

**Survey of Employers Participating in
Utah's Persons with Disabilities Network (PWDNET)**

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Executive Summary

The Persons with Disabilities Network is a partnership of businesses, public agencies and job-candidates with disabilities, funded jointly by Work Ability Utah and the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. Working as partners helps to achieve the goal of creating successful employment relationships. Work Ability Utah supported this evaluation of the PWDNET, in partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR), to identify from the employers' perspective the efficacy of PWDNET and the business relations specialist role. Additionally, it is hoped that the outcomes will provide direction for USOR as they consider improving and sustaining the PWDNET after the Work Ability Utah funding ends in 2012. An on-line survey was distributed via Qualtrics, Inc. to 357 individuals representing 195 organizations. The response rate was 15% (n=54) and represented over 40 organizations. Respondents were typically for-profit organizations with more than 150 employees.

Overall respondents valued the PWDNET program and the services they received.

- When asked to consider all trainings available to them, 78% respondents indicated that the program was either valuable or extremely valuable to their overall employment practices.
- A large majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the staff of PWDNET were responsive, knowledgeable, and trustworthy (82%, 81% and 80% respectively).
- Customized trainings that are tailored to specific organizations' needs were viewed the most favorably. Only 11 respondents reported their organizations receiving this service.
- 70% of the respondents attended the PWDNET workshop. Of these, 41% (15 of 37 respondents) attended the workshop more than once, typically because it satisfies a need for overall training. Other common reasons were they pick up new ideas every time and the opportunity to network with others.
- 72% of respondents (39 of the 54) indicated that their organizations had made changes in their employment practices since their involvement in the PWDNET. Changes to recruiting and hiring practices were the most common (24 of the 39 responses). In addition, 29 respondents thought their organization would make changes to other areas of their employment practices in the future.
- Respondents provided ideas on ways that the PWDNET could be more useful. Suggestions include: additional screening of candidates, providing more specific information for their workplace, and job fairs in areas north of the Salt Lake Valley.

As PWDNET continues to expand its outreach to a larger audience its impact will continue to grow. If actions are taken to target the most valuable services as well as further refine the tools that reach out to larger populations, the perceived value of the program to participants will continue to grow.

Survey of the employers participating in the Persons with Disabilities Network (PWDNET)

The Persons with Disabilities Network (PWDNET) is a partnership of businesses, public agencies and job-candidates with disabilities, funded jointly by Work Ability Utah and the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. The goal of the partnership is to create successful employment relationships between employing organizations and qualified people with disabilities. The PWDNET was created in 2006 by the Utah's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, Work Ability Utah (MIG) in partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. Work Ability Utah supports the PWDNET as part of its efforts to implement Utah's Strategic Plan objectives which focus on improving the employment outcomes for Utahns with disabilities. Work Ability Utah sponsored this evaluation to identify from the employer's perspective the efficacy of PWDNET and the business relations specialist role.

Description of the Study

The following provides an overview of the Persons with Disabilities Network (PWDNET) and the program evaluation conducted. First, background information on the program and the purpose of the survey are provided. The survey methodology is summarized, followed by the survey outcomes, a discussion of the survey results and finally a conclusion.

Background of the PWDNET program

The PWDNET is a partnership of businesses, public agencies and job-candidates with disabilities. The partnership's goal is to foster success for businesses in hiring and retaining qualified employees with disabilities. A range of services focused on supporting the employment of people with disabilities are provided to individuals and businesses by the business relations specialist and other state agencies. The services include individualized trainings and supports for businesses, two methods for posting job openings targeting individuals with disabilities, bi-annual workshops on hiring and retaining of employees with disabilities and bi-annual job fairs to connect job candidates and the business partners. The business relations specialist and other state agency specialists

serve as “single points” of contact (SPOC) for employers and clients with disabilities looking for employment. It is an innovative approach and only a few states have a program structured in a similar manner.

Purpose

Work Ability Utah and USOR would like to evaluate from the employer’s perspective the efficacy of PWDNET and the business relations specialist role. Currently, satisfaction surveys are conducted in conjunction with a specific event such as employer workshops or job fairs in April and October. The purpose of this survey is broader. The goal is to identify whether the program is achieving its objectives, what services are being used, how useful the services are, and if the program has impacted employers’ perception of employing individuals with disabilities. Suggestions for ways the program could be improved were also solicited. Specific topics addressed include: is there increased knowledge of employing individuals with disabilities; and are the services valued.

Methodology

The PWDNET survey was developed collaboratively with the MIG Director and the PWDNET business relations specialist. Surveys of employers used in other states by similar programs were also reviewed to gather ideas for questions. An on-line survey program, Qualtrics, was used to conduct the survey. The survey was pretested in-house and by Kathy West-Evans, Business Relations Specialist with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, who has national knowledge of business needs and relationships. It was then tested in the field by three business leaders who had used the program previously.

A link to the on-line PWDNET survey was sent to 357 individuals who had received services from the Persons with Disabilities Network (PWDNET). A reminder was sent approximately two weeks later. Finally, the link to the survey was sent by the business relations specialist. Of this target pool, 83 individuals started the survey (23%) and the highest number of respondents to a single question was 56. The number of respondents to each question varies because a respondent’s answer to a question determined if follow up questions were asked. Therefore not all respondents had the opportunity to respond to all

questions. In addition, respondents could skip questions if they chose to. Therefore, the number of respondents to each question is noted. The number of respondents that completed the entire survey was 54 for a response rate of 15%.

The 357 individuals surveyed represented 195 employers. The highest number of individuals within a single organization that were sent a survey was 13 and the median number of surveys per organization was one with an average of 1.8. Of the 67 individuals that started the survey *and* whose affiliation with a specific organization could be determined, there were responses from 46 different employers (an average of 1.5 individuals per organization).

In displaying responses to some questions below, the mean response for scales is displayed. Although it is not statistically valid to take a mean of an ordinal scale, for example the usefulness of a service on scale of 1 to 5, the means are shown to give a relative sense of importance of one service compared to other services.

Demographics of respondents

Looking at the role of the respondents within their organizations, the majority are in human resource functions (43%) or recruiting (16%). A significant number are in managerial functions including managers, directors, and president (22%). The “Other” category includes job titles such as Team leader, Reception and Collections Supervisor, Outreach Liability Specialist, ADA coordinator, EEO Specialist, and Administrative Specialist.

Table 1: Job title reported on survey		
Title by function	Count (n=37)	Percentage of all respondents
HR Specialist or Generalist	10	27%
HR Other	6	16%
Management including Managers, Directors, President	8	22%
Recruiter	6	16%
Other	7	19%

In terms of type and size of employers, the largest group of respondents represented for-profit businesses (56% of respondents); followed by federal government and non-profit agencies each representing 13% of the respondents.

Table 2: Please check the response that best describes the organization you work for.

Answer	Count (n=52)	%
Federal Government	7	13%
State Government	5	10%
Non-profit agency	7	13%
For profit business	29	56%
Local Government	1	2%
Other: chamber of commerce and school district	3	6%
Total	52	100%

The large majority of respondents represent organizations that employ 151 or more individuals (86%). For smaller organizations, four respondents represented organizations that employ 51-150 individuals and three respondents were from organizations that employ 1 to 15 individuals.

Table 3: How many people are employed by your organization?

Answer	Response (n=51)	%
1 to 15 people	3	6%
16 to 50 people	0	0%
51 to 150 people	4	8%
151 or more people	44	86%
Total	51	100%

Survey Results

The survey questions started broadly inquiring about respondents' use of services. Targeted questions were then asked to gain an understanding of the usefulness of only the specific services the employer used. The survey then inquired about what human resource practices of the company had been changed due to involvement in the PWDNET as well as what changes the company would consider in the future. The final questions queried overall satisfaction, the value of the program to the respondent's entity, and basic demographic information.

Services Used

The first question on the survey focused on what PWDNET services, respondents had used. The seven basic services were listed plus an “other” category. Respondents could indicate all services received resulting in a total of 131 services received by all the respondents, averaging 2.5 services and ranging from 1 to 8 services per respondent. The most commonly used services were participating in a job fair (74%) and attending a workshop (70%). This is not surprising since these are both events that target larger groups and offer more opportunity to be involved. The next most commonly used services were customized trainings, individualized supports and connections to other businesses (each service was marked by 11% of the respondents).

Table 4: We would like to know what People with Disabilities Network (or PWDNET) services you have used. From the following list, please mark all the PWDNET services you have used:		
Service	Services used (respondents=53)	% Responses
Participated in a Work Ability Utah Job Fair targeting work-ready individuals with disabilities	39	74%
Attended a PWDNET Employer workshop(s) on hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.	37	70%
Customized trainings to meet my particular business need in employing persons with a disability.	11	21%
Individualized supports to retain and accommodate employees with disabilities.	11	21%
Connected with other businesses to share information on hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.	11	21%
Posted job openings via the PWDNET electronic mailing list or listserv managed by the Employee Relations Specialist.	8	15%
Used the PWDNET keyword when posting jobs on Department of Workforce Services (DWS) website.	8	15%
Other -- please specify what services you have received.	6	11%
Total numbers of services used	131	

Although respondents were given the seven standard categories of PWDNET services, they identified additional services that they felt were unique enough to not fit into other categories. They are noted here. One of the respondents indicated that they had not yet used services.

Table 5: Other -- please specify what services you have received.
Tours of your facilities
On-Site Job fair and targeting sourcing
Received help to make our applicant website accessible to individuals with disabilities
Advised others about the PWDNET, especially students with disabilities
Our positions are automatically posted on DWS
Have not used services

Based on the responses to services received, individuals were then asked to rate the usefulness of the service on a five point scale from “not at all useful” to “extremely useful.” The services rated highest on the usefulness scale were customized training, employer workshop, individualized supports, and connecting with other businesses. The services that were not viewed as useful were using the PWDNET keyword when posting jobs on the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) website, participating in jobs fairs, and posting job openings via the PWDNET electronic mailing list/listserv.

Table 6: Usefulness of Services - This next section asks about the usefulness of the PWDNET services you have used. For each service you have used, please rate how useful this service was in helping your business.

Question	Not at all Useful	2	3	4	Extremely Useful	Responses	Mean
Participated in a Work Ability Utah Job Fair targeting work-ready individuals with disabilities	1	1	12	11	13	38	3.89
Attended a PWDNET Employer workshop(s) on hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.	0	0	5	14	18	37	4.35
Customized trainings to meet my particular business need in employing persons with a disability.	0	0	1	4	6	11	4.45
Connected with other businesses to share information on hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.	0	0	1	6	4	11	4.27
Individualized supports to retain and accommodate employees with disabilities.	0	0	2	3	5	10	4.30
Posted job openings via the PWDNET electronic mailing list or listserv managed by the Employee Relations Specialist.	0	1	1	3	3	8	4.00
Used the PWDNET keyword when posting jobs on Department of Workforce Services (DWS) website.	0	1	1	3	2	7	3.86
Other – specified: tours of facilities	0	0	0	0	3	3	5.00

Targeted questions

As noted above, based on the services received, the respondent was asked more targeted questions. The questions focused on the employer’s need for additional services in the area and/or whether the employer would use the service in the future.

Job postings

The thirteen individuals that indicated use of the PWDNET listserv and/or the PWDNET keyword in job posting on DWS were asked if they would use one of the services in the future. All but one said they would (92%). Although this service was not used as frequently as other services, the high rate of commitment to using the service again indicates their value to respondents.

Table 7: In the future, will you advertise position(s) using either (1) the PWDNET keyword when posting a job with DWS or (2) the PWDNET listserv?

Answer	Response (n=13)	%
Yes	12	92%
No	1	8%

When asked which of the services they would use, half said they would use both services. The other half was evenly split between using one service or other.

Table 8: Which of the following strategies will you use? Please mark one response.

Answer	Responses (n=12)	%
Use the PWDNET keyword when posting a job order with the Department of Workforce Services.	3	25%
Email job openings to the Employee Relations Specialist for distribution via the PWDNET listserv.	3	25%
Use both methods listed above.	6	50%

PWDNET Workshop

The workshops were one of the most frequently used services by respondents (37 respondents or 70%). Of these, the majority attended only one workshop (22 or 59%) but 10 respondents (27%) had attended three or more times and another 5 (14%) had attended twice at the time they completed the survey.

Table 9: You indicated that you have attended a PWDNET workshop. How many times have you attended?

Answer	Responses (n=37)	%
Once	22	59%
Twice	5	14%
Three or more times	10	27%

For the fifteen respondents that attended more than once, they were asked why they attended two or more times. Respondents could select more than one reason from a list of five plus an “other” category. The most common responses were: the workshop satisfied a

need for on-going training (12 or 80%), they pick up new ideas every time they attend (10 or 67%), and the opportunity to network with others (9 or 60%). Fortunately, no one indicated they attended more than once because they did not understand items covered.

Table 10: You indicated that you have attended a PWDNET employer workshop more than once. We would like to gain a better understanding of why you chose to attend multiple times. Listed below are some possible reasons, please mark all that apply. Use the other response to provide any additional reasons.

Answer	Response (n=15)	%
The workshops satisfy my needs for on-going training.	12	80%
I pick up new ideas every time I attend.	10	67%
The opportunity to network with others	9	60%
So many topics were covered that I did not gain a thorough understanding previously.	4	27%
I did not understand some of the items covered, so I wanted to attend again.	0	0%

Respondents were also asked what additional information they would like to receive at the employer workshop. The responses ranged from very specific complements “you do a great job” to the very specific suggestions which are included in the table below. In general, the nine respondents that wanted additional information wanted specific information for their workplace or about working with individuals with specific disabilities. The last comment in the table below bears the underlying message one respondent felt: “they were trying to sell to us how competent individuals with disabilities are...” This is just one comment but may be worth trying to evaluate the overall tone and message of the workshop to determine if it accurately portrays the desired message.

Table 11: What additional information would you have liked to receive at the Employer Workshop?
What accommodations are typical when hiring someone with a disability
More geared to specific businesses (call center, general labor, retail, office, etc.). Information is currently too broad.
More specific information on working with people with mental illness, substance abuse and criminal backgrounds.
Do people have to be signed up with the State of Utah, what type of medical documentation does an employee need to provide?
How to gather stats regarding the hiring of those with disabilities
Information geared more specifically to our operation: call center environment
Are there agencies or programs that train and then sponsor individual with disabilities to work for businesses?
More guidance in how I can encourage Chamber businesses to sign on to the program
I really enjoyed seeing the services offered at the center. I left they were trying to sell to us how competent individuals with disabilities are, which I felt I didn't need to be sold on (I don't know the others thought about that). It would have been nice to receive more information on how we can tie or incorporate their services to an affirmative action plan.

Additional Information Sessions

All survey respondents were asked if they would like to attend sessions containing more specific information separate from the bi-annual workshop which provides a broad overview. The respondents were more split in their responses with 57% (32) indicating yes and 43% (24) indicating no.

Table 12: The current PWDNET employer workshop is an overview of a range of topics regarding employing individuals with disabilities. Would you like to receive more specific information by topic in short one or two hour sessions?		
Answer	Response (n=56)	%
Yes	32	57%
No	24	43%

Respondents that indicated that they would like to attend more specific sessions were asked when would be the best time to attend the additional sessions. Table 13 below is a cross tabulation of when respondents would like to attend additional sessions as well as when they would like to attend the sessions. Respondents were split between following the existing workshop and another day but in the morning – each marked by 39% of respondents (12 each) and only 23% of respondents (or 7) prefer another day in the afternoon (see row one of data).

In terms of the topics that should be covered, respondents could mark as many topics as desired and the 31 respondents marked 124 topics (or on average four each); the total responses by topic are shown in the right-hand column. Supervising individuals with disabilities broadly defined to include accommodations, coworker relations, and flexible schedules, was marked the most (27 respondents). Recruiting individuals with a disability and disability etiquette were also seen as important topics (21 and 20 of respondents, respectively).

The details of the cross tabulation indicate the preferred time to cover specific topics. For example, for the 17 respondents that were interested in assistive technology session, 53% would prefer the session in the afternoon following the workshop. In contrast, responses on a session covering “Recruiting individuals with a disability” were more mixed leaning toward another day in the morning (43%) or another day in the afternoon (33%).

Table 13: Cross Tabulation: what topics should be covered in additional sessions and when would it be best to offer additional sessions.				
	Following the workshop, the same afternoon	Another day in the morning	Another day in the afternoon	Number of times topic marked
Preferred time to attend additional sessions	12	12	7	31
What topics do you think the sessions should cover? Please mark all that apply. (N=31)				
Supervising individuals with disabilities including accommodations, coworker relations, flexible schedules, etc.	10 37%	10 37%	7 26%	27 100%
Recruiting individuals with a disability	5 24%	9 43%	7 33%	21 100%
Disability etiquette - Information on interacting and communicating with people with disabilities	9 45%	9 45%	2 10%	20 100%
Assistive technology (AT)	9 53%	5 30%	3 17%	17 100%
Americans with Disability Act regulations	6 38%	5 31%	5 31%	16 100%
Tax credits and other incentives for businesses to employ individuals with disabilities	8 53%	3 20%	4 27%	15 100%
Employing individuals with a criminal history	2 33%	4 67%	0 0%	6 100%

The two other topics noted by the respondents were “helping hiring managers to reduce bias” and “what does an individual with a disability expect from a job interview/ employer?”

Impact of PWDNET on employment practices

Two questions addressed PWDNET’s impact on businesses’ employment practices. The first asked whether the respondent’s company had already changed any employment practices since their involvement in the PWDNET. Respondents were allowed to indicate more than one area so percentages will not sum to 100. Over 60% of the respondents (24 out of 39) indicated that they had changed their “recruiting and hiring practices” as a result of their involvement with the PWDNET. In addition, 38% of the responses indicated

changing practices on “training of employees and supervisors regarding workplace diversity” and 38% marked changing “retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities” (15 out of 39 responses each). The “use of accommodations including flexible work schedules and workplace modifications” was marked by 28% of respondents. The “other” category has been excluded since none of the comments specified other practices that have been changed and were just general comments.

Table 14: Since your involvement in the PWDNET, has your company changed any of the following practices as they relate to individuals with disabilities? Please mark all that apply.

Response options	Response (n=39)	%
Recruiting and hiring.	24	62%
Training of employees and supervisors regarding workplace diversity.	15	38%
Retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities.	15	38%
Use of accommodations including flexible work schedules and workplace modifications.	11	28%

Respondents who did not indicate a change in one of the areas were asked if they *will consider* changing employment practices in that area *in the future* as a result of their involvement in the PWDNET. For example, if the respondent did not indicate that their company had made a change in “recruiting and hiring” already, they were asked if they would consider making a change in “recruiting and hiring” practices in the future. Respondents (n=29) were allowed to indicate more than one area. The most frequent response was changing practices related to “retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities” (52% of respondents). The next two most common were “training of employees and supervisors regarding workplace diversity” (38%) and “use of accommodations and including flexible work schedules and workplace modifications” (34%). The “other” category has been excluded since none of the comments specified other practices that have been changed and were just general comments. Changes in the future to “recruiting and hiring” were lower since many respondents had marked it on the previous question and therefore were not given the option to mark it again.

Table 15: As a result of your involvement with the PWDNET, do you feel that your company will consider changing any of the following practices in the future? Please mark all that apply.

Answer	Response (n=29)	%
Retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities.	15	52%
Training of employees and supervisors regarding workplace diversity.	11	38%
Use of accommodations including flexible work schedules and workplace modifications.	10	34%
Recruiting and hiring.	9	31%

Perceptions of the PWDNET program and staff

Respondents were first asked what aspect of the PWDNET had been most valuable to their company. Responses were combined into six categories. Nine respondents highlighted increased knowledge and/or awareness. These included comments such as “My eyes were opened at the employer workshop; it was enlightening and humbling” and “The technology and training available to help our organization include persons with disabilities in our workforce.” Three respondents also commented on the staff. For example, “the most valuable aspect continues to be the interaction with your staff, being able to ask questions and get support needed.” All comments are included below.

Table 17: What aspect of the PWDNET has been most valuable to your company?

Categorization	Verbatim response
Increased Knowledge	Knowledge gained.
	To understand what service is out there where we can reach out to individuals with disabilities, and in turn, help us recruit more qualified individuals.
	Right now the workshop was the most beneficial as it introduced me to topics & ideas around disabilities that I hadn't thought of. Unfortunately, we haven't done a large hiring since the workshop where we could really benefit from recruiting individuals with disabilities.
	Seminars/Workshop. The more knowledge the better.
	Assistance in determining appropriate workplace accommodations.
	Increased knowledge of resources available
	The technology and training available to help our organization include persons with disabilities in our workforce

Table 17: What aspect of the PWDNET has been most valuable to your company?	
Categorization	Verbatim response
	Awareness as it relates to hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.
	Knowledge and persistence to educate employers.
	My eyes were opened at the employer work shop. It was enlightening and humbling.
Networking opportunity	The ability to network with other employers, professionals who work within the disabilities field and USOR officials.
Positive comment	Awareness. The workshops are very helpful.
	ALL
	It is an excellent resource for businesses and individuals with disabilities seeking employment.
	The Work Ability Job Fair is an excellent avenue for us to contact people with disabilities and help them understand how to get work at Hill AFB.
The staff	The most valuable aspect continues to be the interaction with your staff, being able to ask questions and get support needed.
	Knowing that there is someone to help and assist when we do hire a person with a disability.
	Great team members!
Training	Training our management to better understand how to work with PWD.
Other	Providing additional benefits to my members
	Have not used the services
	I haven't had enough experience with it to make a comment here; but I would like to become better informed and learn more about the hiring of people with disabilities in general.

Focusing on the staff level, respondents were asked to respond to three statements rating their perception of the staff's knowledge, responsiveness and trustworthiness on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree, 3 is neutral, and 5 is strongly agree. A large majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the staff of PWDNET were responsive, knowledgeable, and trustworthy (82%, 81% and 80% respectively). A few respondents rated these questions one or two out of the five point scale.

Table 18: Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly disagree, 3 is neutral and 5 is Strongly Agree.							
Question	1	2	3	4	5	Responses	Mean
The staff of the PWDNET are responsive.	0	2	7	10	33	52	4.42
	0%	4%	13%	19%	63%		
The PWDNET staff are knowledgeable.	1	2	6	9	34	52	4.40
	2%	4%	12%	17%	65%		
I have found the PWDNET staff to be trustworthy.	1	2	7	8	34	52	4.38
	2%	4%	13%	15%	65%		

Satisfaction with the PWDNET program and suggestions

Looking at satisfaction with the program, respondents indicated they were satisfied (43%) or very satisfied (41%) with the program. Neutral satisfaction was indicated by 16% of respondents. No respondents indicated they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 19: Overall, how satisfied are you with the PWDNET program?		
Answer	Response (n=51)	%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Neutral	8	16%
Satisfied	22	43%
Very Satisfied	21	41%

In terms of the value of the program, respondents were asked to indicate the value of the PWDNET program to their overall employment practices as compared to all the other trainings and services available to them. Individuals were then asked to rate it on a five point scale from “not at all valuable” to “extremely valuable” with the midpoint between them being neither. The mean response was four out of five point scale.

Table 20: Considering all the other trainings and services available to you, how valuable is the PWDNET to your overall employment practices?		
Answer	Response (n=50)	%
Not at all valuable	0	0%
	0	0%
Neither	11	22%
	23	46%
Extremely valuable	16	32%

Finally, respondents were asked to provide ideas on ways the PWDNET could be more useful to their organization. The responses were diverse and no one topical area stood out. Increased screening of candidates was seen as desirable as well as job fairs in specific areas. Information specific to their workplace was also seen as useful. A desire was expressed for an increase in written communication such as published materials or a newsletter. All the comments are quoted below except the four that said, in effect, no comment.

Table 21: Finally, in what ways could PWDNET be more useful to your company?	
Categorization	Verbatim response
More job fairs or location of job fairs	We are located at Hill AFB, job fairs event would be more useful if target candidates reside near the area.
	The only thing I can think of would be to have a job fair in the Ogden or Davis county area.
	More fairs
Screening of candidates	We struggle to get specific information regarding potential applicants/employees and their skill levels. It would be nice to be able to say "these are the minimum requirement for positions at our company" and either get a list from PWDNET or have PWDNET communicate our job openings to only those qualified.
	Maybe a little more screening of clientele prior to sending them to apply
Information specific to workplace	Would like to have more specific information delivered to us regarding our type of business and possibilities/assistive technology.
	Need information on how to have individuals in our existing workforce to get tested and trained for their disabilities.

Categorization	Verbatim response
Written Materials	Provide access to written or published material concerning hiring people with disabilities, as well as information about employers that actively hire PWD.
	Newsletter - or on-going communication
Respondent needs to use resources more effectively	I need to make better use of PWDNET I think the resources are there from PWDNET. I think it's more of our part to use the resources. At this point, we haven't felt much of an impact since things are slow in the company.
Train candidates	Teach candidates how to approach employers
Job postings	Separate postings are not efficient
Information in workshops	Try to have more information, or additional information in the workability sessions. They seem to be the same information every time I attend.

Discussion of Results

On the whole, the respondents to the survey represented for-profit organizations (56%) that employ over 150 individuals (86% of respondents). The PWDNET is viewed favorably by respondents. Overall, respondents had used 2.5 services on average with a range of 1 to 8. The job fairs and the workshops were the most commonly used; since they are larger events it is not surprising. Trainings customized for their organization were rated the most useful but only 11 respondents reported receiving this service.

When asked to consider all trainings available to them, 78% respondents indicated that the program was either valuable or extremely valuable to their overall employment practices. Only 22% indicated a neutral response and no respondents indicated that it was not useful.

Given how difficult it can be for organizations to change, it is impressive that over 70% of respondents indicated that their organizations had already made changes in recruiting and hiring practices as a result of their involvement in the PWDNET. In addition, 54% of

respondents (29 of the 54) thought their organization would make additional changes in the future to their employment practices in other areas.

Interestingly, 41% of the respondents had attended the workshops more than once. The most common reasons for repeat attendance were to fulfill a need for on-going training (80%) and secondly, the respondent picked up new ideas every time they attend (67%). Given the frequent repeat attendance, it might be beneficial to consider ways to tweak the workshops to improve the overall impact of the program. For example, several comments were made in the survey to provide more information on particular work environments or working with individuals that have specific disabilities. Examples could be developed in advance to address areas that employers in attendance might have. For example, representatives from a call center are coming so provide specific information about accommodating individuals with a variety of disabilities in that environment. Another idea is to consider including new materials at the workshop while excluding previously presented materials. Since over half of the respondents would like to attend additional topical sessions, there will be further opportunities to provide information.

Several respondents indicated that additional screening of candidates would be useful. It could be that the job fairs, where more contact occurs between organizations and potential candidates, provide exposure to individuals with disabilities, but these individuals may not necessarily be the best candidates to meet the needs of the organizations. Additional screening of candidates might be beneficial for both the organization and the potential employee because the needs of each would be more closely satisfied. If the organization obtains more qualified candidates, their experience with the PWDNET will be even more positive. Anecdotally, program staff indicated that the listserv was used more frequently when the economy deteriorated. With the listserv, there is more screening of positions and identification of appropriate candidates than there is with the keyword job order posting within DWS. Therefore when unemployment is higher and there are more individuals looking for work and applying for jobs, organizations may rely upon the listserv to identify qualified candidates.

It is interesting that job fairs had the most respondents indicating they had used the service but the ratings were less favorable. In addition, when asked what ways that the PWDNET “could be more useful to your organization” three of the 14 respondents made comments about job fairs’ location or having more. Clearly, the fairs are serving a need but it could be that changes could be made to make them more effective.

Limitations of the Study

The response rate to the survey was only 15%. Although this is not an unusual rate for a survey, a higher rate is always better. The survey was intentionally sent to a broad sample to reduce bias. As a result, some individuals were surveyed who had more limited exposure to the program and therefore might not have felt the survey applied to them and, therefore, did not complete it. This could be why 83 respondents started the survey and only 54 completed it. Responses to a question were tallied based on the number of respondents to each specific question.

An invitation to participate in the survey was distributed by the researcher via e-mail. Since the researcher was not familiar to the population, it could be that the invitation to participate was not received due to junk mail or spam filters. To minimize the risk of this, the business relations specialist sent an email in advance of the invitation to the target population informing them that they would be receiving an on-line survey. To further increase the response rate, the specialist sent an email with a link to the survey to the non-respondents. It was hoped that this would garner additional responses, which it did.

Conclusion

Overall, respondents valued the PWDNET program and the services that they receive. The program fulfills a need that organizations have for training related to employment of individuals with disabilities, improving knowledge of employment issues, and identification of candidates. Specific suggestions for improvement include actions that would improve fulfillment of these needs such as more targeted training and increased screening of candidates. Services targeted to an organizations tend to be viewed more favorably which is not surprising – something that meets an individual’s specific needs

tends to be more satisfying. Respondents did express an appreciation for connecting with other entities. The PWDNET is fulfilling a need of participants which is clearly expressed by the value of the training and other services their overall employment practices. PWDNET impact will grow as it continues to provide services to a larger audience. If actions are taken to target the most valuable services as well as further refine the tools that reach out to larger populations, the perceived value of the program to participants will continue to grow.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Introduction

Survey for Businesses using the People with Disabilities Network or PWDNET

Your business has been involved with the People with Disabilities Network (or PWDNET) through your work with Leah Lobato, the PWDNET Business Relations Specialist, a local Choose to Work or an On-the-Job-Training Specialist.

The PWDNET is a partnership of businesses, public agencies, and job-seekers with disabilities. The partnerships' goal is to create business success when hiring and retaining qualified employees with disabilities.

We would like your input on the services provided so that improvements can be made to the program.

Completing the survey should only take about 5-10 minutes. Your responses will be used for program evaluation and improvement purposes only. Of course, participation in the survey is voluntary and all responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact Sara McCormick, Center for Public Policy & Administration at University of Utah, (801) 585-7764.

Clicking on the "NEXT" below indicates your consent to participate.

Thank you!

Please click on the NEXT button to start the survey.

Services Used

Q1. We would like to know what People with Disabilities Network (or PWDNET) services you have used. From the following list, please mark all the PWDNET services you have used:

- Customized trainings to meet my particular business need in employing persons with a disability.
- Individualized supports to retain and accommodate employees with disabilities.
- Posted job openings via the PWDNET electronic mailing list or listserv managed by the Employee Relations Specialist.
- Used the PWDNET keyword when posting jobs on Department of Workforce Services (DWS) website.
- Connected with other businesses to share information on hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Attended a PWDNET Employer workshop(s) on hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.
- Participated in a Work Ability Utah Job Fair targeting work-ready individuals with disabilities
- Other -- please specify what services you have received. <<open ended>>

Author's note: Only respondents that indicated receiving a service above were asked the following question about the service's usefulness.

Usefulness of Services

Q2. This next section asks about the usefulness of the PWDNET services you have used. For each service you have used, please rate how useful this service was in helping your business.

Usefulness of Services

This next section asks about the usefulness of the PWDNET services you have used. For each service you have used, please rate how useful this service was in helping your business.

	Not at all					Extremely
	Useful					Useful
	1	2	3	4	5	
» Customized trainings to meet my particular business need in employing persons with a disability.						
» Individualized supports to retain and accommodate employees with disabilities.						
» Posted job openings via the PWDNET electronic mailing list or listserv managed by the Employee Relations Specialist.						
» Used the PWDNET keyword when posting jobs on Department of Workforce Services (DWS) website.						
» Connected with other businesses to share information on hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.						
» Attended a PWDNET Employer workshop(s) on hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.						
» Participated in a Work Ability Utah Job Fair targeting work-ready individuals with disabilities						
» Other -- please specify what services you have received.						

Author's note: Based on the services received as indicated in Question 1, the respondent was asked more targeted questions.

Service Used: PWDNET listserv or PWDNET keyword

Q3. In the future, will you advertise position(s) using either (1) the PWDNET keyword when posting a job with DWS or (2) the PWDNET listserv?

- Yes
- No

Q4. Which of the following strategies will you use? Please mark one response.

- Use the PWDNET keyword when posting a job order with the Department of Workforce Services.
- Email job openings to the Employee Relations Specialist for distribution via the PWDNET listserv;
- Use both methods listed above.

Service Used: PWDNET Workshop

Q5. You indicated that you have attended a PWDNET workshop. How many times have you attended?

- Once
- Twice
- Three or more times

Q6. You indicated that you have attended a PWDNET employer workshop more than once. We would like to gain a better understanding of why you chose to attend multiple times. Listed below are some possible reasons, please mark all that apply. Use the other response to provide any additional reasons.

- I pick up new ideas every time I attend.
- The workshops satisfy my needs for on-going training.
- The opportunity to network with others
- So many topics were covered that I did not gain a thorough understanding previously.
- I did not understand some of the items covered, so I wanted to attend again.
- Other -- please tell us why you have attended the workshop more than once. (specify)

Q7. What additional information would you have liked to receive at the Employer Workshop?
<<open ended>>

Additional Sessions

Q8. The current PWDNET employer workshop is an overview of a range of topics regarding employing individuals with disabilities. Would you like to receive more specific information by topic in short one or two hour sessions?

- Yes
- No

Author's notes: The Q9 & Q10 were asked only if the person indicated "yes" on Q8.

Q9. When would be the best time for you to attend these additional sessions?

- Following the workshop, the same afternoon
- Another day in the morning
- Another day in the afternoon

Q10. What topics do you think the sessions should cover? Please mark all that apply.

- Americans with Disability Act regulations
- Disability etiquette - Information on interacting and communicating with people with disabilities
- Supervising individuals with disabilities including accommodations, coworker relations, flexible schedules, etc.
- Tax credits and other incentives for businesses to employ individuals with disabilities
- Recruiting individuals with a disability
- Employing individuals with a criminal history
- Assistive technology (AT)
- Other - please specify what other topics the sessions should cover. (Specify)

Block 6

Q11. Since your involvement in the PWDNET, has your company changed any of the following practices as they relate to individuals with disabilities? Please mark all that apply.

- Recruiting and hiring.
- Training of employees and supervisors regarding workplace diversity.
- Use of accommodations including flexible work schedules and workplace modifications.
- Retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities.
- Other: Please specify what other practices have changed. specify

Author's Note: For Q12, only respondents who did not indicate a change in one of the areas in Q11, were asked if they would consider changing employment practices in that area in the future as a result of their involvement in the PWDNET.

Q12. As a result of your involvement with the PWDNET, do you feel that your company will consider changing any of the following practices in the future? Please mark all that apply.

- » Recruiting and hiring.
- » Training of employees and supervisors regarding workplace diversity.
- » Use of accommodations including flexible work schedules and workplace modifications.
- » Retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities.
- » Other: Please specify what other practices have changed. specify.

Block 5

Q13. What aspect of the PWDNET has been most valuable to your company? <<open ended>>

Q14. Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1= Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
The PWDNET staff are knowledgeable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff of the PWDNET are responsive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have found the PWDNET staff to be trustworthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q15. Overall, how satisfied are you with the PWDNET program?

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q16. Considering all the other trainings and services available to you, how valuable is the PWDNET to your overall employment practices?

Not at all valuable		Neither		Extremely valuable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q17. Finally, in what ways could PWDNET be more useful to your company? <<open ended>>

Part I - Background Info

Q18. What is your job title? <<open ended>>

Q19. How many people are employed by your organization?

- 1 to 15 people
- 16 to 50 people
- 51 to 150 people
- 151 or more people

Q20. Please check the response that best describes the organization you work for:

- For profit business
- Non-profit agency
- Federal Government
- State Government
- Local Government
- Other: please specify