

SUCCESS STORY

COLUMBUS SPEECH AND HEARING

Improving Communication ... For Life

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Key Lessons Learned



Anticipate employers' concerns in order to facilitate communication between the employer and the jobseeker.

Build a mutually beneficial relationship with employers by offering assistance throughout the interviewing and hiring process.

Organization Background

The Columbus Speech and Hearing Center was established in 1923 as the League for the Hard of Hearing. The Center is now a non-profit, United Way Agency. Over the past 80 years, the Center has maintained a constant presence in the Columbus community and its surrounding areas by raising awareness of speech and hearing challenges. Each year, the Center serves nearly 10,000 people across Ohio.

The Center's Comprehensive Program for the Deaf was established in 1971 to provide vocational training and placement services to Ohio residents who are deaf and hard of hearing. Over the years, the agency has served over 4,500 individuals by providing evaluation, job coaching and

job retention assistance. They have employers throughout Ohio contacting them requesting job candidates. For more information about Columbus Speech and Hearing, please visit:

www.columbusspeech.org.

EARN's Process is Simple

Jennifer Smith-Dudash first heard about EARN through her state vocational rehabilitation system and signed up to take advantage of the job leads. Jennifer works with the Columbus Speech & Hearing Center's Comprehensive Program for the Deaf serving the center's clients to determine their skills, interests and abilities in order to best assist them with finding a good job.

In October 2004, she received a job posting from EARN that matched the interests and qualifications of one of her candidates. She contacted EARN to refer the candidate and related: "I found the process very simple and the staff quick to respond." EARN agreed with Jennifer that her candidate met the job qualifications and contacted the employer that same day to let them know they had a match. Jennifer then received a call from the employer to

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set up an interview with her and the candidate.

The Beginning of a Beautiful Friendship

This employer had not interviewed a deaf person before, so Jennifer spent some time explaining to the employer what to expect to help put the employer at ease before the interview. The interview was a great success and the candidate was hired as a production associate.

This was the beginning of a continuing relationship between Jennifer, EARN and the employer. Since that first hire, there have been 3 additional hires in data entry and document imaging. The employer has also provided a work experience in IT for Jennifer's clients. She has received positive feedback from the employer, and the employer is now taking advantage of free sign language classes and requesting more candidate referrals from Columbus Speech and Hearing.

Facilitating Communication for a More Successful Interview

Jennifer sees her role as supporting both the client and the employer throughout the interviewing and hiring process. She often contacts employers before an interview to answer any questions or concerns they may have.

For example, employers are used to interviews being one-on-one and some have never used an interpreter; they may have never met someone who is deaf or hard of hearing. In these cases, Jennifer will explain what the employer should expect in the interview and address common concerns rather than relying on the employer to ask sensitive questions.

In many cases, Jennifer attends the interview along with the job candidate. She is quick to point out that she does not act as an interpreter but sees herself more as a communications facilitator who is an active participant in conversations. "Everyone's so nervous in interviews," Jennifer says, "I may point out some things the candidate forgot to say to let the employer know this is a good candidate."

What is the key to their success? Jennifer says it helps that they have strong marketing and job development support and work with a great group of employers.

Share Your Story

If you have a success story you would like to share, please email us at:
earn@earnworks.com.

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