



Kentucky Business Services Redesign

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Thomas P. Miller and Associates

Thomas P. Miller and Associates
1630 N. Meridian Street, Suite 430
Indianapolis, IN 46202

www.tpma-inc.com



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Methodology	1
Alignment with Other KWIB Initiatives	2
Recommendations	3
Adopt a Business Services Framework.....	3
Define criteria for identifying businesses that are at-risk and poised for growth.....	9
Establish roles and minimum standards for Rapid Response	11
Adopt a customer relationship management system to facilitate information sharing, accountability, and transparency among all partners of the Business Services Team	15
Increase networking and peer-to-peer learning opportunities	17
Co-brand Business Services within the Kentucky Career Center Brand Guidelines	18
Leverage the Economic Development Academy and opportunities with Economic Development	19
Develop Benchmarks and Roll Out Strategies	21
Develop a Business Services Training Framework	22



Introduction

The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board's (KWIB) strategic plan, *WORKSmart Kentucky: A Strategic Transformation of Kentucky's Workforce System* calls for the talent development system to become one that is demand-driven and aligned with education and economic development priorities. The KWIB identified and is implementing action steps in five focus areas: 1) System Transformation; 2) Education Alignment; 3) Economic Development Alignment; 4) System Simplification; and 5) Customer Service.

The Rapid Response Redesign was launched in Summer 2011 as one of the initiatives aimed at improving alignment with economic development. The intent of the initiative was to ensure that Kentucky companies have access to services throughout the business lifecycle. The project Steering Committee quickly recognized that in order to meet its intent, however, the initiative must be recast to examine the whole of business services. Rapid response activities are a necessary component to business services, but they often occur too late in a company's decision making. Focusing on developing proactive relationships with employers, rather, will help position the workforce system as a trusted, reliable partner to employers.

Many of the Commonwealth's regions have formed or are in the process of developing proactive ways to serve employers. Some

have developed successful and ongoing relationships with economic developers to jointly respond to business. Others have created formal networks to discuss and address the needs of employers. These processes differ from region to region due to local dynamics, unique assets and existing relationships. Business Services Redesign is an opportunity to offer consistency to partners and most importantly, the Commonwealth's businesses while still maintaining flexibility to serve businesses in ways tailored to each region's environment.

This report recommends a collaborative approach to meeting employers' needs that promotes close partnerships with economic development and education in order to find comprehensive solutions for employers. No one agency, organization or individual can successfully serve all of an employer's needs. But by leveraging the collective resources and knowledge of partners, effective Business Services Teams can help sustain Kentucky's economic growth and improve the lives of its citizens.

Methodology

In order to understand the current structures and gather ideas on enhancements and resources needed, Thomas P. Miller and Associates, LLC (TPMA) has assisted the Commonwealth in its review of the Business Services structure. TPMA received guidance from



the Business Services Redesign Steering Committee throughout the project.

After reviewing the current structure, existing plans and identified goals, TPMA collected input from individuals with on-the-ground knowledge of implementing Business Services and Rapid Response activities. Input was gathered through:

- *Regional Input Sessions* – TPMA conducted ten regional input sessions throughout the Commonwealth that included representatives from workforce development, education, economic development and industry. Regional input sessions provided an opportunity to learn from on-the-ground practitioners about the successes they have had, what is needed to improve business services and opportunities to build from.
- *Stakeholder Focus Groups* – Several smaller group discussions were facilitated by TPMA with Business Services Teams and with individuals from economic development.
- *Interviews with Local Workforce Investment Board Directors* – One-on-one interviews were conducted with directors to share their thoughts about the business services framework, tools and support needed from the state and other observations.
- *Interviews with Regional Office of Employment and Training (OET) Managers* – One-on-one interviews were conducted with Regional OET

Managers to gain an understanding of their role and responsibilities for business services and rapid response, their thoughts on how to improve services and communication between the state and local levels.

With a thorough understanding of the Commonwealth’s business services and rapid response activities and after researching national best practices, TPMA developed the recommendations that follow in this report for Kentucky’s Business Services Redesign.

TPMA will also conduct training for state and local personnel on the proposed Business Services Framework to ensure success moving forward.

Alignment with Other KWIB Initiatives

The KWIB’s strategic plan includes twenty-five initiatives designed to work in tandem to transform the workforce development system. The recommendations for Kentucky’s Business Services Redesign build on or complement previous initiatives and provide a launching point for others that have yet to be completed.

Significant consideration was given to the following initiatives due to their complementary nature:

- Sector Strategies and Industry Partnerships
- One Stop Certifications
- Workforce Development Academy
- Economic Development Academy
- Branding and Identity

Recommendations

The One Stop Certification Standards call for workforce investment areas to establish an organized Business Services Team (BST). Business Services Teams are comprised of four core partners that include representatives from the Office of Employment and Training (OET), the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and representatives from either economic development organizations or chambers of commerce. In addition to the core partners, the One Stop Certification Standards outline “extended” BST partners from a wide range of agencies and organizations such as Adult Education, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans, or the Office of the Blind.

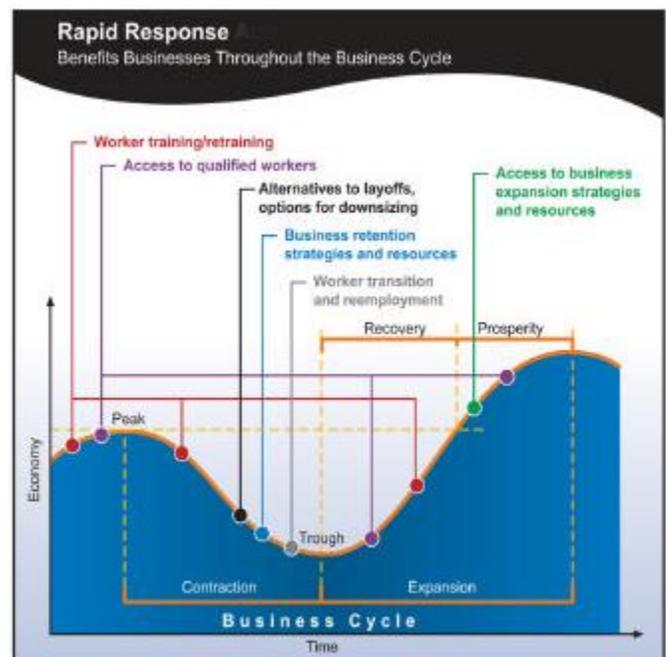
Recommendation 1: Adopt a Business Services Framework

From the regional input sessions, it is clear that regional stakeholders understand the power of approaching businesses as a united front and the need to eliminate the duplication of services. Many regions are currently working collaboratively as a Business Services Team. Some teams have been informally but successfully working together for many years. Others are developing formal infrastructures for teamwork. In the regions that are not currently doing so, workforce development professionals are eager to work more closely with partners.

Because of unique environments and existing relationships, the frameworks for collaboration and the partners involved currently vary across the Commonwealth. Business Services Redesign provides options which can bring consistency to partners and, most importantly, the customer – business. The recommended components of a business services framework that are outlined below are intended to provide Business Services Teams with a “how-to” guide for working collaboratively on solutions-based services for employers.

Partnership and Confidentiality Agreements

Written agreements will assist in communicating and supporting expectations of a new way of doing business.



Source: USDOL. *The New Vision of Rapid Response*. Nov 2010.



Partnership Agreements should describe the key tenants of the new business services model, including a commitment to align programs, operate collaboratively, adhere to the single-point-of-contact model and contribute to transparency by sharing relevant and appropriate information for the purpose of providing solutions-based business services. Partnership Agreements should be signed by the Director or CEO of each partner organization.

Confidentiality is a concern when dealing with sensitive business information. Therefore, all partner Business Services Team (BST) members should receive orientation to the BST, which includes an emphasis on confidentiality. Each BST member must sign a confidentiality agreement before sharing any business information and granting access to the shared system (discussed later in Recommendation IV).

Business Services Resource Guide

TPMA recommends the Commonwealth create a Business Services Resource Guide template meant for internal use to catalogue all known business services and resources. The Commonwealth should populate with information about statewide services, including workforce development, economic development and education. Local Workforces Investment Boards (LWIBs) should then add local services and resources to the Guide. To assist BSTs, the Guide should be organized by phases in the business life cycle, then by subtopic for easy reference. For example, a section of the Guide could be titled “Decline.” Services within this section would be meant for companies that are at-risk. Subtopics could include “Cash Flow and Debt Restructuring,” “Employee Training,” “Marketing and Diversification” and “Succession Planning.” The Guide should include any “eligibility” criteria to assist BST members in determining appropriateness for the employer customer. The Guide also should include standardized descriptions, which can be used when preparing business proposals.

Business Turnaround Assistance

In order to truly be effective in averting layoffs, the Business Services strategy *must* include services and resources to assist at-risk businesses. In addition to incumbent worker training, services include tools for debt restructuring and increasing cash flow (low-interest loans, revolving loans, angel investors), marketing assistance to develop new markets (diversification, exporting assistance, etc.) operational review (LEAN Processes, etc.), succession planning (including Employee Stock Ownership Plans), etc. These services are critical for meaningful and effective layoff aversion. TPMA recommends the Commonwealth provide information and cross-training to the BST members regarding these and other services and resources offered by economic development and education as part of the Economic Development Academy. The Commonwealth also may want to consider supporting an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) center to provide assistance in cases where succession planning issues exist. If not



currently in place, TPMA recommends the Cabinet for Economic Development and county-level economic development designate a key contact for each LWIB who can coordinate business turnaround assistance with the BSTs.

Entrepreneurial and Small Business Assistance

Small business can benefit from services particular to their unique needs. These include, but are not limited to: business planning assistance; microloans, grants and venture capital; marketing; small business counseling and training; information about laws and regulations, and exporting. These services can be identified in the Business Resource Guide with a specific visual cue to easily identify services appropriate for small businesses and entrepreneurs. BSTs also may consider organizing a sub-team specific to Small Business Assistance. This team could be comprised of partners who have particular emphasis on small business services, such as the Small Business Development Centers, SCORE, Small Business Administration, and Community Development Corporations.

Proactive Business Services Process

Described below is a step-by-step process for collaborative Business Services Teams. The process is supported by the following team member roles and responsibilities:

- *A Regional Team Leader* – As defined in the One Stop Certification Standards, the Regional Team Leader manages the day-to-day functions of the BST. The Regional Team leader maintains regular, internal team communication, regular external communication and outreach to stakeholders, coordinates the assignment of BST members to targeted industry sectors and regular reports on BST activities to the LWIB or other designated entity. Once a Regional Team Leader is identified for each BST, the Central Office of Employment and Training Office should be notified and kept on file.
- *Account Executives* – Account Executives (AEs) are the single-point-of-contact for employers as they interact with the Business Services Team. The AE is responsible for reaching out to prospective employers, assembling and managing the interview process, assuring accountability and transparency through data input into the shared system, developing a comprehensive proposal to the employer, serving as the point-of-contact for implementation, and cultivating a long-term relationship with the employer. The AE should ensure that full and accurate information is captured during the meeting.



A Step-by-Step Example Guide to Collaborative Business Services Teams

1. Use data triggers and intelligence from other sources (media, partners, etc.) to identify companies that are at-risk or poised for growth.
2. Narrow list to a manageable number of target companies (example 25/quarter).
3. Distribute list of target companies to partners, asking who has an existing relationship with a business or interest in serving as the Account Executive (AE).
4. Regional Team Leader will compile the information and assign AEs and email assignments to partners. Sector-specific AEs are assigned to businesses within their sector and serve as the single-point-of-contact throughout the relationship with the employer.
5. AE will contact companies to schedule interviews and inform Regional Team Leader when interviews are scheduled.
6. Regional Team Leader will add scheduled interviews to a shared calendar.
7. AE conducts the interview using a common set of interview questions and complete On-site Interview Form.
8. When completed, AE enters interview information into shared system. The AE then distills the main opportunities and challenges uncovered during the interview, completes the Opportunities and Challenges form, and submits it to Regional Team Leader.
9. Regional Team Leader distributes Opportunities and Challenges form to partners.
10. Partners respond to Challenges & Opportunities form with relevant suggestions of services and resources and submit responses to Regional Team Leader.
11. AE drafts a customized business services proposal with partner responses (using proposal templates and internal Resource Guide of service descriptions) and distributes to the BST.
12. Regional Team Leader reviews the proposal to ensure all opportunities and challenges are addressed. If needed, AE will consult with partners and proactively seek out other solutions or the Regional Team Leader will add the company to the roundtable agenda for further brainstorming (if timeframe allows).
13. Once the AE approves the proposal, the Regional Team Leader will save the final proposal, On-site Interview form, and Opportunities and Challenges form and add the proposal completion date to the shared system.
14. The Account Executive will schedule a meeting to review the proposal with the company and will inform the Regional Team Leader when the meeting is scheduled.



15. The Account Executive reviews the proposal with the company and determines interest and priorities of services.

16. Regional Team Leader enters items from proposal into services tracking component of the shared system.

17. The Account Executive ensures services are provided in a timely and responsive manner, introducing partners seamlessly and updates progress in services tracking in shared system. The Regional Team Leader monitors the updates to ensure progress. Partners also can view progress, ensuring accountability.

18. Designated LWIB staff person (preferably not a member of the Business Services Team) initiates the satisfaction survey approximately six months from the proposal presentation date using online survey tools and shares the findings with the Regional Team Leader and Account Executive. The AE then enters relevant data into the shared system.

19. Designated LWIB staff person initiates the 12-month satisfaction survey to determine satisfaction with plan implementation and to quantify results (value of services rendered, jobs created/saved, etc.).

20. The Account Executive will continue to follow-up regularly (minimum every 60 days if no active services) with company building trust-based and sustainable relationships. As the company's needs and challenges and opportunities change, AEs introduce additional services as needed.

21. Account Executive uploads all updated documents/forms to the shared system and alerts partners when forms are added and/or changed.

NOTE: *Regional Team Leaders and Business Services Teams should triage businesses by urgency of need, fast tracking the process as needed. In many cases, it may be necessary to begin delivery of some services before the full proposal process is complete. In those instances, proposals should be developed and completed noting that services are already underway.*



A Word about Industry Partnerships

Effective employer engagement requires a two-pronged strategy: 1) meeting employer's individual business needs through the single-point-of-contact process described above and 2) identifying and meeting the needs of the collective industry through industry partnerships. This parallel track approach increases employer engagement by enabling employers to benefit first-hand from the workforce system while at the same time contributing to industry-wide solutions.

Interplay between the two strategies relies heavily on the industry-specific AEs. As they meet with individual businesses, interview results can provide useful information in identifying common trends, which can inform industry partnership discussions. In order to ensure confidentiality, trend information will be shared in aggregate and anonymous form. AEs can recruit employers to participate in industry partnerships, tying the business's individual needs to overarching industry partnership efforts, thereby demonstrating the benefit to participation. Businesses participating in the industry partnerships also should receive the highest priority from AEs so they may avail themselves of the full range of services. This will enable participating businesses to provide meaningful feedback to the industry partnerships and LWIBs about how the system and services function, and how they can be improved.



Recommendation 2: Define criteria for identifying businesses that are at-risk and poised for growth

When targeting local businesses, TPMA recommends that Business Services Teams identify businesses in the region that are either at-risk or have the potential for growth. First and foremost, Business Services Teams should prioritize businesses that fall within their targeted sectors. In addition to targeted sectors, the information sources and data triggers listed below can help Business Services Teams define companies that are poised for growth or under stress. *(The indicators below are suggested in the U.S. Department of Labor's Layoff Aversion Guide.)*

- Labor market information available from both the state-level and local WIB can be used to determine employment growth or decline within a sector, occupational demand, and the like.
- In addition to indicating the need to offer rapid response services, WARN notices can be analyzed to identify trends within industry sectors, region or occupations.
- Trade Act Petitions can be accessed online at www.doleta.gov/tradeact.
- Unemployment Insurance claims can also be analyzed for trends in a sector or even particular company, using Standard Industry Classification codes or other occupational codes.
- The U.S. Department of Labor's Layoff Aversion Guide notes that public loan defaults can be accessed to identify companies that are experiencing financial stress. This information is typically available from a state's development department, but may require confidentiality or sharing agreements.
- Financial stress indicators from Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) reports are particularly useful showing indicators of stress and growth based on a number of factors. While D&B is a proprietary data source and involves some associated costs, the data are used by several national best practices, including New York's ASSET model and Ohio's Business Resource Network, as the foundation for targeting businesses.
- Utility companies can identify usage drops which may indicate fewer shifts or equipment usage. They can also identify an uptick in usage which sometimes suggests new or expanded production lines, hours, etc. Utility companies have a vested interest in partnering to provide this information as they benefit if their customers succeed.
- A company's customers, suppliers or employees may learn if it is in trouble. Comments about reduced hours, products, services or payments send red flags that the company is at-risk. On the other hand, increased purchase orders or opportunities for overtime may indicate that a company is growing.

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- DOL's Layoff Aversion Guide also notes that the U.S. Industrial Outlook, published by the Department of Commerce (DOC), analyzes current and forecasted trends for U.S. industries by four-digit SIC code.
 - Local media outlets (newspapers, business journals, etc.) often report on significant changes in local companies – a new management team/ structure, new product lines, ads for job openings, compliance issues or legal troubles.
 - A company's annual and quarterly reports provide financial information. These can be obtained through the website for the Securities Exchange Commission. All public companies file two documents: the 10-K, the annual report, and the 10-Q, the quarterly report.
 - Local bankers, accountants or attorneys can be good sources of information for companies that may be considering expansion projects, mergers or acquisitions, or may be in financial trouble. These sources can be especially helpful to identifying smaller businesses that can benefit from the BST's services.
 - Systems such as Synchronist build in predictive indicators based on an evidence-based set of questions, which can be used by Business Services Teams.
 - Job boards can provide useful early indicators based on employee résumé postings from particular companies.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Layoff Aversion Guide can be found online at <http://www.steelvalley.org/policy-leadership/books/58-layoff-aversion-guide>.



Recommendation 3: Establish roles and minimum standards for Rapid Response

In 2006 in an effort to provide more efficient and timely Rapid Response services, the Office of Employment and Training shifted the lead responsibilities for Rapid Response from the central office to the local areas for all Rapid Response events.

The recent economic downturn has led to a high volume of layoffs which, while unfortunate, has allowed Rapid Response Teams to hone a process and presentation for delivering Rapid Response services. Furthermore, many regions have developed successful, unique ways to assist dislocated workers in finding new employment. In one region, for example, the chamber of commerce is a critical partner in identifying local employers who are seeking employees with similar skill sets as those who are dislocated. Another region is using data captured during Rapid Response events as an economic development tool. This information is then used when recruiting new jobs to the area or in serving existing businesses that may be growing.

The recommendations that follow are not intended to replace the policy from 2006, but to build on and specify the roles and responsibilities of the team and its members. Much of this process depends on employers' willingness to share information, which reinforces the need for ongoing relationships with businesses throughout the business life cycle.

The Business Services Team and the Local Area Rapid Response Team

The BST and LARR are heavily interconnected. Information about a dislocation will sometimes come directly from the BST's interaction with employers. Other times, a company that is offering rapid response services to its employees may also benefit from turnaround assistance that the BST is able to provide. Thomas P. Miller and Associates suggests that there be at least two "bridge" roles among the two teams – the BST Regional Team Leader and a designated liaison from the LARR - who serve as information/ communication channels and are considered members of both teams. (It is noted that in several areas the BST and LARR are currently one in the same.)

Rapid Response Roles and Responsibilities

Local Area Rapid Response Team (LARR):

- The LARR will work with the Business Services Team to identify at-risk companies or employers who may already be laying off as well as monitor Career Center "chatter" and local trends. This includes comments from clients regarding a cutback in hours, an uptick of Unemployment Insurance claims from certain companies, etc.

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- Once lay-offs have been identified, the BST works to determine if turn around assistance is appropriate for the company.
 - As a member of the LARR, the BST Regional Team Leader suggests who should contact/ meet with the employer taking into account existing relationships and sector-specific expertise.
 - The LARR reviews information from the employer meeting(s) to assess the needs of the employer and employees, determine the appropriate partners for the employee meeting, and assemble the presentation for the employee meeting. A representative from Unemployment Insurance is expected to be present at every employee meeting.
 - The LARR provides a timely presentation of available assistance and resources during the employee meeting.
 - The LARR surveys any layoff that the Team is aware of – from 5 affected workers to 500 or more. Even if the Team only provides rapid response packets to employees, all laid off workers should be surveyed and informed of resources available to them.
 - The members of the LARR agree to ongoing cross-training of all partners on the available resources and services so that individuals are familiar with the various agencies' and organizations' offerings.

Local Area Rapid Response Coordinator (LARRC):

- Within 2 business days of learning of the dislocation, the LARRC contacts the employer to schedule a meeting. If the BST Regional Team Leader determines another team member should meet with the employer, then a joint meeting is coordinated.
- The LARRC gathers information used to assess the needs of the employer and employees through an in-person meeting(s) and possibly through the employee survey if the employer is willing to have it completed prior to the dislocation.
- The LARRC determines if the affected workers are trade impacted. If so, the LARRC contacts the Trade representatives.
- The LARRC shares information from the employer meeting(s) with the Local Area Rapid Response Team to assess the needs of the employer and employees, determine the appropriate partners and assemble the presentation for the employee meeting.
- The LARRC schedules and participate in the employee meeting(s). During the meeting, the LARRC oversees the employee survey process.
- The LARRC enters survey data into EKOS within 5 business days of the meeting.

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- The LARRC completes and files the necessary forms and required reports (RR-50, employer profile, synopsis of employee meetings, etc.)
 - For additional Rapid Response funds, the LWIB staff submit a request to the central office with a detailed service plan.

Regional Leadership:

- BST Regional Team Leader serves as a liaison between the Commonwealth and LARR.
- BST Regional Team Leader supports/ provides guidance to the Local Area Rapid Response Coordinator and Team on assessing the needs of employers and employees.
- BST Regional Team Leader ensures that data is entered into EKOS in a timely manner and that reporting on rapid response activities is kept up-to-date.
- BST Regional Team Leader ensures that minimum standards are met in the local areas.

Central OET Office:

- Prior to awarding funds for Rapid Response, the Central OET office will evaluate requests based on the completion of certain requirements, including but not limited to:
 - Timeliness of rapid response services
 - Survey information entered into EKOS
 - Survey results utilized to build service plan
 - Level of rapid response activity recorded
- The Central OET Office will review requests for additional Rapid Response funding and provide a response to local areas within 5 business days of receiving the request.
- The Central OET Office provides technical assistance as needed. Topics may include best practices, cross-training, presentation skills and training on new technologies.
- The Central OET Office will dedicate at least one peer-to-peer learning opportunity each year (see Recommendation V) to a discussion of Rapid Response best practices.
- The Central OET Office will provide regular labor market information reports and tools that provide centralized analysis and support as LARRs and BSTs to review data triggers.

Minimum Expectations

The following minimum standards are expected for rapid response activities. These are meant to provide consistency throughout the Commonwealth and ensure that information is shared to all appropriate parties.

What	Why	When	Who
Survey and offer services for any layoff the LARR becomes aware of regardless of size or industry	To ensure that all dislocated workers are aware of the resources and services available to them	As needed	LARR Team
Share employer information	To connect the employer to potential turn around assistance	As needed	LARR Team; BST Reg. Team Leader
Submit employee meeting summary to the Central Office	To ensure the Central Office can monitor rapid response activities and effectiveness and identify successes	Within 5 business days of employee meeting	LARRC
Enter data collected from employee survey into EKOS	To ensure that the Central Office has access to this information for reporting purposes	Within 5 business days of employee meeting	LARRC
Evaluate completeness of rapid response data in EKOS	To ensure that the Central Office has access to information for reporting purposes	Prior to approval for funding; within 5 business days	Central OET Office
Provide Central OET Office with contact information of staff identified as LARRC	To ensure that the Central Office knows who to contact with questions or for further information	As identified	LARRC



Recommendation 4: Adopt a customer relationship management system to facilitate information sharing, accountability, and transparency among all partners of the Business Services Team

The regional input sessions and interviews revealed the need for a tool that allows local partners to access and share information easily and efficiently. A common customer relationship management system will help partners avoid duplication when meeting with businesses, provide Account Executives with insights on an employer's previous needs or interests, and streamline communication throughout the Business Services Teams. All core partners outlined in the One Stop Certification Standards should be able to utilize the system. Local Workforce Investment Boards should determine appropriate access for additional partners, including partners across state lines to support regional partnerships.

The 2008-2018 Capital Plan proposes an Enterprise Case Management System that simplifies and aligns the case management systems used by the Commonwealth's Workforce Investment agencies. The proposed system will create a common interface for the Office of Employment and Training, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Office for the Blind and the Office of Career and Technical Education. Although the project is not scheduled to be complete until 2017, if funding is made available sooner, immediate work will begin. While the current Plan does not offer access to all core partners of the Business Services Teams, this will be an added component.

Recommended characteristics that should be included in a customer relationship management system are:

- Facilitates information sharing among partners including support to the following processes:
 - Distribute target companies to Business Services Team (BST)
 - Capture responses from BST
 - Record Account Executive (AE) and Scribe assignments
 - Capture scheduled interviews
 - Capture responses to standardized interview questions including information about products and services, market, competitors, anticipated changes that will benefit or adversely affect the business, facility needs, workforce needs, impacts of technology, etc.
 - Capture primary challenges and opportunities
 - Distribute Challenges and Opportunities to BST
 - Capture responses from BST

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- Track planned services, including progress
 - Captures customer satisfaction results
 - Allows document uploads (proposals, etc.)
 - Organized by company, not contact
 - Includes contact history, relationship management and service reminders
 - Facilitates regional collaboration
 - Enables user-friendly canned and custom reporting, including reporting of trends, results, and reporting by company, geography, AE, industry, etc.
 - Assists in relationship building by including fields for personal information about employer contacts such as birthdays, favorite sports teams, anniversaries, hobbies, collections the contact displays in his/her office, etc. Information can be added as it is gained and should be detected naturally over the course of time, but helps build the relationship to the ultimate level of trusted advisor.

Options

The Commonwealth has several options to consider for a customer relationship management system. Each has its own array of advantages as well as challenges. A few options are:

- EKOS enhancements
- Customer Relationship Management system such as Executive Pulse or Sales Force
- Business Services Process Solution – Synchronist

Before determining a course of action, explore the pros and cons of all options.



Recommendation 5: Increase networking and peer-to-peer learning opportunities

Workforce Investment Boards and service providers are faced with unprecedented challenges, and they are being asked to address them with reduced funding from federal and state government sources. In essence, they must do more with less. That means they must employ new technology, new tools, and new ways of thinking to continue to be effective and relevant to both employers and job seekers. Fortunately user-friendly technology is available to facilitate networking and information sharing so that local areas can connect on common challenges and collaborate for success.

Kentucky has the opportunity to combine the development of a learning academy with improved technology to create a model, interactive Workforce Leadership Network to advance the capacity of the broadly-defined “workforce development system.” A Workforce Leadership Network that allows for personal as well as virtual connections offers:

- 24/7 access to information;
- Ability to interact with other professionals and web sites, not just receive information;
- Continuous access to “best practices” via keyword searches, not just access via conferences, seminars, and training sessions; and
- Formation of affinity groups and blogs that target occupational and topical interests.

The broader system must also provide direct ties to the education and economic development systems as key partners in development.

Building a Model Workforce Leadership Network

Kentucky’s model should include, at a minimum, the following characteristics:

- Two-way exchange of information between the state and regions
- Peer-to-peer exchange of information among the regions
- Ongoing conversation about workforce and economic development issues in Kentucky
- Fresh and relevant content from national and state thought leaders
- Showcase of best practices from the state and nation
- Direct links to regional and national platforms, such as SETA and NAWB
- Social networking capability and blogs for special interests in the system.

The Leadership Network should also include regularly scheduled conference calls/ webinars so that BSTs and other Career Center staff can communicate with each one another.

The network will need to be managed – technology must be maintained and discussion topics and content developed. A state Kentucky Career Center Learning Network Director and a designated point person at each WIB can be established to help manage the network.



Recommendation 6: Co-brand Business Services within the Kentucky Career Center Brand Guidelines

By co-branding Business Services programs and activities, a collaborative team is presented to employers that offers comprehensive solutions and leverages the brand recognition that individual partners already have with certain businesses. The One-Stop Certification Standards establish regional Business Services Teams that are comprised of four “core” partners and additional “extended” partners. The four core partners are the Office of Employment and Training (OET), Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), and a local business organization (e.g. Chamber of Commerce) or an economic development organization. Two of these – KCTCS and the chamber of commerce or economic development organization – are not represented by the Kentucky Career Center branding making it necessary to co-brand joint efforts. Certain brands such as the local chamber of commerce or economic development organization may be more familiar to the business community and can help open doors when reaching out to employers.

Several of the “extended” Business Services Team partners are reflected in the Kentucky Career Center branding such as Vocational Rehab and the Office of the Blind. If extended partners play a key role in the Business Services Team but are not represented by the brand, the appropriate co-branding should be decided on by the team.

Co-branding should always follow the specifications outlined in the Kentucky Career Center Brand Guidelines. The Business Services Redesign Training can be utilized to communicate to local areas the expectation to co-brand Business Services with core partners.



Recommendation 7: Leverage the Economic Development Academy and opportunities with Economic Development

The KWIB's Economic Development Academy and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development's (KCED) new strategic plan, *Kentucky's Unbridled Future*, present opportunities to introduce all BST partners to the principles and priorities of economic development as well as the resources available from these key partners.

The Economic Development Academy initiative described in the KWIB strategic plan can be reimagined in such a way to support a venue for presenting economic development principles so that workforce professionals have foundational knowledge and, if not already doing so, can begin to collaborate with economic development partners. By devoting a portion of the KWIB's Economic Development Academy agenda to reviewing the priorities laid out in the new KCED plan, local areas will be able to couple their new knowledge of economic development principles with specific priorities and goals identified for Kentucky.

In order to leverage the Economic Development Academy and the other opportunities with economic development, the collaboration at the Commonwealth-level should continue among the KCED and the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, their respective agencies and be encouraged at the local level. A suggested first step is to work with KCED to develop content specific to *Kentucky's Unbridled Future* for the Economic Development Academy sessions. The KWIB's Economic Development Academy can be leveraged by both cabinets to develop workforce development professionals' and economic development professionals' knowledge and appreciation for what one another is able to offer to Kentucky employers.

Areas of Alignment with *Kentucky's Unbridled Future*

Kentucky's Unbridled Future emphasizes the importance of an educated workforce with high-tech skills. Nearly all of the targeted business/ industry sectors identified in the plan cite the availability of a skilled workforce as a critical location criterion. Furthermore, the plan promotes truly collaborative thinking and suggests partnering with the KWIB to assess the Commonwealth's workforce and educational capabilities. Business services teams and sector partnerships can play a pivotal role in providing the mechanisms for ongoing feedback from business related to workforce capabilities, providing more detailed analysis of workforce challenges, specific skill needs and, in turn, creating collective solutions.

Other areas of alignment with *Kentucky's Unbridled Future* include:

- *Embrace regionalism* –Communities are no longer competing with other states or counties for economic development projects, but now with other countries around the world. To remain competitive, KCED's plan calls for regional strategies that leverage



resources and present the critical mass necessary to attract and retain jobs in the Commonwealth. Workforce investment areas are regionally-focused and can help shape these multi-county economic development strategies.

- *Develop and implement statewide protocols for supporting existing business* – KCED plans to encourage consistent business expansion and retention efforts across the Commonwealth. Regional Business Services Teams provide an ideal platform for collaborative retention and expansion efforts.
- *Coordinate entrepreneurial resources* – The plan calls for conducting an inventory of entrepreneurial assets and then aligning assets/ developing a more coordinated effort around entrepreneurship. The assets that are identified should be included in the Business Services Resource Guide mentioned earlier in this report. Business Services Teams should be cross-trained on these resources and should understand any coordinated processes/ efforts that emerge for supporting Kentucky’s entrepreneurs.
- *Conduct an assessment of Kentucky’s incentive programs* – Although WIA funds cannot be used for "economic development," the value of recruitment and screening services as well as On-the-Job Training for eligible new hires can be a valuable component of an attraction package. The KWIB can help the KCED further understand these resources and the value they bring to employers moving to or expanding in Kentucky.
- *Develop and implement a strategy to attract Kentucky alumni with specific skill sets back to the state* – The effort to draw alumni back to the Commonwealth can be coordinated with the new Focus Talent/ Focus Career system. As the “go-to” site for job candidates/ job postings, the system will already include open positions that employers have posted.
- *Support the Military* – The plan calls for working with the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs on job creation opportunities as well as finding employment for military personnel returning from active duty. Again, the new Focus Talent/ Focus Career system offers a valuable tool. The KCED and KWIB can tap into models of military skills crosswalks to translate military skills to civilian careers, engage employers and use On-the-Job Training to address skill gaps. BSTs can provide services that take advantage of programs such as “Helmets to Hardhats” and “Boots on the Ground.”

Business Services Teams can also be a valuable resource in marketing the state-wide internship program outlined in *Kentucky’s Unbridled Future*.

By sharing these and other concepts with workforce professionals, the Economic Development Academy sessions will facilitate the cross-sharing of information and help form collaborative approaches to common goals.



Recommendation 8: Develop Benchmarks and Roll Out Strategies

Once the recommendations are finalized and approved by the leadership team, Thomas P. Miller and Associates will develop roll-out strategies. The roll out strategies will help answer questions such as: What will it take to make this successful? What are the intersections with other initiatives? and Where are the cause and effect dependencies?

Measuring Success

Thomas P. Miller and Associates will suggest outcomes that are desired from strengthened business services and “rapid response” capabilities. Some initial thoughts on outcomes are included below.

Business Services:

- Number of jobs saved/ retained/ created
- Financial “impact” of services (grants, loans, training, technical assistance)
- Employer satisfaction rate
- Repeat business
- Number of additional services provided to employers
- Partner satisfaction rate
- Employer awareness of KY Career Center services
- Average number of partners per comprehensive proposal

Rapid Response:

- Reduction in length of time Unemployment Insurance recipients are receiving payments
- Reduction in amount of Unemployment Insurance payments
- Reduction in unemployment rate
- Increase in laid-off worker participation rates for accessing services of the Kentucky Career Center system
- Increase in laid-off worker participation rates enrolled in sector-driven training programs
- Increase in on-the-job training for worker advancement into higher skilled positions (hard to measure but key to preventing layoffs and saving companies)



Recommendation 9: Develop a Business Services Training Framework

Thomas P. Miller and Associates will provide training to Business Services Team representatives from throughout the Commonwealth. The training topics will be tailored to the needs and priorities identified by local business services staff. Generally, TPMA suggests the training include the following topic areas:

- Business Services Framework and Process
- Tips to identifying at-risk and/or growth-mode companies to target
- Tools that will be/are available to support business services, including resources for developing sector-specific knowledge and expertise

TPMA suggests an interactive training that begins to instill a curiosity for best practices and a culture of continuous improvement in the Commonwealth's Business Services Teams.

