

Market Forces Activity: Facilitator's Guide

Engaging Employers and Workplace Partners



Purpose of the exercise: Program staff who wish to engage with workplace partners must pay attention to the market forces and environment that affects potential partners. True partners understand the forces that impact the work of one another. This exercise helps participants to:

- Expand awareness of who potential partners might be;
- Expand awareness of what a range of engagement options might be; and
- Build awareness to provide services based on workplace partners' needs.

Instructions: Identify an industry sector you wish to engage in your work (e.g. health care, restaurants, construction, etc.) You may also focus on a particular organization, or sub-sector within the broader grouping, which you would like to engage services with (e.g. St. Jude nursing program, Home Depot, etc.)

Once you've identified the sector or individual organization, follow the following steps in completing the attached worksheet. Please note: you will begin with the fourth column on the right, then the fifth, and then move to the far left column, then the second to the left, and end with the third or middle column. See the sample on the following page.

Step One: Identify Workplace Partners

Write the words "Workplace Partners" at the top of the second column from the right. Ask the participants to discuss the workplace partners they would like to engage in their work. If it is a group of participants from the same community, ask them to be specific when naming potential partners (organizations and individuals). If the group represents several different communities they may indicate organizational types and individual roles. Record their responses in the second column from the right.

Quick Prompts: Who is it you are trying to engage? (Institutions and individuals in roles within institutions)

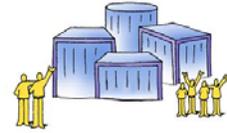
Step Two: Identify What Types of Opportunities They Provide

Write the word "Types of Opportunities" at the top of the far right column. Ask the participants to discuss what types of opportunities they want from the partners they've indicated. Ask what they need their potential partners to do or provide, or the types of opportunities they foresee with the partners they've indicated. If the group is large, and you sense that the conversation may become too unwieldy if you talk about all the named partners, you may limit the next part of the discussion to one or two of the named partners. The group will likely come up with several kinds of responses to this question – including jobs, internships, active participation on committees, donations, etc.

Quick Prompts: How would you like them to be engaged? What is it you would like them to do or provide?

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Step Three: Identify Their Market Forces

Write the words “Market Forces” at the top of the first column on the left. Ask participants to describe the environmental forces that are impacting the potential workplace partners.

Responses might include layoffs, increased cost of workers compensation insurance, financial scandals, limited resources, lack of buy-in from leadership, etc. Encourage the group to think about both internal and external factors within the organizations. Record their responses below.

Quick Prompts: What do they care about? What concerns them? What forces drive them and command attention?

Step Four: Identify Your Competition

Write the word “Competition” at the top of the second column from the left. Ask participants to discuss the competition for the potential business partners’ attention. Participants may indicate that other program providers are competition. Encourage them to think about those other program providers or schools as potential partners, not competition. The first hurdle with a potential business partner is to get them to see the benefit of partnering overall. The competition for the business partners’ attention includes items like “the bottom line” - making profits each quarter, the Xerox machine salesperson or repair person, the technology challenges, the high price of temporary workers.

Quick Prompts: Who is your competition?

Step Five: Select the Services and Strategies You Can Negotiate

Write the words “Services and Strategies” at the top of the middle column. Ask participants to consider now what services they can they can provide to the workplace partner to help them address the challenges they face. Ask participants to discuss the resources and services that you have that they need. The services will have to be crafted and pitched in such a way that they overcome the competing forces in the workplace partner’s day and provide solutions to some of their challenges. The first hurdle with a potential partner is to get them to see the benefit of partnering overall. By identifying and communicating what you have to offer potential partnerships, rather than simply what you need supports a win-win situation in which the potential partner sees what they will gain in the collaboration.

Quick Prompts: What services can you provide that will enable them to participate? What do you have that the workplace partner needs to address their challenges?

Topic and Order	Market Forces 3	Competition 4	Services and Strategies 5	Workplace Partners 1	Types of Opportunities? 2
Record ideas here					

Market Forces

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Order, Topic & Prompt	Step 3 <i>Market Forces</i> What do they care about? What concerns them? What forces drive them and command attention?	Step 4 <i>Competition</i> Who is your competition?	Step 5 <i>Services and Strategies</i> What services can you provide that will enable them to participate? What do you have that they need?	Step 1 <i>Workplace Partners</i> Who is it you are trying to engage? (Institutions and individuals in roles within institutions)	Step 2 <i>Types of Opportunities</i> What do you need them to do or provide? How would you like them to be engaged?
Record ideas here					