

Agenda

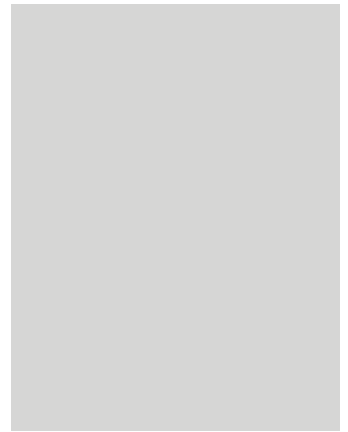
PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 4, 2021

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Zoom (contact 802-760-0574 or kate.larose@vermont.gov for link)

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 10:00 am – 10:02 am | Introductions (Nick Caputo, Chair) |
| 10:02 am – 10:05 am | Approval of Agenda (Nick Caputo) |
| 10:05 am – 10:07 am | Open for Public Comment (Nick Caputo) |
| 10:07 am – 10:15 am | New VR Liaison for PR Committee (James Smith) |
| 10:15 am – 10:18 am | Approval of Minutes (Nick Caputo) Minutes from December 3, 2020 |
| 10:18 am – 10:48 am | Presentation: VR Marketing Plan (James Smith) |
| 10:48 am – 10:55 am | Other Business (Nick Caputo) 1) Agenda Setting – April 1, 2021 2) Other |
| 10:55 am – 11:00 am | Vote: Chair (Nick Caputo) |
| 11:00am | Adjournment (Nick Caputo) |



VOCREHAB

BRAND FOCUS WORKSHOP
SUMMARY REPORT

NOVEMBER 17, 2020

Workshop Goals:

1. Discover insights that we'll use to craft messaging that connects with our core audiences.
2. Set a strong foundation for an emerging brand.
3. Explore and discuss the impact of COVID-19 and how to strengthen diversity.

Audience Segments

The Brand Focus Workshop included one working session for each audience group: adults, employers, and youth. We walked each group through the same three exercises (Audience, Who We Are / Who We're Not, and Antes vs. Drivers) yielding many similar—but some different—insights from each group.

DAY 1

Adults

DAY 2

Employers

DAY 3

Youth

DAY ONE:
ADULTS

Audience

We want to learn more about our audience as real human beings. Where are they struggling? How do we help? What do they get out of VocRehab/
Creative Workforce Solutions?

AUDIENCE | ADULTS | DETAILED NOTES

GENERAL NOTES:

Hurdles:

Mental Health (finding a consistent counselor – switching led to giving up going)

Childcare (huge child when they want to go back to work)

Relationships can be really complicated – addiction, traumas

They want to have the support system so they'll reach out to people who keep hurting them because that's who they know.

Work through their challenges and go beyond it.

People who are juggling a lot – often don't have the skills to prioritize, say no, accept other things. Boundaries is a big issue – set strong boundaries with family/schools. Might be working with one system that says one thing and another system says something else, but these meetings/groups I have to do, but they interfere with my plan to get back to work.

Need help to navigate the life strife but never got the tools.

A sense of lack of control – now add COVID, and it's been stagnating people – they don't know what to do – how to move forward.

We need to recognize people are navigating multiple systems (corrections, schools, ReachUp) – so many appointments pile up. Lives feel very chaotic because of these demands. Challenging for them to prioritize. Could have a part-time job but even that is overwhelming. Problem solving is challenging. Access to services – but folks are resilient. There is still a sense of hope.

Everything is chaos. Their house. Their lives. Financially.

They might have \$800 or \$900 to live from to just pay their bills. Finances often gets in the way of what they want to do. They go for the “for now” job instead of looking into career exploration stuff. They might fall off the radar because they're in survival mode. Tug and pull between “for now” and “future self”.

A lot of them have kids (maybe 50%)

Could be many grandparents parenting grandchildren – because biological parents are struggling.

Mentors – agencies help guide people and be a support for them in ways they haven't had before. But should be addressed more in the community.

As a program, we don't have income limits, but we often serve a poor population, but we can serve folks who are middle class who have full-time disabilities. People might just assume you need to be low-income. "I thought VocRehab only served people who had criminal backgrounds. Didn't look because I haven't been arrested." – Name change for rehabilitation – we're really a workforce solution.

Recapture part of their professional life. Do something different, but still very satisfying.

Survivors of cancer, people who have sustained injuries in and out of work who need help finding work. Disease and injury.

Question 4: Barriers and Objections

Perception Issue – could be helping more people who could be a better fit and it's actually for them. They think we just have jobs we can put them in. "I've met with you three times, why don't I have a job yet?" The system is cumbersome – it takes time. It's not immediate and quick. That typically puts a hard stop. This process probably takes 2-3 months to land a job. There is a methodical process – how can this be more aggressive? Does it need to be?

Idea of a job they want, but it's not the best fit.

A lot of people don't have conflict resolution skills. Hard time when they have issues with their new role. Sometimes people have something come up and the work to achieve something more gets put on hold or completely stops.

Statistically, people with disabilities are unemployed and under-employed. We help identify the barriers to move them toward their full employment potential. They want a job, but getting someone higher wage and steady employment, and much more satisfied -- you have to put the time in to do that.

Balancing the need for help now (motivated because they want our services) – and being thoughtful about doing those things to help them get a better fit.

Examples:

Got through the door – but he was frightened – was provided services to help training and recommendations – software to use. He made one small step to work with AmeriCorps because he wanted to get off SSI. If he could do Americorps, he could probably handle a job.

Positive Outcomes:

Sometimes we see the growth in people before they see the growth in themselves.

Woman who was down, terrible family, mental health issues. She saw a support person every week (VR and Therapist) – I'm not getting anywhere, but really you are compared to when we first met. Seeing those steps in growth and helping them get to a point, move forward, and figure out direction they want to go in.

You are more than your disability – see themselves in a different way. We're in the business of providing hope for people. People see their abilities not just their disability that they thought defines them.

There's a spark there in all of that chaos. (Resilient and Hopeful)

Work is transformational for people – we make a difference in people's lives every day.

Why do you come to work every day?

BEFORE + AFTER VOCREHAB

We shared this chart during our Brand Focus Workshop with you and wanted to include it in our recap because we felt it showed how impactful seeking support from VocRehab can be for adults.

| BEFORE VOCREHAB | AFTER VOCREHAB |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Powerless (x2) | Confident (x3) |
| Lost (x2) | Empowered (x2) |
| Hopeful (x2) | Excited |
| Worthless | Capable |
| Diminished / Down | Accomplished |
| Desperate | Proud + Gratified |
| Discouraged | Heard |
| Isolated | Successful |
| Scared | Supported + Valued |
| Uncertain | Connected |

DRIVERS FOR ADULTS

Individualized Service - it's not one-size fits all. We meet you, get to know you, and your goals. Capture passion. Let them lead. Listening to what you need.

Flexibility in what we can do. Discretionary Case Service Dollars - allow counselors to make decisions of what's best to do

Put the customer at the center of the process

Informed Choice - ability to choose instead of being told what to do. No one has ever asked me what I want to do. You're not just a number here

Voluntary - other agencies are mandatory

Creative and Entrepreneurial as an organization -- generate more revenue - go after a grant to serve a new population. (Adaptability)

Our Counselors/People - advocates for growth. 97% of folks said they were treated with dignity and respect. Accepting of people's backgrounds and histories. Consumers often very likely to refer a friend to VR services.

Commitment to continuous improvement and growth for our organization and our consumers.

BRAND INSIGHTS FOR ADULTS

VOCREHAB | ADULT BRAND FOCUS WORKSHOP

This is what we feel rose to the top for the VocRehab Adult program based on our workshop with you. The insights serve as “brand pillars” that will guide us in the next few phases of brand development and beyond as we both work to strengthen program awareness and get adults the help they need.

1

“FOR NOW” JOB OR CAREER

You’ve got a lot going on. Some of which you don’t even have control over. But, you can be in the driver’s seat—even if it’s a “for now” job. Want to switch careers or try something new? We can help. Want to take a course to move up with your current employer? We’ll help with that, too.

2

THIS IS A JOURNEY

Working with VocRehab means you’ve invested in becoming better than you were yesterday. But, the greatest change doesn’t happen overnight. Although you may feel stuck, after working with us, **you’ll see just how far you’ve come.** And we’ll stay by your side every step of the way, helping you transform into a **proud, confident, and accomplished** individual.

3

WE’RE IN THE BUSINESS OF PROVIDING HOPE

We’ll be respectful of your past and current situation. After all, we’re here to help you **navigate your future.** So much of our identity is tied to what we do that when you **find the right fit** it can be transformational. You’re on the right path with VocRehab.

DAY TWO:
EMPLOYERS

Audience

We want to learn more about our audience as real human beings. Where are they struggling? How do we help? What do they get out of Creative Workforce Solutions?

AUDIENCE | EMPLOYERS | DETAILED NOTES

Business Account Managers – “BAMS”

Employment Consultant Specialists

Working with partners throughout the state. “Umbrella branding” AHS – VOCREHAB - CWS

CWS started in 2009 and 2010 – agency of human services asked about how to improve job placement. There are 200 people funded by AHS doing employment work in the community. The effort to bring these people to the same table to collaborate is what formed CWS.

:This is great – I never knew!

Jen Kimmich – Alchemist – super articulate PSA on employing people with disability.

B2B reference/referral network – strengthen this in a more formalized way – Creative Workforce Ambassador.

How do they find out about CWS?

- > Outreach from “BAMS” and Employment staff.
- > Not as well known in the community without this outreach
- > Other employers we have worked with.
- > Primary is “sales calls” and word-of-mouth
- > Job fairs and yearly events (when possible).
- > Use Salesforce to track outreach to see what’s happened with each region. Often overlap between BAMs. Prioritize businesses.
- > Businesses that have 25 employees or less – best opportunity to get to decision makers. 10 or less is also a sweet spot for BAMs.

When we first started, there wasn’t a lot of community outreach – where the BAM came from. Then, we started doing outreach to many businesses. Tend to focus on businesses and types of jobs based on the needs of current job seekers.

- > Retail is a strong industry for placement – Grocery Stores like Price Chopper. (Seeking statewide agreement).
- > Place entry-level work to people with a lot of experience. We serve all Vermonters. Spans demographic, income.

What is the current perception of CWS?

- > Not a lot of people know CWS as much as they know the BAM.
- > There is not consistent use of CWS or Creative Workforce Solutions – a lot of partner organization just use the org's name even though they are part of CWS.
- > Creative Workforce Solutions is an initiative – not an organization or an entity.
- > We want to help with recruitment and retention, but we're not a staffing agency.
- > You're just another gov't initiative. I don't want to work with another "program".

Vermonters with Disabilities

Vermonters with Barriers

Vermonters with Challenges in their Lives

- > Employers are generally supportive of the work, mission, and the importance of it. We're good people doing good work in Vermont – the mission resonates with them.
- > They may not work with us due to timing.
- > Their first priority is "Can we help them with their business needs?" That part tends to come after they see we can be an effective solution.

- > Some of the people we work with do have some unique challenges. It may take more effort or time in helping them to become successful. Everyone has the potential to become a really good employee. If you put the time in, it can pay off.

- > Employers value that they took the time to understand the need of business, the roles, and the skills that are needed. We're trying to make smart matches that work for everybody. How do your skills transfer and match with what the employer needs.
- > Helping you discover a diverse workforce / untapped part of the labor market.

Progressive Employment

Opportunity for individuals to explore careers and businesses to get to know the employee in general. Informational interviews to share info from both parties – company tour, skillsets, where you're working, who you're working with, job shadowing to talk to the person doing the job.

Short-term work experience – tasks can be decided ahead of time. Bring someone in to perform tasks over a few days or weeks – someone on the floor to oversee tasks. Demonstrate and oversee skills – these often lead to jobs. We also offer on-the-job training to backfill a skill gap – CWS can help offset some of these costs for the employer.

This is more of a buffet line of what you can – pick and choose the product you want. After someone is employed, you can use individual employment to look at advancement and further skill development.

We're your neighbors. We stay local as much as we can. BAMs are there to build trust – you have someone who is there for you – this is not just dropping in and dropping out.

Very possible that employers already have someone who is struggling with a disability on their team whether they know it or not.

Why do employers reach out?

- > The relationships we've built with the employers. – the trust. Our touchpoints are different – employers reach out with new listings – so many people working with all kinds of people so we can really help find the right candidate. I know the support is there throughout the process – we want people to grow in their career. We don't just put 5 people on a line and leave you stranded.
- > We can help them with other resources that can help them grow their business. It can be a maze for small business owners who need other supports like HR, payroll, etc.
- > We could offer a 2-1-1 system for businesses, just like we do for Vermonters.
- > We also provide/develop training to employers and employees.
- > Everything is free. Other orgs charge finders fees and such.

What are the positive outcomes / what do you hear?

- > Gave existing staff a new perspective – see someone with a disability being successful. They change their way of looking at things.
- > When they bring someone in to do a work experience, it's positive for the person learning skills, but also for the person working and helping with them.
- > Businesses value the service component we bring to the table. Actively seeking out trainings that relate to current openings.
- > We're also checking in – what are your needs? How can we help? How can we support? We can be proactive – tell us what's going on – where can we help?

- > Employers feeling hopeful – trying to manage expectations – under-promising and over-delivering. Think a lot about being hopeful.
- > Everybody is ready for something – we may not have the perfect person for a job right now, but there are other ways to work together (ie. Progressive employment). Everyone will need some help and support.

BEFORE + AFTER CREATIVE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

We shared this chart during our Brand Focus Workshop with you and wanted to include it in our recap because we felt it showed how impactful working with Creative Workforce Solutions can be for employers and employees.

| BEFORE CREATIVE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS | AFTER CREATIVE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Busy | Connected (x2) |
| Stressed | Have Options |
| In-the-dark | New Resource / Partner |
| Not Sure What's Out There | Listened to |
| Confused | Valued |
| Intrigued / Interested | Not in This Alone |
| No qualified candidates | Excited |
| Frustrated with current labor pool | Hopeful |
| Seek support from state agencies | Relieved |
| Express they've never heard of us | |

DRIVERS FOR EMPLOYERS

Good job match for the candidate and the employer - requires listening to find the right fit. Everybody is ready for something. Feeling of accomplishment for all.

Progressive Employment opportunities - introduce candidates to employers in a variety of ways. Small commitment - a small step.

Post-Employment Support - we're in this with you for the long-haul. Follow up with you and candidate.

Access to other resources -- sending virtual events, other valuable resources.

Training - supporting the development and access to training

Social Mission - make doing the right thing worthwhile. "It's so cool."

Retention - facilitate additional support to take next steps.

Understand the business and workforce needs - we can't serve what we don't know.

Career Paths — what this looks like at your business

Local - support community, neighbors, and economy

You can change a life - good employers care about this

Success stories - B2B testimonials - the company you keep. Don't take our word for it. Becoming "ambassador" for CWS.

Relationships - our people - it's more than just business. Commitment.

BRAND INSIGHTS FOR EMPLOYERS

CREATIVE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS EMPLOYERS BRAND FOCUS WORKSHOP

This is what we feel rose to the top for Creative Workforce Solutions based on our workshop with you. The insights serve as “brand pillars” that will guide us in the next few phases of brand development and beyond as we both work to strengthen program awareness and help employers fill job vacancies.

1

IT'S THE SMART (AND RIGHT) THING TO DO

People with disabilities are often unemployed and underemployed. And, often discriminated against for the same job opportunity. Working with our team is an opportunity to **do the right thing**—to provide an opportunity for someone who very well could become your best asset. Not to mention, there are also financial benefits to your bottom line.

2

THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE RIGHT JOB

We're not a staffing agency. We're a career spark. **We listen to you** to determine how we can help—whether it's a job shadow or full-time employment. We make sure to find the right fit for your unique needs and match you with a candidate who will benefit your business. We follow through with **training** to strengthen their development. This helps set the stage for a fulfilling career.

3

THIS IS A PARTNERSHIP. WELCOME ABOARD.

Our Business Account Managers are out in their communities learning about employment opportunities and **forging long-term relationships**. Why? Because we understand that your business has evolving needs and we're here to support you however we can. With a small investment of time and energy from our team and yours, we can make this partnership beneficial for all involved.

DAY THREE:
YOUTH

Audience

We want to learn more about our audience as real human beings. Where are they struggling? How do we help? What do they get out of VocRehab?

AUDIENCE | YOUTH | DETAILED NOTES

Tell us about a day in their life? What are their hurdles? Challenges? Relationship with family? What are their goals?

> Finding a balance with everything – school, working, homework, caretakers to siblings. A lot are in parenting roles – navigating the components. Students felt the pressure from their parents that they couldn't go to work.

> Every student situation is different – gear services to what they need – student-centered.

> “Well, what am I going to get out of meeting with you?”

> Told them – about their careers, interests, prompted around what they wanted to do – trainings, jobs, helping with applications and resumes. They're in the driver's seat. They're meeting because they want to be there – not because they were pressured to meet with us.

> The day-to-day is SO full that it's almost just like everything blends together into this back-drop of overwhelm. School is social, where is the academics taking me – school is a cloud, it's a weight, but also a spark. Home life for some of them is, for some, inconceivable. It's not fair that a 15-year old should be parenting an alcoholic parent. School is often the bright part of their day.

> The response is often apathy – lean in or out. What carrot can I put out there that's going to cause the kid to lean in that's not going to add to what's already on their plate. This is for you.

> Opportunity to be flexible.

> **Huge range of abilities: interested in access to their services** – could be non-verbal or type of physical disability to students who have learning disability but everything else is going well – they could be college-bound with a job.

How they view themselves

> If at any point, if you could change the name – rehab has a bad connotation with teens now.

> Empower them to be their own decision maker when they're in a system that tells them what to do. We're often a gap filler.

> It's hard to distinguish who VR is within the school/parents because there are so many other providers working with these students. “They're the jobs people”

> **We're some of the first people who ask them what they want to do.** First time they have a voice. Don't find them a job – find them the right job. What's the next step to see what's possible? Create that path for themselves.

> Students have varied amount of support – develop self-advocacy skills – so it's not a conversation about them – it's a conversation with them.

It's AWESOME to have the power to finally do what you want to do.

> We are a voluntary service – they don't have to meet with us. But we will be here when they are ready.

> **Employment can be something you enjoy in life** – a job doesn't have to suck. It's a revelation that is often influenced by their family who they can't really model themselves after. Low-wage jobs do suck – work can be a part of building a life that works for you and can be good.

> Explore careers they are not sure about – not sure what to do, we can open the door for them to connect them to the right people. So, if they felt overwhelmed and nervous, we've built a sense of trust with our team to know that we'll be there to help them with opportunity.

> Come Alongside. We're with you on the journey vs you out there alone. You're not stuck to do what everyone else is doing.

Acting as a cruise director

> **We are able to help a student see possibilities.** Working might not even be discussed. Sometimes there's an assumption that they might just live off benefits. But, we open their eyes to the possibility of doing something that they'd really love to do.

> High school is the time to help shape what work, career, and potential they might have before the real world slaps them in the face.

Perceptions / Hearing about VR

> Rely heavily on schools to send people to VR. Invites to IEP meetings or groups of students set up by the case manager.

> Before, they'd do resource fairs, career days.

> Family referrals – a warmer hand-off because they've learned about it through another parent. (sometimes homeschooled). Because there isn't a "middleman" case manager.

> How do they communicate a broad message when it's so individualized.

> 6 new referrals just from youth who have worked with VR – even couples who have been accessed services.

> This person helped me get a job. This person helped me with an interview. They wouldn't even use our name. That lady on Wednesday helped me.

When it works, it really works. But it doesn't, when it doesn't.

Example of it working really well:

Student who started doing career and interests – welding – took classes and loved it. Graduated, went to AWI and now he's welding. Excited about the incredible work we've done. So engaged in the process --- figured out what he wanted to do and did it.

Ambitious freshman, local grocery store – started as bagger, got comfortable, wanted more hours, how to talk about this – wanted to be a cashier – asked for a card-only line to be trained as a cashier – we're there to support them to get them to the next step each time. Opens up career pathways to get where he wants to be. Walk down that path to get to each step – and he takes more and more ownership for it – instead of what to do I do?

When a kid has a vision and we put them in a work experience or job shadow – then they come back and hate it – also super important what you don't want to do and why.

Engagement – eventually coming on their own is a huge success.

We're going to help you collect info about who you are – aptitude and interests. It's a toolbox for kids. The more information we know about the students, their toolbox is building.

Embracing that right to fail but it's opportunity to learn about yourself – not interested or skills you may need to add.

Be the most successful you can be-where you want to be.

It's a sea and a bolt of lightning that makes people reach out. Sometimes the student got a job but needs their help. School may not know how to handle the kid. Student may not know what they want to do – when they see the work we can do with students and help them envision their future, we're often referred because they see us as a great step to get to where they want to be.

Benefits counseling – young women getting SSI – didn't see check because Mom took it – moved out, now has her own place. School and VR worked collaboratively to move to where she wanted to be.

Education piece – as long as people know what we do and how it's worked, they'll continue to refer people
Tell us about a day in their life? What are their hurdles? Challenges? Relationship with family? What are their goals?

School and VR worked collaboratively to move to where she wanted to be.

Education piece – as long as people know what we do and how it's worked, they'll continue to refer people

BEFORE + AFTER CREATIVE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

We shared this chart during our Brand Focus Workshop with you and wanted to include it in our recap because we felt it showed how impactful working with Creative Workforce Solutions can be for employers and employees.

| BEFORE VOCREHAB | AFTER VOCREHAB |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Unsure/Uncertain (6x) | Supported/Heard (4x) |
| Confused (2x) | Confident (4x) |
| Uninformed | Informed (3x) |
| Dictated to | Prepared/Ready (3x) |
| Alone/Lost/Afraid/Nervous | Clear About Goals |
| Stuck | Self-Advocate |
| Overwhelmed | Empowered |
| Question their Ability | Optimistic/Motivated |
| | Capable |
| Like a Student | Like a Young Adult |

DRIVERS FOR YOUTH

Person-centered - a lot of people say it - we do it. We don't tell them what to do -- individualized.

Free + Voluntary - no punishment if you don't do it.

Work doesn't have to suck. Find opportunity you love doing

Respect for self-worth - strength and skills / ability-based

Active - not just sitting down. It's getting out and doing. We have an idea - ok, what's next? Let's get you doing it. Often the first time when they're driving. No one asked me - everyone just told me.

Support and facilitate connections - resources, schooling - we are the hub. We have layers of internal resources.

Ability to break down the steps to get from point A to point B - idea of a job/exploring to having a job. Build skills to get to the next step - not just signing on for the rest of their life. Letting them learn and grow.

Career Counseling - skills, opportunity, research

Empower to vision and dream where they haven't before. Thinking outside of the box. "Hope Dealer"

We are more than work - bank accounts, learner's permits, financial, life skills.

People/TC's - relationships, trust, guiding. But, we're not the expert.

BRAND INSIGHTS FOR YOUTH

VOCREHAB | YOUTH BRAND FOCUS WORKSHOP

This is what we feel rose to the top for the VocRehab Youth program based on our workshop with you. The insights serve as “brand pillars” that will guide us in the next few phases of brand development and beyond as we both work to strengthen program awareness and get students the help they need to thrive.

1

THIS IS YOUR DECISION. YOU'RE IN CHARGE.

There's a world of opportunity after high school—you might just not know it because people are always telling you what to do. And that's where our team comes in. We talk about what you want—your interests, desires, and hobbies—and support you in opening doors. **This is your time.** We're along for the ride.

2

WORK DOESN'T HAVE TO SUCK.

We want to help you build a career. And the first step is **finding something you like doing**—it makes a huge difference. That's why we help you explore progressive employment opportunities to see if you like the experience. If you don't, we help uncover another opportunity you'd like to **explore**.

3

YOU CAN DO IT. WE CAN HELP.

As a student—regardless of any setbacks—you can do it. You can be successful. You have the choice to do what your family does or do something else. **You can do what you want.** Our Transition Counselors are here to help navigate how to get there—one step at a time.

INSIGHTS FROM ALL AUDIENCES

ADULTS | EMPLOYERS | YOUTH

There are a lot of commonalities across all of the audiences we talked about during the workshop. Many of the insights are truly foundational to creating a symbiotic communications strategy with consistent messaging.

ADULTS

“FOR NOW” JOB OR CAREER

THIS IS A JOURNEY

WE’RE IN THE BUSINESS OF PROVIDING HOPE

EMPLOYERS

IT’S THE SMART (AND RIGHT) THING TO DO

THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE RIGHT JOB

THIS IS A PARTNERSHIP. WELCOME ABOARD.

YOUTH

THIS IS YOUR DECISION. YOU’RE IN CHARGE.

WORK DOESN’T HAVE TO SUCK.

YOU CAN DO IT. WE CAN HELP.

VocRehab Vermont

Brand Recommendations

While we found the separate group sessions valuable, we wanted to offer multiple strategic brand recommendations that will help VocRehab and Creative Workforce Solutions thrive in the future, strengthen statewide awareness, and continue to provide top-notch, personalized service to consumers.



Job Seekers with Disabilities

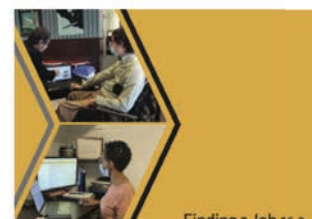
RespectAbility knows that people with disabilities can be excellent employees, but the job search can be a challenge. Thus, below is a selection of information, resources and websites that can help you and your loved ones with a disability search for a job.

We wish you much success in your journey to a better future!

Finding a Job as a Person With a Disability in Los Angeles Toolkit

Download the [PDF](#) or [accessible Word document](#) or view each section of the toolkit by following the links below:

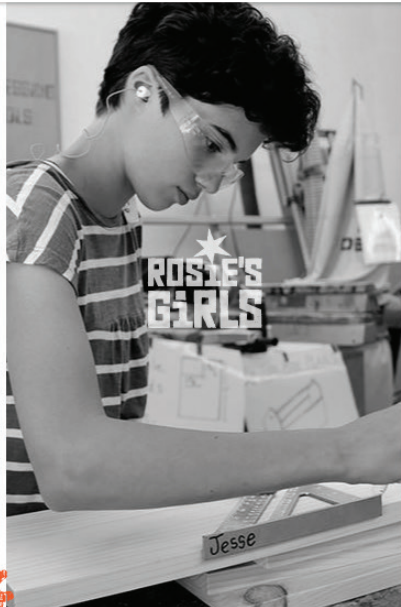
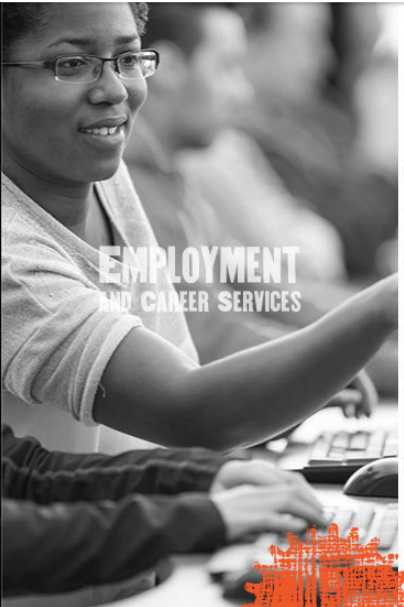
- ▶ [List of Acronyms](#)
- ▶ [Acknowledgements](#)
- ▶ [Message From Los Angeles Mayor \(PDF\)](#)



1

“REHABILITATION” IS HOLDING YOU BACK

One consistent comment we heard across the three sessions, is that having Rehabilitation in your name holds a negative connotation for your team and the multiple audiences you work with. We strongly recommend re-naming VocRehab and Creative Workforce Solutions to a name that is more in-line with the positive impact you have on an often under-served population of Vermonters. In the above example, Respect Ability turns disability into a positive with a strong name and even stronger tagline of exactly what their mission is.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE • TEACHING SKILLS CHANGING LIVES

2

UNIFY EACH GROUP WITH ONE CONSISTENT POSITIONING STATEMENT

With three separate audiences offering three different solutions, we felt there was an opportunity to bring efforts together under one brand with a common mission. Regardless of the population: youth, adults, or employers, your organization works toward one thing: providing career-focused opportunities for people with disabilities in Vermont. Within that, you have programs that could become their own initiatives with branding and messaging specific to that population. Vermont Works for Women has a unifying brand name with smaller programs underneath its umbrella.



3

USE CONCEPTUAL MARKETING MESSAGES

We recommend marketing that is more symbolic and conceptual in nature to avoid issues around diversity, specificity, and COVID-19. Creating a visual language about the promise for your consumers, employers, and students will help set the stage for a versatile communications effort. This recommendation also comes from many participants being hung up on images we showed during the workshops. Conceptual design avoids all of that specificity and gets your message across in a new and different way than it has in the past. One example that came up a lot in our discussions was Vermont Works for Women using two gears to show that when people come together, big things can happen.



IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE
THAT COUNTS[®]

V



PEOPLE



PASSION

4

YOU HAVE A PASSIONATE, DRIVEN TEAM

Finally, we have to commend your team. Everyone we met was heavily invested in the success of the consumers and business they worked with. VocRehab and Creative Workforce Solutions wouldn't be where it is without your dedicated team. They are fiercely committed to your mission. We recommend that you showcase the people who do the hard work. The people who lay the foundation to get results. They are fundamentally changing lives and we think that needs to be celebrated far beyond a state website. An example here is Vermont Mechanical, relying heavily on pictures of their team—rather than the number of white vans in their parking lot.

Next Steps:

Develop a comprehensive marketing and communications plan that takes into account all of the brand development work we've completed so far.

place.

Appendix

The following pages include the brand exercises from all three workshops we held with you.

ADULTS:
BRAND EXERCISES

WHAT WE COVERED:

The Brand Focus Workshop included one working session for each audience group: adults, employers, and youth. We walked each group through the same exercises below yielding many similar but some different insights from each group.

1. AUDIENCE DISCUSSION
2. WHO WE ARE / WHO WE'RE NOT / WHO WE WANT TO BEE
3. ANTES + DRIVERS

WHO ATTENDED?

Hib Doe - VocRehab Regional Manager

Meg Lidster, Transition Counselor

Nan Kolack – Senior Counselor

Donna Curtain – Field Services Manager

Betsy Choquette — Program Manager, Central Vermont

Danielle Hogan — Job Coach, St. Albans Office

Diane Torres — Young Adult Counselor

Holli Vidal — Admin Service Coordinator

Sheila Mercon — Senior Employment Consultant, VABIR

Diane — Dianne Delmasse — VocRehab, Director

James Smith – Policy Director – VocRehab

Steve Crafts, Partner, Chief of Brand Strategy and Creative Development, PLACE

Michael Adams, Account + Digital Director, PLACE

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Who We Are Who We Are Not

A perception exercise to help define the tone, feeling, and voice for VocRehab now and in the future.

WHO WE ARE



WHO WE ARE

> Diversity

> Nike, VT Works for Women, DTV -- more action oriented.

> United Way – sense of protection, oversight, reaching out. We’re a safe place to grow. We protect them. Helping to lift them up. Cradle and protection – then, you can thrive.

> Getting to the summit – looking back down at where you were.

> Likes the Let’s Grow Kids visual getting bigger, showing potential and growth.

> VR works for our consumers. Resonate with values and culture.

> DTV – resiliency, what makes the consumers successful – coming over barriers and looking back on them.

> Heartwarming families – positive vibe.

> Working in a career – likes the focus on her face.

> Empowering, but maybe too bold. Favorite on this page. It’s about me. I got this. Achievement or triumph is not specific, but looks triumphant. More impactful if you see people around her, cheering her on.

> Vast wide open space – options and opportunity. Have you felt this way? We’re here to help you find direction. More like before and after. About to make an important decision

> Rainbow is a sign of hope – Vermont town

> Guy working. I’m here, doing something, enjoying it. Proud and at work. Maybe if he was an amputee and a person of color.

Finding fulfillment in their careers

> Plant something to grow.

> Everyone walks in with questions.

> Stones show balance, strength, simplicity. Possibility because of the background. We help people bring balance to their lives, build their resiliency that they already have. This is a multi-step process and a building of something. We have helped you lay each stone. You can build them anywhere, you can knock them down and start over. You can change the order. There are a lot of possibilities. They have all these pieces to put together and they don’t think we can build something out of it, but when placed in the right order, you can.

> Rosie is a great poster

> Money - help people go to work to get money. Money gives you greater control and allows you to do things.

> Making connections, put all the pieces together for them. Sometimes, you don’t have the pieces, but you see the big picture of what could be. The blue is a misfit – not the same color, but a lot of the people we work with feel like they haven’t fit in – this shows that there is a place for someone. Doesn’t matter that you’re blue, you can still fit in with the whites. There is a place where you fit in.

> Swiss army knife has the tools you have right now that you might not realize.

WHO WE ARE NOT



- > Howard Center and United Way – more passive orgs.
- > McDonald's – greasy, fast food, jobs and career ladder, but very dead-end jobs. No growth.
- > Lonely and sad – not who we are.
- > Condescending – especially the family image – it's very privileged. So many people we work with don't have that nuclear family.
- > We want to focus on invisible disability – not just disability you can see like a wheelchair.
- > Legos are a little chaotic and not built yet.

Antes + Drivers

We'll identify the core drivers of VocRehab that help it stand out from other service alternatives for adults.

ANTES + DRIVERS

All brands need certain attributes to be successful in your category. Here, we'll explore your drivers—the unique traits that set your program apart.

ANTES

DRIVERS

Individualized Service - it's not one-size fits all. We meet you, get to know you, and your goals. Capture passion. Let them lead. Listening to what you need.

Flexibility in what we can do. Discretionary Case Service Dollars - allow counselors to make decisions of what's best to do

Put the customer at the center of the process

Informed Choice - ability to choose instead of being told what to do. No one has ever asked me what I want to do. You're not just a number here

Voluntary - other agencies are mandatory

Creative and Entrepreneurial as an organization -- generate more revenue - go after a grant to serve a new population. (Adaptability)

Our Counselors/People - advocates for growth. 97% of folks said they were treated with dignity and respect. Accepting of people's backgrounds and histories. Consumers often very likely to refer a friend to VR services.

Commitment to continuous improvement and growth for our organization and our consumers.

EMPLOYERS:
BRAND EXERCISES

WHAT WE COVERED:

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1. AUDIENCE DISCUSSION
2. WHO WE ARE / WHO WE'RE NOT / WHO WE WANT TO BEE
3. ANTES + DRIVERS

WHO ATTENDED?

Nat Piper- Business, Legislative & Community Relations Coordinator

Hib Doe - VocRehab Regional Manager

Mary Ellen Giglio - Business Account Manager

Zoe Cartwright - Business Account Manager

Katie Coe - Business Account Manager

DJ Masi - Business Account Manager

Sheila Mercon — Senior Employment Consultant, VABIR

Diane — Dianne Delmasse — VocRehab, Director

James Smith – Policy Director – VocRehab

Steve Crafts, Partner, Chief of Brand Strategy and Creative Development, PLACE

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Who We Are Who We Are Not

A perception exercise to help define the tone, feeling, and voice for VocRehab now and in the future.

WHO WE ARE



WHO WE ARE

- > We work with Darn Tough – placed candidates there. Toured there. Really into promoting their brand. Put Vermont first in their marketing.
- > Patagonia has a great product they stand behind – they have a mission and do good work. Very socially responsible – value employees and environment. Value employees above profit. Love of natural, wild places. Like CWS, they want to stay connected to their customer’s post-purchase.
- > Vermont Works for Women – tell you what their mission is, who they’re serving, current partner. Like gears. Love what they do.
- > Let’s Grow Kids - tells you what their mission and who they do it for.
- > United way also a partner – working on workforce development. United we stand. United we work together.
- > Reinforce memories, great brand recognition.
- > Target, go to the store for one thing, but you get a lot more.
- > Technology is part of every job these days – using tech to up-skill and make them more marketable.
- > Local – that’s your downtown.
- > Building blocks – diverse group that can make something happen.
- > Have to push a lot of rocks to get the brand recognition – you have to start all over again a lot.
- > Helping things grow – sustained growth – careers – moving up the ladder.
- > Building blocks. Find your way by following the Cairns.
- > we could be the missing puzzle piece and work together cohesively. Finding the employment need.
- > One tool, many options.
- > Most employers top concern is making and saving money – doing things economically.

WHO WE ARE NOT



** We don't have good brand name recognition like Target, Ford, and Nike – if CWS was on there, no one would know who they are or what they do.

- > Seems narrow – we work with so many different kinds of businesses.
- > We don't just work with specific industries – we work with everyone.
- > Everyone we work with doesn't require a ton of training.

WHO WE WANT TO BE



- > The #1 search engine – won't use anything else. We want to be the first partner they pick.

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ANTES

DRIVERS

Good job match for the candidate and the employer - requires listening to find the right fit. Everybody is ready for something. Feeling of accomplishment for all.

Progressive Employment opportunities - introduce candidates to employers in a variety of ways. Small commitment - a small step.

Post-Employment Support - we're in this with you for the long-haul. Follow up with you and candidate.

Access to other resources -- sending virtual events, other valuable resources.

Training - supporting the development and access to training

Social Mission - make doing the right thing worthwhile. "It's so cool."

Retention - facilitate additional support to take next steps.

Understand the business and workforce needs - we can't serve what we don't know.

Career Paths — what this looks like at your business

Local - support community, neighbors, and economy

You can change a life - good employers care about this

Success stories - B2B testimonials - the company you keep. Don't take our word for it. Becoming "ambassador" for CWS.

Relationships - our people - it's more than just business. Commitment.

YOUTH:
BRAND EXERCISES

WHAT WE COVERED:

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1. AUDIENCE DISCUSSION
2. WHO WE ARE / WHO WE'RE NOT / WHO WE WANT TO BEE
3. ANTES + DRIVERS

WHO ATTENDED?

Kate Stevens – Transition Counselor – Brattleboro Area

Tara Howe — Transition Program Director – VocRehab

Lauren Dillon – Transition Counselor — Newport

Kara Haynes — Transition Counselor — Bennington

Opal Jones —Senior Youth Employment Specialist, Washington County, VABIR

Shelly Fugere — Transition Counselor, St. Albans

Hib Doe — VocRehab Regional Manager

James Smith, Policy Director, VocRehab

Donna Curtain - Field Services Manager, VocRehab

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WHO WE ARE



WHO WE ARE

- > VT Works for Women – little bit of visual that catches your eye – gears cranking, things are moving together. Not too many words. An opportunity to be connected to VR for the rest of their life. WORKS. Simple and not overcomplicated, but also not BMW. The connection is a key piece to what we do. Enough words to understand what they do. One “gear” isn’t more important than the other.
- > LGK – positivity, proactive, understand what they’re about. Like the starting and growing – coming somewhere. Trajectory of some sort. Growth, Change, Work – all active things. Colors look young, though.
- > DTV – this is who we are.
- > Google – exploring opportunities and options.
- > Patagonia has a cool logo and kids love cool.
- > United Way has a nice icon that tells you what we do to support you.
- > The road, there are a lot of possibilities – students are driven and still thinking about what they’re doing and why. You are looking down the road. Combining 16 and 18 – you’re in the truck, driving down the road. Journey – it’s not straight. Adventure, wide open, progress, keeps going, but you don’t know where it’s going. Imagination.
- > Get your hands dirty.
- > Balancing different things in your life and how it can all work together. The rocks are all different.
- > Blocks can go together in many different ways and still form an object.
- > Rosie – connecting present with the past. Symbolic. You know who she is – identifiable. Showing alternative paths.
- > Supporting you until you can go out on your own.
- > Self-awareness looking inside yourself – seeing through different lenses.

WHO WE ARE NOT



- > I hate tik-tok. Everyone has it on their phone.
- > Not BMW. Not luxurious. BWM is unattainable.
- > We're not flat and one color.
- > We are not vocational rehabilitation anymore – what are other words? What it means, but also what it does.
- > These pictures don't really get very far – a little exclusive when there are images of people doing specific things. Always happy and having fun – kids see through anything.
- > Conforming to societal standards – beauty norms and expectations with people. When you pick person of color or in a wheelchair, it normally backfires and doesn't feel authentic. Symbols are a great way to go. Stock photos – everyone knows.
- > It shouldn't be scary to meet with us.

WHO WE WANT TO BE

- > We want to be memorable. We want to avoid the words rehab, center -- hulu / google is much cooler to the kids.
- > We want to be acting as a bridge to adulthood.
- > Current VR images – white male sitting in a classroom looking attentive. – Increase of people falling outside typical white male. Mindful of diversity. Gender non-conforming careers – female on construction site and male working in daycare.

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DRIVERS

Person-centered - a lot of people say it - we do it. We don't tell them what to do -- individualized.

Free + Voluntary - no punishment if you don't do it.

Work doesn't have to suck. Find opportunity you love doing

Respect for self-worth - strength and skills / ability-based

Active - not just sitting down. It's getting out and doing. We have an idea - ok, what's next? Let's get you doing it. Often the first time when they're driving. No one asked me - everyone just told me.

Support and facilitate connections - resources, schooling - we are the hub. We have layers of internal resources.

Ability to break down the steps to get from point A to point B - idea of a job/exploring to having a job. Build skills to get to the next step - not just signing on for the rest of their life. Letting them learn and grow.

Career Counseling - skills, opportunity, research

Empower to vision and dream where they haven't before. Thinking outside of the box. "Hope Dealer"

We are more than work - bank accounts, learner's permits, financial, life skills.

People/TC's - relationships, trust, guiding. But, we're not the expert.