



Department of
Career Services

North Shore Workforce Innovent – background and status as of Feb., 2016

North Shore, Massachusetts, Workforce Challenge

North Shore Workforce Innovent (NSWI) is a dedicated team of workforce development professional, educators, service providers and workforce board members committed to expanding and improving workforce development services to businesses in our region. The Customer Centered Design Challenge we focus on is ***How might we design a system to put employers in the center of our sector strategies and career pathway work?*** This question builds on our previous employer centered sector work but deepens our research processes and allows for a more intense response – and more success for our employers and job seekers.

Approach:

The tools of investigating and reframing used in Customer Centered Design are providing the Team with new insights into how to build customer feedback into our everyday work and regular in depth customer service interviews are providing fresh insights and ideas. Under this initial project, the Team asked businesses and experts two simple questions:

1. What was the best experience you have had in filling your talent needs? And
2. What are your pain points in filling your talent needs?

Through these interviews we developed several ‘How might we’ questions that could be addressed. We heard that we needed to build a brand and define a niche for the system, diversify candidate pool, share company data with partners, and balance services between job seekers and businesses. Ultimately, it was clear that “how might we speed up our response time to meet company needs and move job seekers more efficiently into quality employment” needed our immediate attention.

Process:

Through this the team developed a short term and long term action plan around our “how might we” question. These are:

Short Term:

Based on this research, the North Shore Career Center (a member of NSWI and the One-stop in the region) is using existing technology to speed up its response time to north shore companies that post on the state-wide posting site with good, strong referrals mined from the data base within a 72 hours period of posting. This work has been on-going for the past several weeks. Examples of employer conversations include:

1. Job postings are “not real”, i.e., the postings are routine HR practices but the job is already filled by internal and/or known external candidates: *A Life Sciences company posted a job description for a high end laboratory technician. Upon the Career Center’s follow-up with the Human Resources contact it was discovered that an internal candidate had filled the position;*
2. Job postings are “real” but are not urgent or important immediately, i.e., the Career Center can develop a stronger relationship with the company and source candidates over a longer period of time: *A Manufacturing Company posted machinist position, but it was discovered that the position would not be filled until new equipment arrived. This provided the parties with time to custom tailor the search that led to the company making an OJT hire;*
3. Job postings are “real” and imminent, but lack details needed for appropriate referrals, allowing the Career Center to discuss and clarify what is needed to make the appropriate referral: *A Seafood Manufacturing Company was having trouble attracting the skilled candidates needed for their openings. Working with the HR contact the Career Center was able to assist with restating the desired skills and found the company 5 qualified candidates within 48 hours;*
4. Job postings are “real” and accurate, so Career Center job seeker referral is made within the 72 hour time period: *Local Insurance Agency in need of an office assistant was able to secure 4 pre-qualified candidates within 36 hours of the initial contact with the Career Center. One of the four was hired by the agency.*

Longer Term:

Future implementation of Lean Practices and Design Principles within the one-stop will ensure a deeper refinement and adjustment in culture to lead to more success for companies and the employees they seek. NSWI is working with the Professor and students in Salem State University Business School Operations and Decisions Science Department’s Lean Systems course to make these changes. A student in this course will be hired as an intern for the next four months observing and discussing with classmates current processes and procedures. New systems and processes will be developed by the end of the course and implemented between July and October, with finalization of systems completed by the end of 2016. Ultimately, we hope to develop a new motto for NSWI staff - “Everyone’s Job is Building Relationships with Companies.”

Conclusion:

NSWI will continue to meet and review activity during 2016. In addition to stronger services to employers and job seekers, we anticipate using these new relationships to better understand career pathways on the north shore and increase the number and effectiveness of our sector strategies.