



By Allen Anderson

Change the Perspective

How you frame the marketing challenge in job development will determine if the challenge can be met and if anyone is willing to meet it. Ensuring our frame of reference or perspective accurately reflects what we need is what gives access to the correct skills needed for the solutions. An inaccurate perspective or frame of reference brings forth ineffective skills.

Let me give you an example. When we try to find work for people with significant employment barriers (like multiple disabilities), we often frame the task in the context of the fit or match between candidate abilities and employer demands. Our marketing efforts, resources and skills are applied to finding the right job match.

How do you find a match between jobs that are always going to demand more than the candidate has to offer? A traditional answer has been to look for potential job carving, (only doing a piece of the job) etc. and job match through doing only part of the job. This is a great answer but the marketing task here is not finding a job match, but finding employers willing to carve jobs. Finding employers willing to carve jobs is different than finding job opening where you can match candidate skills and job qualifications. The different perspectives demand different marketing approaches and skills.

Let's push this further. What marketing skills would we use if our frame of reference became identifying and owning some of the basic entry-level positions in our community? If our marketing strategy centred on job identification – what basic job exists in our community, which one suits us best and how can we access and hold these jobs for our candidates; do you think we will use our skills differently than if we asked the question – where is the right job match for this candidate? I do. I know I would look for different employers, I would ask different questions and I would build a different sell for the latter and the former.

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Matching emphasizes transferable skills and support services as the keys to the marketing campaign. Recognizing opportunities emphasizes responsiveness, selection and creative thinking.

You cannot take advantage of opportunities if you cannot also affect job matches. Both are important skills.

My point is that how you frame the initial challenge, “is it to find the job match” or “is it to scope potential opportunities” – determines the marketing strategy design. I suggest that if we frame the marketing strategy within the limitations of the candidate as opposed to all the potential job opportunities we can identify, we artificially limit ourselves. Our candidates often do not fit traditional job qualification descriptions. It is our ability to identify potential for both the employer and candidate that makes employment happen. The marketing challenge is to find places where we might work not only where we can work.

How we think about the task determines how we design our marketing efforts. Our marketing efforts determine our employment outcomes. If we are not getting the employment outcomes we need it may not be the marketing efforts but our perspective on what we think is the task.

We can improve our employment outcomes by changing our perspective on what we want the marketing to do. If the marketing is not working now or not working well enough think about how you are thinking about the task and see if there is a different perspective or frame of reference to refresh your work.

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