

# Job Developer Types, Placement Practices and Outcomes

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# technical report

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## Introduction

Despite numerous employment initiatives, people with disabilities are significantly more likely to experience unemployment and consequentially, reduced economic and social well-being and a diminished quality of life (Gilbride & Stensrud, 2008) than their nondisabled peers. In a recent national survey of employers, less than 14% of companies indicated that they actively recruit jobseekers with disabilities (Domzal, Houtenville & Sharma, 2008). Thus, the role of the job development professional is pivotal to helping job seekers with disabilities to find, secure and maintain employment. Several studies have explored job development and placement practices (Blitz & Mechanic, 2006; Simonsen, Fabian, Buchanan & Luecking, 2011; Migliore, Hall, Butterworth & Winsor, 2010; Tilson & Simonsen, in press; Whitley, Kostic, & Bush, 2009). In recent years, the field has also amassed a repertoire of best practices and targeted competencies for job development professionals endorsed by several professional organizations, including The Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE); Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE); Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE); The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children; and the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD-Y) (Tilson & Simonsen, in press).

Although we have a growing knowledge base about effective strategies, job developers do not consistently implement highly recommended job development practices. In a national survey of job developers, Migliore et al. (2010a) found that respondents relied on cold calls and browsing help wanted ads more than networking with family members or employers despite the fact that the literature indicates that employers tend to hire candidates who are connected through networks of acquaintances. These variations in strategies and approaches were found among professionals within the same organizations, who were likely to have similar case loads, expectations, processes, community variables, and training opportunities. This suggests that individual job developers have “go to” strategies or styles. Because attitudes and beliefs motivate behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), we conducted a study in 2011 to categorize different types of job developers based on their attitudes towards employers and employment process (Fabian, Simonsen, Buchanan & Luecking, 2011). We developed and administered the “Employment Providers’ Attitudes & Beliefs Scale” (EPABS) to job development professionals in New Jersey and Maryland. By conducting a factor analysis, three distinct types of job developers emerged from that preliminary study based on the patterns of responses to the Scale items. We named these types: (1) Relationship Builders, (2) Supply Siders, and (3) Job Brokers. Relationship Builders marketed trust and mutuality in job development/placement; focusing on networking and information exchange. Supply Siders emphasized “selling disability” and anticipated addressing significant employer barriers to hiring applicants with disabilities. Traditionalists relied on moral or legal imperatives to encourage employers to hire applicants, including tax incentives and the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

The purposes of the current study were to: 1) validate the EPAB Scale and confirm the job developer types identified in our preliminary study; and 2) explore the relationship between these types, other personal characteristics, and placement outcomes.

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## Methods

Three questions guided our examination of job developer attitudes and beliefs toward employers and the job development process:

1. Can we validate the three job developer types identified in earlier research by administering the EPABS to a second sample of employment specialists?
2. What is the relationship between job developer types and other staff attributes and behaviors related to job placement?
3. Is there a relationship between job developer type and job placement outcomes?

## Sample Description

Participants in the second sample administration of the Employer Attitudes & Beliefs Study were recruited from individual email solicitations, website invitations, training conferences, and workshops. We fielded the survey for four months (June 9, 2012- October 9, 2012), and had 267 respondents. We cannot estimate the response rate as we had no knowledge of the number of potential participants, but the sample size in this study is consistent with that achieved in the earlier administration (Fabian et al., 2011). In this sample, 70% were female, and the majority (66%) were employed by community rehabilitation programs, compared to 24% in State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies. The sample was highly educated with 79% having a bachelor's degree or higher, and only 14% having a high school diploma or less. About 46% of the sample worked in job development for fewer than five years; and 35% had been in the field for 11 or more years. The sample was predominantly from the Mid-Atlantic/Northeastern portion of the United States (e.g. Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Vermont).

## Data collection and instrumentation

The survey was administered via SurveyMonkey and consisted of three scales (described below). In addition, we used six job development and placement practice items derived from our previous work (Tilson & Simonsen, in press), as well as items on background information.

**The Employment Provider Attitudes and Beliefs Scale-Revised** (Fabian et al., 2011). This scale taps attitudes and beliefs regarding employers and the employment process. The first administration of this Scale (described in the Fabian et al., 2011 report) had 25 items. After analyses of the results of the first Scale, five items were dropped and several were re-worded for clarity. The Scale has a 5-point response scale from 1 (none) to 5 (all). The final instrument appears in Table I. The internal reliability coefficient using Cronbach's Alpha is .73 for this sample.

**The Job Development Efficacy Scale** (Fabian & Waugh, 2001). This 20-item scale assesses job developer's self-efficacy beliefs regarding tasks associated with job development and placement. The JDES has a 7-point response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scale reliabilities have been reported using Cronbach's Alpha as .81 (Schultz, 2008). For this sample, Cronbach's Alpha is .81.

**The Life Orientation Test-Revised** (Schier & Carter, 1985). The Lot-R assesses dispositional optimism/pessimism and contains six items with four fillers; three items are phrased positively and three are worded negatively. The LOT-R is scored on a 5-point response scale from 0

(strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Reliability coefficients for the Lot-R are reported as .78 (Scheier et al., 1994).

## Results

We report the findings for this study based on the three research questions.

### Validating the Job Developer Types

As described earlier, we modified the EPABS based on an item analysis conducted after the first administration of the Scale, which was field-tested in spring, 2011.

The first research question seeks to validate the factor structure of the EPABS by comparing the Scale statistics across the two-sample administrations (about one year apart), both of which primarily relied on web-based surveys data collection methods. Table 1 shows the results of the analyses for the two samples as well as the factor loadings for each item. Based on our first or exploratory factor analysis of the Scale, reported in August 2011 (Fabian et al.), we restricted the number of extracted factors to three, and conducted a Varimax rotation to find the best solution. Respondents with missing data were eliminated from the analyses. The latent factor pattern was fairly consistent across both samples, as were the factor loadings. We attribute some of the differences noted in the Table to the re-wording of some of the items on the scale administered to the second sample. As indicated in Table 1 only two items loaded onto different factors for the two samples; both of these items addressed the role and function of the job coach.

**Table 1. Factor loadings for the two samples of the EPABS**

The item stem for each response is: Employers in my community...		
Item	Sample 1 (n= 242)	Sample 2 (n= 207)
1. Are interested in learning about my agency/organization	Factor 1 (.560)	Factor 1 (.653)
2. Respect the role of job developer	Factor 3 (.348)	Factor 1 (.566)
3. Base hiring decisions on bottom line	Factor 2 (.350)	Factor 2 (.474)
4. More likely to hire PWD for entry level jobs	Factor 1 (.545)	Factor 1 (.484)
5. More likely to hire PWD for volunteer positions	Factor 2 (.651)	Factor 2 (.373)
6. Prefer to know in advance about applicant's disability	Factor 2 (.559)	Factor 2 (.481)

7. Hire our applicants because they trust us	Factor 1 (.642)	Factor 1 (.708)
8. Prefer to meet job developer before hiring applicant	Factor 1 (.489)	Factor 1 (.648)
9. Hire applicants because of tax incentives	Factor 3 (.591)	Factor 3 (.586)
10. Are too busy to interact with job developers	Factor 2 (.591)	Factor 2 (.608)
11. Prefer to hire applicants referred by “trusted” job developer	Factor 1 (.622)	Factor 1 (.666)
12. Need to be “sold” on hiring PWD	Factor 2 (.698)	Factor 2 (.659)
13. Are motivated to hire for charitable reasons	Factor 3 (.593)	Factor 3 (.554)
14. Whose hiring manager is off-site is less likely to hire	Factor 2 (.493)	Factor 2 (.617)
15. Want more information about the ADA	Factor 3 (.628)	Factor 3 (.529)
16. Are less likely to hire PwD in current economy	Factor 2 (.671)	Factor 2 (.685)
17. Are reluctant to hire PwD due to perceived costs	Factor 2 (.603)	Factor 2 (.685)
18. Prefer to have a full-time job coach	Factor 1 (.447)	Factor 3 (.608)
19. Appreciate inquiries about business needs	Factor 1 (.612)	Factor 1 (.649)
20. Who have hired in the past, more likely to do so again	Factor 1 (.612)	Factor 1 (.675)

The validation of the initial factor analyses of the data (with modifications to the EPAB Scale for the second administration) confirms our initial three-factor solution. In addition, a review of the items loading on the three factors confirms the conceptual description of each of the resulting latent constructs as originally described in the 2011 report: Relationship Builders (Factor 1), Supply Siders (Factor 2), and Traditionalists (Factor 3). After reviewing the items for Factor 3,

we renamed this Scale, “Traditionalists” to signify that this type relies on traditional “tools” of the job placement process (tax incentives, ADA training, etc.). These types will be used in addressing the next two research questions. It is important to note that the three types are based on a pattern of responses to the 20-item EPABS, and not on a particular score for each item or for the combined items. As a result, there are no “pure” types, but instead a pattern of responses to the items that reveal a stronger preference for one of the three types.

## Relationship of Job Development Types to other Personal Characteristics

We analyzed correlations between job developer types and other personal variables and attributes we assessed, including: (1) background education and experience, (2) job development efficacy, (3) business “savvy,” and (4) general life orientation. We conducted these analyses by saving and retrieving the scores from the factor analysis described under Research Question 1.

### Education and Experience

There was a significant relationship for years of experience and job developer type, with those respondents having more experience being more likely to be typed as **Relationship Builders** ( $F = 2.651; 3; p \leq .05$ ), and those with the least experience (less than one year) being more likely to be typed as **Traditionalists** ( $F = 3.6, d, p = .01$ ). There were slight but non-significant differences for educational level across the three types. There were no differences for type by gender or respondent’s agency or consumer population.

### Types and Job Development Efficacy

We correlated factor scores derived from the analyses with the 20-item Job Development Efficacy Scale (JDES; Fabian & Waugh, 2001). Our analyses resulted in some significant correlations across the types as described below.

**Supply Siders** correlated significantly and positively with five of the 20 items on the JDES Scale (\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ):

- It is difficult to balance competing demands of dual customers (.183\*\*)
- It is difficult to meet the “right” contact person in a business (.306\*\*)
- It is difficult to secure jobs because there are so few available in the current job market (.164\*)
- Chance or luck is a key factor in job development (.293\*\*)
- It is difficult to find jobs because there are so few my clients can do (.196\*\*)

On the other hand, **Relationship Builders** had significant correlations with only two JDES items: a positive correlation with, “I am confident I can find jobs that match my client’s interests” (.153\*), and negatively with, “Chance or luck is a key factor in job development” (-.203\*\*). **Traditionalists** had only one significant positive correlation with the item, “It is difficult to secure jobs in the current economy” (.121\*). Results for these analyses suggest that **Supply Siders** might have less confidence in their job development skills than the two other types.

### Types and Business Savvy

We also examined correlations between types and six items that we developed based on our prior work in job development (Tilson & Simonsen, in press) that represented a construct we named “Business Savvy.” The six items representing this construct are identified in Table 2 along with the correlation coefficients for each of the three types.

**Table 2. Relationship of types to items measuring “business savvy”**

Item	Relationship Builders	Supply Siders	Traditionalists
I frequently seek assistance from personal and professional networks to generate new job development strategies	.207**	-.008	-.228**
I have a reputation for delivering quality customer service	.151**	.025	-.087
I am knowledgeable about local labor force and local economic and employment trends	.233**	-.005	-.090
I find it easy to build ongoing working relationships with employers	.303**	-.158*	.014
I have worked in a variety of jobs outside of education and human service fields	.156*	.024	.038
I frequently seek assistance from personal and professional networks to generate new job development strategies	.207**	-.008	-.228**

\*p<.05

\*\*p<.01

**Relationship Builders** correlated positively and significantly with each of the six “Business Savvy” items; whereas the other two types each had only one negative correlation with the items as indicated in Table 2. These findings underscore the positive link between **Relationship Builders**, and some of the attitudes and behaviors associated with business savvy.



## Type and Life Orientation

Based on prior research (Tilson & Simonsen, in press), we were interested in the association between our job developer types and general measures of optimism/pessimism, as assessed by the 10-item Life Orientation Scale (Schier & Carver, 1985). Results indicated that **Relationship Builders** were generally more optimistic and less pessimistic than the other two types, a finding that emerged from the analysis. For example, **Relationship Builders** correlated positively with, “Overall I expect more good things to happen to me than bad” (.313\*\*), and, “In uncertain times I usually expect the best” (.291\*\*), but negatively with, “I hardly ever expect things to go my way” (-.211\*\*), and, “If something can go wrong for me, it will” (-.204\*\*). **Supply siders’** and **Traditionalists’** factor scores correlated positively with, “If something can go wrong for me, it will” (.137\*), and “I hardly ever expect things to go my way” (.132\*). These results suggest that Supply Siders and Traditionalists may have an overall more negative or pessimistic orientation to life, a factor that may contribute to their type.

## Relationship of Job Developer Type and Job Placement Outcomes

Finally we were interested in exploring the relationship between job placement outcomes (defined as placement rate) and job developer type based on a small sample of 35 job developers all employed by the same agency in Vermont. We derived the placement rate by dividing the number of jobseekers on the job developer’s caseload by the number of placements achieved during a one -year period. Data on each participant were supplied by the administrative office of the Vermont Agency. The majority of the sample were female (71%), and the majority (74%) had 1-5 years of experience in job development. In terms of educational level, 54% had a BA degree or higher.

In the analysis, we regressed factor scores for job developer type on placement rates, and found no significant differences (given the small sample size, this was not surprising). However, there were some trends worth noting. Examination of the regression plots indicated a slight but not significant positive slope for **Relationship Builders** and placement rate – as the mean score on this Type increased, the placement rate also increased. On the other hand, for **Supply Siders**, there was a slight, although not significant, negative slope – as the mean score on this Type increased, the placement rate decreased. There was no discernible relationship for **Traditionalists**. These results may suggest that job developer type is associated with job placement outcomes, although additional study, including a larger sample size, controlling for other variables, is needed to confirm these trends.

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## Conclusion and Implications

It appears from this study and our previous research that there are different types of job developers who can be characterized based on their attitudes and beliefs towards employers and the employment process. The type dimension is important because people behave in ways that are consistent with their beliefs and attitudes, and it is more difficult to shape or modify behaviors without understanding or acknowledging the underlying motivators. It is also important to remember that there are no “pure” types; implying that each job developer might adopt a different approach based on unique individuals, events, and circumstances. In other

words, a job developer who primarily relies on relationship building in their strategies “toolkit” would also need to have skills required to “close a sale” or demonstrate to employers the “bottom line” value of hiring the jobseekers they represent. However, the dominant type may represent the habitual patterns that job developers rely on when faced with a new or challenging experience.

We must also consider some of the limitations of this study. We have no information on the sample response rate, and might conclude that the respondents in this study were more likely to participate based on an individual attribute that potentially alters or skews the results. In addition, the Employment Provider Attitudes and Beliefs Scale, with a Cronbach’s Alpha of .72 is adequate for research purposes, but requires further refinement and testing in order to demonstrate solid psychometric characteristics for individual assessment. Despite these limitations, there are several practical implications of this study that are described in the next section.

## Implications

Our findings may be particularly useful for employment service provider managers as they seek to develop and implement training programs which will maximize the capabilities of their job developers. It is important that managers encourage exploration and discussion of staff attitudes and beliefs towards the employment process within the framework of the job developer types. Becoming aware of these attitudes is the first step in trying to change them – or in developing alternative strategies to optimize strengths or compensate for limitations. Although we don’t provide a scoring key corresponding to each type, it might be useful to have individuals complete the EPABS and compare their most highly rated items to those of the three types identified in Table 1.

Each of the job developer types identified in this present study has its own strengths and weaknesses. The most savvy job developers are those that understand the attitudes, beliefs, and accompanying skills of each type in order to expand their toolkit of strategies. The fact that **Supply Siders** tended to be newer to the field and express lower self-efficacy beliefs about job development/placement suggests potential training and professional development interventions. Early in their careers, these individuals (who also tend to have a pessimistic disposition) might benefit more from efficacy-building tasks (achieving incremental accomplishments) rather than being exposed to new complicated skills sets (such as those required in demand-side job development). **Traditionalists** who rely on practices such as appealing to employers’ charitable sense or relying on tax incentives may benefit from training that emphasizes skills required to “close a deal” or persuade employers of the benefits of hiring by paying attention to the bottom line. Although it’s harder to change a dispositional trait such as having an optimistic outlook, it’s possible to maximize the odds of achieving job development success, and improving one’s overall attitude toward employers and the employment process.

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