



B O T H N E R • B R A D L E Y

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTING

Great Expectations Initiative  
Audience Research  
*Findings and Recommendations*

---

Sedgwick County Developmental Disabilities Organization  
October 26, 2012

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

*"Far and away the best price that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." – Theodore Roosevelt*

The goal of this research project was simply this: To understand the perceptions of key stakeholders about the benefits and barriers of hiring people with disabilities. From those who are closest to the person with a disability – family and caregivers, agency case workers and job coaches – to those with a little more distance – teachers and business leaders – we realized that there would be a need to align how the concept of what is often called "supported employment" is perceived in the community.

The findings are consistent. There is concern that every person with a disability can find employment within a private business or industry. However, there is growing understanding and acceptance that supported employment is the preferred option when circumstances allow it.

As the project unfolded, it became apparent that those working most closely on the program – from the Sedgwick County Developmental Disabilities Organization (DDO) to lead agencies to vocational rehabilitation – would need to adjust how they talked with each other and businesses about the project. While "Great Expectations" was used at the start of the program, it soon shifted to a way to describe a grant project. The term "integrated employment" was found to be more effective in describing the program, particularly for businesses.

For the person with disabilities, benefits are increased independence and self-esteem. Barriers are fear of the unknown, social anxiety, and families who are not ready to let their loved ones go into the "real world" on their own.

For business, the benefits are a diverse workforce with employees who are dedicated, loyal and caring. The barriers are fears about employees who might take extra time for training, who might not be able to do the job and ultimately who might not be able to contribute to a positive bottom line. An online survey indicates businesses would like to hire people with disabilities, but they need help. Marketing and communication will help, but most of it will be one-on-one coaching and assurance from agencies that represent the job seeker.

For the community, stakeholders believe there continues to be a stigma – or uncomfortable feeling – when interacting with a person with disabilities. The benefits, however, are found in understanding a person who is different from them as well as societal benefits associated with more people in the workforce.

This report will show that marketing is an important part of a plan that raises awareness and changes perceptions in order to reach the goal of hiring more people with disabilities in our community. It outlines what we learned from the research, as well as recommendations about how to build a new brand for integrated employment in our community.

## RESEARCH PURPOSE

In May 2011, the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization (DDO) asked Bothner and Bradley Inc., a communication and consulting firm in Wichita, to assist with a new program called the Great Expectations Initiative (GEI). The goal was to provide “program and advisory services in developing strategies (to achieve) the over-arching goal of implementing and evaluating a social service awareness program to educate key stakeholders on the benefits and importance of integrated employment and self-sufficiency for persons with intellectual disabilities within Sedgwick County.”

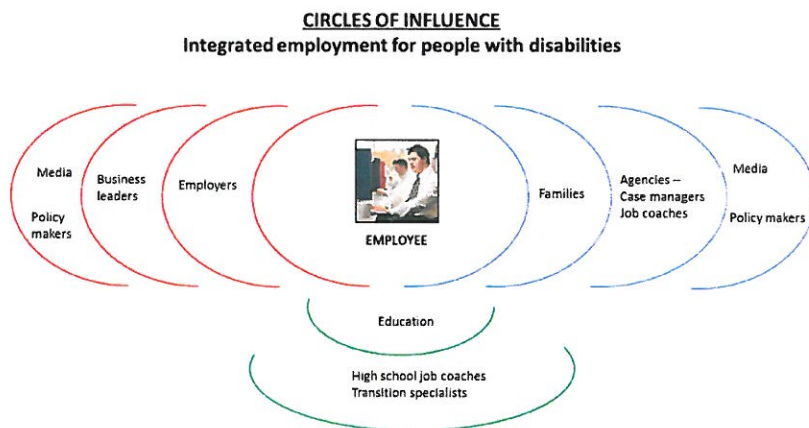
Services outlined included:

- Secondary research
- Primary audience research with key stakeholders:
  - Agency leaders – individual interviews
  - Case managers – individual interviews
  - Job coaches – several small group discussions
  - Education specialists – individual interviews
  - Families and caregivers – focus group
  - Businesses – online survey through Wichita Independent Business Association and Society of Human Resource Management

It should be noted that the University of Kansas conducted research with people with disabilities, who have been described as clients or customers. For the purposes of this audience research, we will use the term “employee” or “job seeker.” Their research should be considered as a companion piece with research findings and recommendations in this report.

The outcome for GEI is that more people with disabilities find permanent employment in the community. From a marketing perspective, the challenge was to determine current perceptions – benefits and barriers – about hiring people with disabilities through audience research. Based on the findings, recommendations are made about how to raise awareness and change attitudes that eventually will lead to more people with disabilities being hired in the community.

Throughout the research, a “circle of influence” began emerging, with the person with a disability at the center and stakeholders at different levels around the person. (See diagram)



Following is a summary of research findings, as well as recommendations about marketing strategies designed for targeted stakeholder groups. A brief discussion about evaluation tactics also is included.

---

## FINDINGS

---

### SECONDARY RESEARCH

Based on secondary research, it quickly became evident that the best practice for a program like GEI was an approach called “social marketing.” Social marketing is a term that combines the art and science from multiple disciplines, including communication, marketing, psychology and behavioral health.

A common definition for social marketing is “application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior or target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society.” (Andreasen, 1995)

Key elements include a consumer-centric orientation, creating an exchange that advances the interests of multiple groups, segmentation and the four basic elements of a marketing program (product, price, place and promotion).

Social marketing is a natural fit for this program, as the model used at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) is focused on a marketing mindset. That is, starting internally by changing the culture of those agencies that are implementing and promoting supported employment.

The VCU model focuses on two primary audiences. They are the:

- Internal customer, or the job seeker, and
- External customer, the employer

The model involves rebranding social service agencies as employment agencies and that means changing operations from the inside out – from how they are reimbursed, to how they reward employees to how they communicate with each other and especially their two audiences – job seekers and employers. In addition, infrastructure challenges, especially transportation, will need to be addressed if the program is to gain momentum.

Following is a summary of articles reviewed:

1. “Health Behavior and Health Education: Theory, Research and Practice,” 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Glanz, Rimer, Lewis (Eds.), 2002 – Overview of behavior change theory, including explanations of social marketing theory and practice
2. “Supported and Customized Employment,” Wendy Parent, PhD, Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities (October 2004) – framed the understanding and language of effort.
3. Video – “America’s Strength” from the America’s Strength Foundation
  - Focused on addressing perceived barriers of employers
  - Promoted benefits through success stories at employers such as IBM, Wal-Mart, Bank of America, Inter-Continental Hotel, Cincinnati’s Children’s Hospital

- Raising expectations of person with disabilities, increases outcomes – importance of starting early with messages that define expectations of employment in the community
4. Virginia Commonwealth University – model program (Lesson 3 of the Supported Employment Certificate Series):
- Focus is on job development, which is different than “organizational marketing,” though the two support each other
  - Marketing mindset is customer based
  - The series recommends an organizational marketing plan that combines organizational marketing and job development because both involve:
    - Relationship building
    - Service marketing
    - Informational networking
  - The plan includes an emphasis on building relationships. “Networking is perhaps the single most important implementation strategy used in marketing.” (Page 32) Other highlights included:
    - Reframing customers as “job seeker” and “employer”
    - The plan should answer:
      1. What are the needs of the customers?
      2. What are outcomes? For example, jobs of choice, employment satisfaction, careers
      3. What is the message? For example, a message that highlights the service of “putting people with disabilities in community jobs” is not appealing to employers. Rather, “identifying employees to meet the personnel needs of today’s business community.” It should be professional and concise
      4. What is the promotional plan? What tools will be used? The answer to this is based on the resources available. It could include: public speaking, attending community and civic meetings, offering training to employers, word of mouth advertising by customers, and public service announcements. Tools could include brochures, flyers, business cards, social media, as well as non-traditional methods (for example, sponsoring placards at tee boxes at local fundraising golf tournament). Newspaper and broadcast stories, inserts in corporate and business newsletters, web pages, pens, notepads, etc. – to highlight the agency and reframe as an employment agency meeting business needs.
      5. How will success be determined or evaluated? Examples include customer satisfaction surveys, interviews, content analysis.
5. “Organizational Change for Community Employment,” Journal of Rehabilitation (1999)
- Key questions to ask local program or systems people – used to inform interviews with agency leaders.
  - Conclusions –

- In for-profit world, motivation for change is financial results. In human services, it will take a change in financial reimbursement.
- Everyone in the organization, from board to consumers to management and staff must believe in the importance of employment for people with disabilities
- Redirecting of resources and substantial change in the way staff and consumers spend their time, with tangible result of employment in the community as the end result.
- Multidimensional factors produce and maintain change – social, governmental policy, agency leadership and advocacy from people with disabilities and families

6. “Employer Attitudes and Satisfaction with Supported Employment” – 1997

- This report informed the development of the survey used with Wichita businesses (see Audience Research)
- In a comparison of findings, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General – Employment Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities found that promising employment programs at the state level had state councils that worked to increase public awareness through coordinated poster campaigns, periodic newsletters, legislative proposals, resources guides, videos and conferences. State resources focused on changing perceptions and attitudes by working to place people with disabilities in visible settings, highlighting current employment programs on Internet websites and providing public recognition of exemplary employers.
- Other highlights included
  1. Supported employment programs – paid work in a variety of integrated settings with job coaches.
  2. High school-to-Work Transition programs – career opportunities
  3. Person-centered planning – individual planning that includes person with disability, employment advisers, agencies, job coaches, families and friends (voucher program)
  4. Entrepreneurial grants – for person with disabilities to develop their own business plans
  5. State hiring initiatives – targeting people with disabilities for job vacancies in government entities
  6. Involve employer community, building long-term supports for people with disabilities and marketing the skills of person with developmental disabilities.
  7. Collaboration with other state agencies to educate employers, create public awareness
- Less than effective approaches included providing too many financial incentives to employers, so that it appears to be “overselling.” Programs should work to fill actual HR needs that companies have. Negative perceptions about hiring a person with disabilities are a barrier. Raising public awareness and support for jobs can be done with presentations to civic groups, Chambers, employer groups and developing business advisory councils.

7. Businesses – organization change – Kotter and Prochaska – “readiness to change.” This concept can be applied to agencies and community as well. Kotter, “Leading change: why transformation efforts fail. In Harvard Business Review on Change (1998). Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente, Changing for Good (1994)
  - 8 major errors that lead to failed attempts at organizational change
    1. Not establishing a great enough sense of urgency
    2. Not creating a powerful enough guiding coalition
    3. Lacking a vision
    4. Under-communicating the vision by a factor of ten
    5. Not removing obstacles to the new vision
      1. Structures and support
    6. Not systematically planning for and creating short-term wins
    7. Declaring victory too soon
    8. Not anchoring changes in the organization’s culture
  - o From [www.worksupport.com](http://www.worksupport.com), the key characteristics of employers who are open to people with disabilities include employers who:
    1. Include people with disabilities with all workers and treat them equally
    2. Welcome diversity; they are egalitarian and inclusive
    3. Management style is more personal and flexible
    4. Focus on a worker’s performance, not his or her disability
    5. Have a senior management team that expects and rewards diversity
    6. Are comfortable providing accommodations to all their employees
    7. Organization provides “cafeteria style” benefits
  
8. APSE Connections, “National Employer Survey” (June 2011) – Survey of 411 HR managers and senior executives.
  - A perceived lack of qualified candidates
  - Use of personal networks is critical (of those employers who had hired at least one person with a disability in past three years, referrals by current employees, friends or word-of-mouth referrals)
  - Service providers are a significant source of recruitment
  - Many employers don’t perceive service providers as particularly effective
  - Some employers feel service providers do not provide quality candidates
  - Many employers don’t see value in provider services
  - Employers are interested in the types of services available from service providers
  - Conclusion: Changing the message, resulting in a more positive impression and better understanding. “However, the solution is not simply better marketing. Service providers must use new strategies to engage employers, show better understanding of business needs and offer a menu of services that respond to those needs.”

## AUDIENCE RESEARCH

Audience research was conducted with six primary stakeholder groups, defined as groups that influenced whether or not a person with a disability could be placed in a job in the community. Scripts can be found in the Addendum of this report.

- Agency leaders – individual interviews
- Case managers – individual interviews
- Job coaches – several small group discussions
- Education specialists – individual interviews
- Families and caregivers – focus group
- Businesses – online survey through Wichita Independent Business Association and Society of Human Resource Management

Following is a summary of findings from each stakeholder group. However, in general, the findings support the following:

- Points to the importance of aligning internal resources so that integrated employment can be successful. Leaders support it but see it as part of a spectrum. Case managers and job coaches are sometimes “competing” when it comes to advocating for the person with disabilities and their families. A strong, consistent internal voice is needed to ensure external messages to families, businesses and the community are heard and understood.
- Recognizes the “real world” aspect that there are varying levels of need. A person-centered focus works for integrated employment, as well as sheltered workshops – it is meeting the “consumer” (person with disabilities) where he or she is at.
- Identifies the need to start early with expectations about employment – both with the person with disabilities as well as the community at large
- Points to a business-to-business model that is based on relationships

### Agency Leaders

Interviews were conducted with four agency directors, plus one employment manager. Interviews were conducted early in the project (June 2011) and some of the discussion focused on sheltered workshops versus supported employment. In general, they were not opposed to the GEI model, but all acknowledged reimbursements for such a program haven’t caught up to the reality of costs.

They said the internal culture at agencies – even those with sheltered workshops – is changing – with most embracing supported employment as a preferred option, but it is not the only option for everyone. Specifically, they said it probably won’t fit everyone who is disabled, especially those who are fragile in terms of physical disabilities, as well as those who are older. Quotes from the interviews included:

- *“Employment first is great, but not ‘employment only.’”*



- *"I think that there still needs to be options and choices – not a one size or model that fits all, but that it is certainly an option."*
- *"There is a spectrum that is person centered. One person by one person, we need to design and connect the pieces of puzzle."*

They like and appreciate that GEI and the work of Sedgwick County DDO will address stereotypes and stigmas in the community. The economic downturn has made supported employment challenging, but as the economy improves, it will be important to brand this initiative as an option that meets employment needs in the community.

In general, they

- See the importance of starting early in a person's life, working with families so the expectation for supported employment is built into their mindset from the beginning.
- See the fears among families and caregivers, as well as the person with disabilities themselves, when moving out into the "real world." It is considered much more dangerous than the protective environment of a sheltered workshop. In addition, financial incentives for people with disabilities, their families and the institutions themselves have not made moving to the supported employment model appealing.
- Believe an effective spokesperson will be a businessperson who has had positive experiences in hiring several people with disabilities and can speak to their colleagues about their experiences.
- Believe the benefits for the person with a disability is increased self-confidence and independence; for the family it is the security that their loved one will be self-sufficient; for the community it is decreasing the need for some social services while getting more people in the workforce.
- However, they caution that supported employment continues to have social costs, especially for people with severe disabilities or multiple diagnoses (such as intellectual disabilities and a mental illness).

*"They (people with disabilities) need the right supports around them so they can be employed. Increasingly, that's a challenge."*

Specifically, they identified the following benefits, barriers and opportunities of an integrated employment initiative:

- Benefits
  - Less costly for taxpayer
  - For employee – self-esteem, responsibility, quality of life
  - For families – long-term outlook is better
  - For community – changes expectations, perceptions

- For employers – “Access to a greater diverse workforce – helps all of us to access to employees who are dependable, care, want to work – and they are doing the right thing for their business while doing good.”
- Accelerated approval process
- Barriers
  - Low wages for people with disabilities
  - Families afraid
  - Clients (job seekers) not wanting to
  - Stigma in community
  - Economy – no jobs
  - Funding/reimbursement – higher costs for supported employment because of the individualized support
  - Loss of medical card/SSI/benefits
  - Transportation
- Solutions
  - Business advisory council
  - Business Leadership Network
  - “You don’t have to over-think it too much if you figure out what the client wants to do, then gently nudge (an employer) to try something different.”

### **Case Managers**

Interviews were conducted with four case managers. In summary, they acknowledged there was an “old way of thinking” inherent in some of the agencies and that a culture change was needed in order to fully adopt and implement integrated employment as a preferred way of doing business.

Among the benefits of the integrated approach were:

- Quick approvals
- Placing “some of the best” employees – hard workers
- “Job carving”

Barriers included:

- Difficulty for anyone to find a job in the current economy
- People with disabilities who get “set in their ways” – like the comfort, the activities they are doing
- Families are afraid of their loved one being in an unprotected environment where they could get hurt
- Not knowing the impact on benefits – like social security – for people who are placed in jobs
- Not sure this is realistic for some people with disabilities
  - “Skipping a step” – social and people skills
- Limited # of hours for people with disabilities to work

- Transportation

They recommended starting the process of changing attitudes about integrated employment in schools – usually about 14 to 15 years old. That builds expectation for families and students and shows success.

They also noted that case managers and job coaches needed to work together and communicate more. They acknowledged that case managers could be a little more aggressive when working on behalf of a “client” or “customer,” while job coaches might be a little more cautious. They said a process – such as pre-meetings, discussions about expectations and barriers, and continuous communication with each other, the job seeker, families and employers – was important. They all “need to line up,” as one case manager said.

### **Job Coaches**

Two focus group-type discussions were conducted with job coaches from the various agencies working on GEI. In summary, they were “cautiously optimistic” about the success of supported employment in the community and their efforts at placing people with disabilities in jobs. As they went through training, they appeared more supportive of the concept and the potential success of the program.

Highlights included:

- Support of their “consumers” getting jobs
- A real-life understanding regarding employer concerns about hiring someone with disabilities (barriers)
- An appreciation of the “discovery process” with jobseekers. While this is seen as time-consuming, they realize it is critical. An example about the importance of the VCU model, and providing the “discovery” phase of the process, was when an early “win” in the program actually was a loss after one of the first job seekers placed lost his job. At the time it was observed that the model was not followed (no job coaching, employer didn’t have clear picture of what to expect, issues with residential program that needed to be addressed ahead of time)
- A need to explain benefits to employee and employer

### **Educators**

Interviews were conducted with three educators, including one for pre-school aged children. In summary, they agreed that efforts to promote integrated employment for people with disabilities needs to start early in life, so students, parents and teachers had similar expectations about employment.

There was some comparison with mainstreaming, or integrating children with disabilities, in public schools 15 or 20 years ago. Integration allows people to see what supported employment looks like.

They suggested:

- Addressing concerns of families by listening, showing success
- For employers, manage expectations. They are going to be mistakes with any employee.

- Project SEARCH – new example – school classroom inside a business – students trained like employees (some interest from Cargill in Minneapolis; tried with Via Christi)
- Relationships – stressing the importance of building relationships between teachers and students, job coaches and employers, transition staff and agencies.
- The important thing, they said, echoing the concept behind the GEI model is: “Get to know the student at the individual level”
- Encourage parents talking to other parents about success stories
- Barriers
  - o SSI benefits
  - o Transportation
  - o Parents – fearful
- Benefits
  - o For businesses: “It will change their view of what individuals with disabilities are capable of doing.”
  - o Parents – advocate, hopeful

### **Parents/caregivers**

A focus group of nearly 30 family members and caregivers was conducted at the offices of the Sedgwick County DDO. The group represented families and caregivers with loved ones who had varying disabilities and at different ages, from school-aged children to adults who are in their 50s.

The “hope” that families have about their loved ones working in an integrated employment program like GEI ranged across a spectrum, with the majority wanting it for their loved ones, and some more comfortable with a workshop environment and still others believing their loved one would never be able to work in any environment, but especially one that was integrated into a real-life setting.

For those who believed it would never happen, the fear of what their loved one could do (the physical damage) and the liability associated with that were of high concern.

To overcome these barriers toward integrated employment, there seems to be an overwhelming need for job coaches to stay connected to the person with a disability and their family – as well as an integrated and involved member of the team working on behalf of the person with disabilities at the agency. That is, the job coach needs to be present and communicating with the client, the client’s family, the employer and the case manager at the agency. And they need to stay involved for years – not weeks or months – as the clients adjust and need or want transition to other employment opportunities.

The idea of a “Circle of Friends,” such as that found in the school system, was mentioned for employment to be successful – the “circle” including people at work, as well as the typical social service resource system, to surround the person with disabilities.

Transportation also was a common concern among family members – how to get their loved one to and from a job.

It was suggested those working on GEI should focus on communication with the agencies – especially case managers, directly with families if possible and places like ILRC, ARC, Families Together, Catholic

Charities and other places families go for information. Dr. Wendy Parent from KU was mentioned as a credible source among family members, as was Sedgwick County.

In short, there was little awareness of the program, its benefits and the way it is being delivered among families and caregivers. Research indicates the need to quickly address the concerns of integrated employment and getting “inside” the agencies, so that everyone is at least talking about GEI in the same way and framing it in positive ways (i.e. individualized, long-term, etc.).

## Businesses

An online survey was developed and distributed to members of the Wichita Independent Business Association (WIBA) and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). The goal was to assess the perceptions among the Wichita business community about hiring people with disabilities

A total of 62 people completed the survey. Demographics were:

- Age:
  - o 80% 50 and older
  - o 17% 21 to 49
- Who took the survey:
  - o 54% senior executives
  - o 17% managers
- Type of business:
  - o 43.5% Professional service
  - o 39.1% Other: other services, government, construction, communication
- Have you hired a person(s) with disabilities?
  - o 50% yes/50% no
    - 68% Good or Very Good experience

Findings from the survey included:

- Preferred term for the effort:
  - o 56.5% Integrated employment
  - o 30.4% Supported employment
  - o 13% Customized employment
- Hiring a person(s) with disability is overall seen as a positive on an individual level, but less so for their business
- Benefits of hiring a person with disabilities
  - o Improves diversity in a work place
    - 98% Agree or strongly agree
  - o It is seen as the "right thing" to do
    - 100% Agree or strongly agree employees with disabilities should have the opportunity to work
    - 94.6% Agree or strongly agree that employees with disabilities belong in our work setting
  - o Good for the person with disabilities and for those around them
    - 89% Agree or strongly agree that employees with disabilities have a positive effect on workers without disabilities

- 96% Agree or disagree that hiring a person with disabilities improves the self-image for the person
- Barriers of hiring a person with disabilities
  - Belief that people with disabilities take more time to manage (61%)
  - Concern that an employee with disabilities might be unable to perform the work needed (56%)
  - One-quarter or more of those surveyed have a fear about liabilities, costs, not knowing what to expect
  - One-third would not be convinced with financial incentives; nearly 4 out of 10 would not be convinced by a personal visit
- When asked what would move them toward hiring – or reinforcing a decision to hire – a person with disabilities
  - Personal visit (60%)
  - Hearing from employers who have a successful experience (79%)
  - Financial incentives (68%)
- What would NOT convince them to hire someone with a disability?
  - Advertisements (83%)
  - Direct mail (67%)
- What information would convince them?
  - Knowing a person with disabilities is a reliable employee (93.5%)
  - Knowing people with disabilities can meet employment needs (98%)

In conclusion, barriers for the business community are significant, but incremental change is possible. Advertising and direct mail will not work.

One of the first steps will be to rebrand agencies as employment specialists. They need to intentionally use the term “integrated employment,” instead of supported employment or the Great Expectations Initiative. From a marketing perspective, it will take a combination of activities to change perceptions, including:

- Personal success stories from peers
- Convincing employers that people with disabilities can meet their workforce needs
- Personal visits
- Financial incentives
- Education of co-workers

---

## RECOMMENDATIONS

---

1. **A MODEL PROGRAM:** Keep doing what you're doing – Sedgwick County DDO working with agencies, using the VCU model.
  - Identify and target businesses with a “culture of inclusiveness.” The characteristics are listed in the secondary research section above, but include employers who welcome diversity, whose management style is more personal and flexible and who focuses on a worker’s performance. It will make early wins easier, and as these businesses are promoted in the community, it will begin to create a shift in awareness and attitudes.
  - This will change perceptions one business at a time. It’s all about relationships. Focus on building relationships with business. Like building any other relationship:
    - Get to know the other person, their businesses’ needs, what is important to them – ask and listen
    - Offer solutions to their problems; engage them at all levels
    - Consistently provide quality service that meets the business’ needs
  
2. **ORGANIZATIONAL PLANS:** Develop organizational communication plans that reframe agencies as meeting employment needs in the community. Specifically, tactics could include:
  - Ask agency leaders, case managers, and job coaches to meet together regularly so they can stay on task and on message when working with the job seeker, families, employers, and the community, as well as share success stories.
  - Use “integrated employment” and consistent language in every communication opportunity, from in-person discussions to agency websites to every printed piece
  - Highlight success stories through agency communication tools, including newsletters, websites, annual reports, and at meetings and conferences. This helps “build the buzz,” creating an environment while also demonstrating the benefits to all audiences. Consider confidentiality issues of both employee and employer when sharing success stories, developing consent form and seeking approval.
  - Utilize social media, but again be careful with confidentiality issues for the job seeker and the employer. Work with employers to ensure it is good public relations for the business too.
  - Participate in events – job fairs, networking events, trade shows. Consider co-branding with other agencies in the community, providing joint messages and appearances at events.
  - Develop a network of advocates – people with disabilities and families who believe in and/or have had success in integrated employment in the community



### 3. MESSAGES:

- **“Integrated employment. Meeting workforce needs for businesses.”**
  - Use it consistently
  - Use it as frequently as possible
  - For businesses, keep the focus on the benefits to the employer
  
- Emphasize benefits to employers, including:
  - Integrated employment helps the bottom line, by providing employees who can get the job done
  - Job coaches who make personal visits to employers
  - Examples from employers who have a successful experience
  - Low cost to both consumers (job seeker and employer). The employer – gets a reliable, well-trained employee with some financial incentives and personal assistance from agencies.
  
- Overall reason for this approach:
  - Meets the needs of the employers – business’ bottom line
  - More people with disabilities find permanent employment in the community

### 4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

While all organizations working with people with disabilities have a role in community relations – that is, reaching out to the community and promoting the concept of integrated employment – the Sedgwick County DDO has a unique leadership position in bringing stakeholders together and monitoring success in the community.

Within this plan the DDO can facilitate the development of a **Business Leader Network (BLN)** and support the development of spokespeople who can take the messages and success stories about integrated employment into the community. Depending on the audience, spokespeople could include:

#### **SPOKESPEOPLE:**

For people with disabilities:

- People with disabilities who have had success with integrated employment
- Agency caseworkers and job specialists
- Teachers and administrators who believe in the integrated employment model
- Parents who have had success with their own child

For businesses:

- Businesses will listen to other businesses. Among the “leaders” in our community, according to interviews, are:

- Wal-Mart, specifically East Kellogg store
- Salvation Army Thrift Stores
- Central States Electric
- Dillons grocery stores
- Walgreens
- Carlos O’Kelly’s

For parents:

- Teachers and administrators who are advocates for integrated employment
- Sedgwick County DDO directors
- Agency leaders
- Transition specialists within the schools

Within each of these groups, there need to be opportunities for highlighting success stories. The Sedgwick County DDO, working with the BLN, could:

1. Recognize businesses, agencies and individuals (“job seekers”) who are “doing it right” with an annual dinner or recognition luncheon. Messages could include how everyone worked together, including families, educators, businesses and agencies
2. Recognize policymakers who are “championing” the idea of integrated employment, either through the local dinner/luncheon or as part of other activities on the state or local level
3. Monitor activities at agencies – are they using “marketing mindset?” What are they doing regarding organizational change? Goals include reducing anxiety within a competitive environment; include Executive Directors, Targeted Case Managers, Job Coaches/Employment Specialists.
4. Encourage the use of social media in highlighting events, such as BLN recognitions and success stories at agencies. As mentioned earlier, special care needs to be given to confidentiality and regulations that protect the identity of people who are being served in the community. Consent forms are one way to address these concerns. However, asking friends, family, educators, businesses and others to “follow” the story of successful individuals could build a strong network in the community.
5. Coordinate public relations efforts, such as:
  - Editorial board visits at The Wichita Eagle, including policy makers, BLN representatives, agency leaders and the DDO
  - Presentations from BLN leaders at the Chamber of Commerce, WIBA, Rotary clubs, employer groups (SHRM)
6. Communicate the details of this plan with job coaches, agencies (directors and case managers) involved in the Great Expectations Initiative, parents, and partner organizations, including:
  - Catholic Charities
  - The Arc of Sedgwick County
7. Coordinate agency participation in job fairs

---

## EVALUATION

---

For the purposes of this project, an evaluation would look at how much awareness and attitudes have changed in the community. Ultimately, if the work GEI does is successful, more people with disabilities will find permanent employment in the community. Increased awareness about the benefits of integrated employment can lead to attitudinal change and behavior change (hiring more people with disabilities), but the change will be incremental over time.

While it is too late in the process to obtain a true baseline of awareness and attitudes among some audiences, a brief questionnaire could be developed and distributed to people with disabilities, parents/caregivers, educators and agencies. The questionnaire developed for businesses as part of this project could be used for business leaders. Careful consideration of the types of questions to ask is needed. The questions need to focus on awareness of integrated employment, and their beliefs about the benefits and barriers of such a model.

The survey could be distributed in 2012 and again at the end of 2013 to determine if tactics used with agencies, parents, businesses and educators have helped increase awareness and change attitudes in a positive direction.

Other options to measure change in awareness and attitudes are more process in nature, and include:

- Agencies (Self-Reporting)
  - o Number of agencies using the Great Expectations 'model'
  - o Interviews with executives to determine if attitudes among staff have changed – are more receptive to the GEI model (use original questions included in the Addendum of this report)
  - o Number of agencies communicating about integrated employment with partner agencies and businesses (through presentations, social media)
  - o Number of employment 'leads' generated
  - o Number of placements
  - o Duration of placements
  - o Participation in job fairs highlighting integrated employment
  
- Job seeker (Interviews or Surveys)
  - o Number of people with disabilities employed in Wichita/Sedgwick County
  - o Number of people with disabilities who have heard about integrated employment
    - Where did they hear about it? Family, Agencies, School, Employer, Media

- Employer (Reports, Questionnaires, Online Survey)
  - o Number of people involved with Business Leader Network
  - o Number of presentations by BLN members
  - o Number of news stories reported in newspapers, on TV stations, or in company or community newsletters

Following is a brief summary of options for evaluating the effectiveness of a marketing campaign for integrated employment in the local community.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Reframe 'supported employment' as 'integrated employment' at agencies	Review memos, articles, emails and count the number of times 'integrated employment' is used as compared with 'supported employment'
Employer recognition	Number of events, awards presented per calendar year; media or newsletter stories
Employer – Business Leadership Network	Number of participants, number of meetings per calendar year, number of events sponsored, number of people attending events
Engage job seekers in GEI	Surveys measuring current perceptions and those a year from now
Engage parents as spokespeople	Number of parents participating in BLN activities; number of parents recruited as spokespeople; number of presentations about benefits of integrated employment at parent-focused events
Raise awareness in the community	Number of stories in news media, number of editorial board visits, number of press releases distributed



---

## ADDENDUM

---

**Great Expectations Initiative**  
**Script/interview questions**  
**June 2, 2011**

**Target audience:** Leaders of agencies – early participants in Great Expectations Initiative (GEI)

**Purpose:** To understand perceptions of the benefits and barriers of GEI model in order to develop an effective program and community engagement campaign

**SCRIPT:**

Hello, I am Tami Bradley from Bothner and Bradley, Inc. – we are a communication and consulting here in Wichita and are working with the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization. I believe John Sullivan has mentioned I might be calling. We are helping with some communication research – to better understand perceptions about the Great Expectations Initiative and provide direction on how to engage the community in developmental disabilities efforts.

Your interview is one of several we will be conducting – and the trends or themes will be included in part of an overall audience research project that will involve gathering input from other stakeholders. Your responses will be anonymous. We want you to be as honest – so feel free to share what is on your mind!

Does this sound familiar? Yes – continue. No – ask if there is anything else I could provide or someone else I could talk to. If not, terminate the call.

Thank you – would you have time now to answer a few questions? If yes, continue. If no, ask to set up an interview time (either in person or over the phone).

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What can you tell me about the Great Expectations Initiative?
2. What are your thoughts about the benefits of this model? (Do you think it's the 'right' approach? Why or why not?)
3. What do you believe are the barriers to its success?
  - If the answer is related to effects on "bread and butter" – or negative impact on budget – for their agency ask them to explain. Also determine if they have had their cost data analyzed to determine if there are ways to be reimbursed.
4. What do you think your staff – particularly those who work or would work directly with the Great Expectations Initiative – think about the model?
5. What about your customers/clients? Their families?

6. How would you rate the overall roll-out of the model in our community?  
Good/VeryGood/Poor/Extremely Poor/Average? Why?
7. Is there someone you could think of who could be a good spokesperson for changing the perceptions about integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities in our community? Either for this initiative (if they are favorable to the effort), or for the population as a whole (if they are not in favor of the initiative).
8. Now, my final question – and this is a big one – if you could rebuild the system that currently handles employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities ... what would it look like? That is, if you were starting over – without the buildings, the overhead, the structures ... would you do it the same way? What would change and why? What do you think would be best for the customer/client?

Thank you so much – is there anything else you would like to share or wish we would have asked? On behalf of Sedgwick County DDO, thank you. I'm sure the combined findings from our research will be shared as the initiative continues – your perspectives are critical for informing our work and we certainly appreciate your time and assistance.

**GREAT EXPECTATIONS INITIATIVE  
FOCUS GROUP – FAMILY MEMBERS  
8/25/11**

**Target audience:** Families and guardians of people with disabilities

**Purpose:** To understand perceptions of the benefits and barriers of GEI model in order to develop an effective program and community engagement campaign

**SCRIPT:**

Hello, (introduce ourselves) Bothner and Bradley, Inc. – we are a communication and consulting here in Wichita and are working with the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization. I believe most of you were contacted by an agency or the county for participation this evening. We want to thank you very much for coming – taking time out of your evening to help us.

We are working with the County to better understand perceptions about the Great Expectations Initiative and provide direction on how to develop a campaign that would help break down barriers and highlight the benefits of employing people with disabilities in the community.

This focus group is one of several we will be conducting – and the trends or themes will be included in part of an overall audience research project that will involve gathering input from many other folks. Your responses will be anonymous. We want you to be as honest – so feel free to share what is on your mind!

**INTRODUCTORY QUESTION**

First, we would like to learn a little bit more about you – can you tell us your name, if you live in Wichita or one of the surrounding communities, and a little about your child or family member – or if you are a guardian, the person in your care. Primarily, if you feel comfortable – let us know their relationship to you, their age, and if they work (and where they work ... if they are in a workshop setting, in day programs, in an enclave, working in the community or on a waiting list).

**GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

1. What is your recollection about how the decision about employment was made for your child/person in your care? (This might include the fact that employment is not an option – what went into this decision?)
  - a. Was this their idea?
  - b. Did they come to you, did you encourage them, etc.?
  
2. For those of you who have a child or person you care for who is employed, what is their experience – can you describe it? (Look for success stories and/or barriers to success)



3. What were some of the concerns you had about employment?
  - a. If they are in the community – what are the concerns?
  - b. If they are in a workshop – what are the concerns?
  - c. If they are not employed – what are the concerns?
  
4. What do you see are the benefits of employment?
  - a. If they are in the community – what are the benefits?
  - b. If they are in a workshop – what are the benefits?
  - c. If they are not employed – what are the benefits?
  
5. What do you think your child/family member or person you care for thinks about working in the community?
  - a. Is it something they aspire to? Are they fearful? Why?

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT GREAT EXPECTATIONS – A NEW TWIST

6. A new program called the Great Expectations Initiative is designed to be a new approach to “supported employment,” which matches people with disabilities with employers in the community. While the concept of supported employment has been around a while, the goal of GEI is to deliver this program in a way that is beneficial to you and the person in your life with disabilities.
  - a. Do you like this concept of supported employment?
    - i. Tell us more
    - ii. For example: Do you like it? Why or why not?
  
  - b. What would you look for in a program like this?
    - i. What would you want to know about it?
    - ii. For example: What are the “supports”? How do I know my child/person in my care will be able to do this? How does this affect benefits? Who is going to pay for it?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

7. When it comes to listening to people about what is best for your child/family member – or person in your care – who do you listen to?
  - a. Does it change based on age?
  - b. Does it change based on what they are doing – ie day activities or pastimes, work, friends, health care?
  - c. Who would you listen to about employment issues?
  - d. Where do you go for information (internet, radio, support groups, etc.)?
  
8. If you can agree that supported employment in the community is a good option if it is delivered in the right way, is there someone you could think of who could be a good spokesperson for this idea?
  - a. What makes him/her a good spokesperson?
  
9. What would you expect/hope for your child or loved one when it comes to the being employed? What would you want them to get in return for employment?

Thank you so much – is there anything else you would like to share or wish we would have asked? On behalf of Sedgwick County DDO, thank you. I'm sure the combined findings from our research will be shared as the initiative continues – your perspectives are critical for informing our work and we certainly appreciate your time and assistance.

**Great Expectations Initiative**  
**Script/interview questions – Education and Case Managers**  
**October 2011**

**Target audience:** Education partners – Wichita only

**Purpose:** To understand perceptions of the benefits and barriers of GEI model in order to develop an effective program and community engagement campaign

**SCRIPT:**

Hello, I am Tami Bradley from Bothner and Bradley, Inc. – we are a communication and consulting here in Wichita and are working with the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization. We are helping with some communication research – to better understand perceptions about the Great Expectations Initiative and provide direction on how to engage the community in developmental disabilities efforts.

Your interview is one of several we will be conducting – and the trends or themes will be included in part of an overall audience research project that will involve gathering input from other stakeholders. Your responses will be anonymous. We want you to be as honest – so feel free to share what is on your mind!

Does this sound familiar? Yes – continue. No – ask if there is anything else I could provide or someone else I could talk to. If not, terminate the call.

Thank you – would you have time now to answer a few questions? If yes, continue. If no, ask to set up an interview time (either in person or over the phone).

**QUESTIONS:**

What can you tell me about the Great Expectations Initiative? What is your agency's involvement?

What are your thoughts about **the benefits** of this model? (Do you think it's the 'right' approach? Why or why not?) What are the benefits for:

- Staff
- Students or clients and their families/caregivers
- Providers
- Students/clients
- Employers

What do you believe are **the barriers** to its success?

- Staff
- Students or clients and their families/caregivers

- Providers
- Students/clients
- Employers

Where would you start if you were going to break down barriers to this type of program in our community?

Is there someone you could think of who could be a good spokesperson for changing the perceptions about integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities in our community?

Thank you so much – is there anything else you would like to share or wish we would have asked? On behalf of Sedgwick County DDO, thank you. I'm sure the combined findings from our research will be shared as the initiative continues – your perspectives are critical for informing our work and we certainly appreciate your time and assistance.

**Great Expectations Initiative**  
**Script/interview questions – AGENCY LEADERS**  
**June 2, 2011**

**Target audience:** Leaders of agencies – early participants in Great Expectations Initiative (GEI)

**Purpose:** To understand perceptions of the benefits and barriers of GEI model in order to develop an effective program and community engagement campaign

**SCRIPT:**

Hello, I am Tami Bradley from Bothner and Bradley, Inc. – we are a communication and consulting here in Wichita and are working with the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization. I believe John Sullivan has mentioned I might be calling. We are helping with some communication research – to better understand perceptions about the Great Expectations Initiative and provide direction on how to engage the community in developmental disabilities efforts.

Your interview is one of several we will be conducting – and the trends or themes will be included in part of an overall audience research project that will involve gathering input from other stakeholders. Your responses will be anonymous. We want you to be as honest – so feel free to share what is on your mind!

Does this sound familiar? Yes – continue. No – ask if there is anything else I could provide or someone else I could talk to. If not, terminate the call.

Thank you – would you have time now to answer a few questions? If yes, continue. If no, ask to set up an interview time (either in person or over the phone).

**QUESTIONS:**

What can you tell me about the Great Expectations Initiative?

What are your thoughts about the benefits of this model? (Do you think it's the 'right' approach? Why or why not?)

What do you believe are the barriers to its success?

What do you think your staff – particularly those who work or would work directly with the Great Expectations Initiative – think about the model?

What about your clients? Their families?

How would you rate the overall roll-out of the model in our community? Good/Very Good/Poor/Extremely Poor/Average? Why?

Is there someone you could think of who could be a good spokesperson for changing the perceptions about integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities in our community?

Now, my final question – if you could rebuild the system that currently handles employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities ... what would it look like? That is, if you were starting over – without the buildings, the overhead, the structures ... would you do it the same way? What would change and why? What do you think would be best for the customer/client?

**Business survey**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 9, 2011

For more information contact ...

**County Disability Organization seeks business input**

WICHITA – As part of a project designed to integrate people with disabilities into workplace settings in the community, the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization (SCDDO) is asking for input from the business community.

An online survey asks businesses about what they think the benefits and barriers of hiring people with disabilities. The survey can be found at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DDO\\_Business\\_Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DDO_Business_Survey).

“We want to better understand the business perspective so we can be prepared to meet their employment needs,” said Chad VonAhnen, Director of the Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization.

The survey is part of an ongoing effort called the “Great Expectations Initiative,” which includes working with agencies who serve people with disabilities as they place employees in the community.

“The goal of this particular initiative is to assist people with disabilities get competitive jobs in the community,” VonAhnen said. “Ultimately, this focus helps the person looking for a job become more independent, and from a public policy standpoint can lead to reduced reliance on government funded services.”

The survey is open to businesses of any size and those participating will not be identified. Results will be collected and analyzed by an outside firm. Surveys need to be completed by Friday, February 17, 2012.

The SCDDO is the community developmental disability organization for the county. The agency ensures support and services are available for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Its mission is to assist people with developmental disabilities to receive quality services and achieve greater independence. For more information go to <http://www.sedgwickcounty.org/cddo/>.

#