

Ten Tips for Re-employment Transitions

- ✓ Position unemployment insurance as “re-employment insurance”
- ✓ Strategically redesign worker profiling processes
- ✓ Turn “claimants” into jobseekers or training participants ASAP
- ✓ Improve “orientation” and “rapid response” presentations
- ✓ Comprehensive list of services, not just resource rooms
- ✓ Improve customer flow with “high volume” center traffic
- ✓ Position your unique situation with employers
- ✓ Revamp bureaucratic UI “notices”
- ✓ Improve processes between customers, one-stop centers and UI call centers and internet sites
- ✓ Make sure the most in need know about your employment and training services

1. **Position unemployment insurance as “reemployment insurance”** ...in documents, signs, scripts for orientation sessions, etc. The goal is for claimants to understand the “temporary” nature of the UI benefits, and NOT WAIT until the last check to take action. In addition, the requirement to “register for work” should be described as “register for services” – so that claimants don’t think work is readily available and you will call them at home when you have work for them.
2. Strategically **redesign worker profiling** processes, requirements and services to target reduction in weeks claimed, not just reduction in claimants that exhaust benefits. **Services and processes should be customized for different claimant groups:** entry level workers that will exhaust within a few weeks may need quick access to customer service certificates; while laid-off manufacturing workers that are likely to collect for 26 weeks need skills assessments and interest inventories right away to plan for skill building opportunities. This means customizing the “one-size-fits-all” RES orientation into various modules.
3. Re-orient process steps and customer communication to **turn “claimants” into jobseekers or training participants**

ASAP with frequent, constant contact. Every contact with customers should refer to “How is your job search going?” as part of the standard script. This includes call center activities, UI notices, hearings, and exit interviews with customers on their way out the door. “Training Fairs” are as important as “Job Fairs.” The “notice” to

- claimants that inform them of mandatory services (due to profiling) can say *“based on your skills and significant work history, you have been selected for additional services to help get you back to work or into approved training as soon as possible...”*
4. Improve “orientation” and “rapid response” presentations, processes and documents – to ***focus on reemployment and skill building, not just facilitated claims processing and mandatory information***. This applies to the agenda sequence, semantics, amount of time spent on each topic, handout materials, etc. For many of the unemployed “rapid reemployment” is the goal, not just rapid UI response. A first meeting that only features information on unemployment requirements, and then only briefly presents other services is likely to reinforce the “unemployment office” image. Talk more about helping them to their next paycheck...while ensuring they meet ongoing UI eligibility requirements.
 5. ***Transitioning to re-employment requires a comprehensive list of services, not just resource rooms***. Design and (re)launch services for professionals, along with improved re-employment services for entry-level workers – that are authentic to current recruitment and hiring practices. Resumes have changed, interviewing has changed, testing – personality, integrity and honesty tests – is more and more common. Social networking, internet access and virtual job clubs are increasingly becoming part of job search success, especially for professionals. The “Job Search Workshop” works better unbundled into several shorter, more current “seminars” or “clinics” offered more frequently...and perhaps out of the office if you do not have space.
 6. ***Improve customer flow*** with “high volume” traffic in centers to once and for all move beyond (just) the “unemployment office” to recognition as a true Career Center. Increase group services, i.e., provide ongoing “welcome and orientation” sessions that repeat job search topics in 15-minute modules so first-time customers can join at any time. Provide lists of other locations that have public access computers. Post signs that let customers know when wait time is lowest. Create job clubs for similar customer groups...and more.
 7. ***Position your unique situation with employers***: this economy means your Centers are access to a “paramount bank of talent” since UI is the *“first to know when quality workers lose their jobs.”* And

Centers are among the first to know when skill-builders complete training; so any employer that is hiring should make sure you know about their vacancies – through direct job-bank listings, links, scraping and indexing jobs.

8. **Revamp bureaucratic UI “notices”** to promote re-employment services (in a way that does not diminish the communication of required information). As a prime example: most of the documents explaining “benefits rights” or “claimants rights” are very difficult for claimants to understand, and instead of reading for information, these customers ask staff the same questions over and over again. Documents that explain weekly/bi-weekly filing instructions (for call centers or online applications) can also explain weekly job search activities...*“every week when you enter ongoing claim information, also visit our job website at...* In addition, many documents would benefit from “simplification” of the terms, words and actions required.
9. Adopt **process improvement strategies between and among customers, one-stop centers and UI call centers or internet sites.** Sometimes this is as simple as a facilitated meeting with problems and issues identified, and solutions prioritized. The goal is to minimize the amount of time customers spend on their claim, and increase the amount of time spent on job search or training. Areas of improvement include web site navigation, voice response scripts and operations, call processing, clarity of instructions and roles among those involved and more.
10. **Make sure the most in need know about your services.** For example, the unemployed who are denied unemployment benefits need to know you can help with employment and training services. The notice to inform a claimant that s/he is NOT eligible for benefits should feature an invitation to come to the Center...*“now that you are facing a major financial hardship...let us help you find a new job as soon as possible.”*

Melanie Arthur works with State and Local leaders nationwide to improve workforce services and outcomes. For more information on how to transition from unemployment to re-employment, contact her today: Melanie@GregNewtonAssociates.com.