when trying to engage</u>	<u>Sector Needs Assessment Templates –</u> <u>Childcare</u> <u>Social Services</u> <u>Skilled Trades</u> <u>Retail & Hospitality</u>
Engage	<u>3-Step Overcoming Objections Tool</u> <u>Readiness for Developing Employer-Centric Messaging</u> <u>Job Carving</u> <u>Elevator Pitch Tool</u>	<u>Inventory of Existing Employer Relationships</u>	
Sustain	<u>Employer Engagement Continuum Worksheet</u> <u>Needs Analysis Worksheet: Sustaining Employer Relationships</u>	<u>Sustaining Employer Relationships - Do's & Don'ts</u>	

Have feedback or would like more information on how this training can be held for your organization team then contact: info@firstwork.org

