

Strengthening Relationships with Employers Using a Question-Based Approach

The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program May 29, 2019

Using Zoom

Webinar controls & assistance

- We are expecting a large audience, so attendees are muted.
- You can access chat and Q&A functions at the bottom of the Zoom window.
 Move your cursor down and these functions will appear.
- If you have a **technical issue**, please share it via the **Chat function** or email dan.lebiednik@aspeninst.org.

Participation

 Volunteer! At any time, send questions for presenters via the Q&A function. We'll stop for questions at several points during the webinar.

Presenters



Amy Blair
Research Director, The Aspen
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Program



Tonya Cody-Robinson
Business Relations Specialist,
Chicago Cook Workforce
Partnership



Ellen JohnsonDirector of the Frontline Focus
Training Institute, Chicago Jobs
Council

Today's Agenda

- Introduction to the Question Bank (download: <u>as.pn/questionbank</u>)
- Practitioner perspective with Tonya Cody-Robinson, Business Relations Specialist, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership
- Practitioner perspective with Ellen Johnson, Director of the Frontline Focus Training Institute, Chicago Jobs Council
- Discussion
- Polling questions
- The webinar is being recorded. We will post the recording and PowerPoint deck on our website.



• Launched in 2016 with support from the Walmart Foundation, the initiative explores ways to enhance stability and improve mobility for the retail workforce.

Reimagine Retail

- We work closely with partners in six regions across the country testing strategies to support job quality and advancement for retail workers:
 - Pittsburgh, Phoenix, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and San Diego
- As we learn alongside our partners, we document promising practices and develop new publications and tools to strengthen the field.

Question Bank Tool: Background & Organization

- Inquiry-based approach:
 - Learn about sector and develop local expertise
 - Identify good fit employment opportunities
 - Inform workforce development services that help workers and businesses
 - Over time, share learning about workplace practices that are good for workers and businesses
- Organization:
 - Up-front discussion about rationale for inquiry-based approach
 - Tips on preparing for conversations and using the Tool
 - Questions organized in 3 categories

- I. Questions to Understand the Business and its Workforce (p. 4)
- II. Questions About Employee Engagement, Development, and Advancement (p. 5)
- III. Questions About Compensation and Scheduling (p. 6)

How to Use This Tool

You can use this tool to find questions that help you learn about a business with an eye toward providing workforce services. Or you might pick questions from the tool to help you identify retailers that are a good fit for the job-seekers you serve. Using the tool to ask questions and learn about a large number of businesses in your region can help you develop expertise about industry norms and practices. This can give you the confidence and standing to talk with

with what they tell you. This strategy can be effective not only for identifying and challenging your assumptions, but also for preparing you to participate actively in discussions with a retailer.

Let the Conversation Guide Your Questions

When you take a look at the Question Bank, you'll see that there are far too many questions to ask anybody in one session! You should pick and choose a mix of questions based on your objectives, the stage of your

I. Questions to Understand the Business and Its Workforce

Questions in this category help you develop an understanding of the business and its workforce practices, and to start to get to know the manager you are speaking with. Listen for information about how this manager thinks about attracting and retaining talent. What is the manager most proud of, and are there human resources challenges that your organization may be able to help address? This conversation can also help you understand the structure of the business and the types of decisions this store manager has authority to make.

Opening Question:

Tell me about your business and your workforce.

Potential Follow-Up Questions:

How do you describe your brand and target customer?

Why do people want to work for your company?

Who does well here? (what types of experiences, expectations, personalities)

Tell me how you hire staff. Who and how do you recruit? What is involved in screening (application process, assessments or work-based tests)?

Who are your major competitors for workers?

II. Questions about Employee Engagement, Development and Advancement

These questions help you learn about how this company provides opportunities for workers to learn, grow and contribute feedback and ideas. It is common to hear about retail managers who started at entry-level and advanced within a company; you may even learn that the manager you're speaking with started in an entry-level role. Because the typical mix of employees in a store is heavily concentrated at entry-level, probing can help you learn more about what it takes for a worker to advance. This line of inquiry may also help you learn about ways that workforce services could help a retailer meet goals for internal promotion and improve retention.

Opening Question:

How long have you worked here and what's been your path to this job? Can you describe the typical path to moving up in the company?

Potential Follow-Up Questions:

How do you learn about your employees' satisfaction at work? What have you learned?

Can you tell me about training that new workers receive in the store(s)?

Is it a goal to cross-train workers? What's going well and what has been challenging?

Who does on-the-job training? Do you have designated trainers?

Are there new skills your workers need to help your business remain competitive in the face of technology or industry shifts? What are they?

III. Questions about Compensation and Scheduling

Compensation and scheduling may be sensitive topics for retail managers. At the same time, this information can help you assess the fit of this company's employment practices for your job-seekers' needs, enabling you to refer workers who will stay and succeed. As you probe, tread gently, and listen for indication of what the manager does and does not have control over. For example, policies set by headquarters (such as just-in-time scheduling software or surprise merchandise promotions) may lead to staffing up on short notice.

Once you've established rapport, see if this manager is open to conversations about staffing and scheduling practices that promote retention. For example, some firms that prioritize customer service try to **operate with slack**,³ and always have **enough staff on hand**⁴ to be responsive to customers. As you have conversations with different retailers, you'll be in a position to help them learn about how their wages, benefits, and scheduling compare with others' and how this affects their ability to hire and retain the workforce they need.

A number of states and cities have recently introduced new laws regulating wages and scheduling practices. Businesses anticipating or adapting to new regulations may be particularly interested in information about **strategies and tools**⁵ to enhance their workforce practices to improve productivity (such as **stable scheduling apps**).⁶

Opening Question:

Where does an entry-level worker typically start in terms of position, shift schedule, wages and benefits?

Potential Follow-Up Questions:

What's the mix of full-time and part-time workers in your store(s)?

What's the work cadence in your store? When are workload peaks in a typical week? Are you busiest on weekends?

What is the process of going from part-time to full-time? How about from seasonal to regular part-time or full-time?

Plan for Retail Seasonality

As you plan to use this tool and engage retailers, remember to consider the seasonality of the retail year. Retailers may be more available and interested in partnership in some months than others. Typically, the retail fiscal calendar runs from February 1 to January 31, and the holiday season (from October to

January) is the busiest time of year. Planning for new workforce investments usually occurs during the annual budgeting process ahead of the fiscal year start. Calendars can differ depending on the type of retailer—for example home and garden retailers have different peak seasons than department stores or grocery retailers. Consider asking retailers about their calendar and planning conversations at the times when they can be most receptive.

Tonya Cody-Robinson

Business Relations Specialist, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership



Ellen Johnson

Director of the Frontline Focus Training Institute, Chicago Jobs Council



Discussion

Additional Resources



Cost of Turnover Tool: Make the Business Case to Improve Retention through Upskilling and Stability

- This tool walks you through the steps to calculate cost of turnover for a business. as.pn/turnovertool
- Stay tuned for upcoming webinar date!

Reimagining Employer Engagement: A toolkit for providers



- Created by Reimagine Retail Chicagoland, this digital toolkit is designed for workforce development professionals interested in strengthening partnerships with businesses.
- Sections include retail sector business basics, finding employers and using labor market information, pitching and marketing services to employers, and deepening employer relationships.
- The toolkit will be available in summer 2019.

Supplemental Materials Courtesy of Tonya Cody-Robinson and the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

Template surveys for employer outreach

HHC Spring 2019 - Employer Registration

Hospitality Hires Chicago

EMPLOYER QUESTIONNAIRE

Choose Chicago, Magnificent Mile Association, Illinois Restaurant Association, Illinois Hotel, and Lodging Association, Chicago Loop Alliance, and the Near South Planning Board thank you for registering for our Hospitality Hires Chicago (HHC) event is being held on Tuesday, March 19th 2019, at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel in Chicago.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to get information about your company and the three positions you will interview candidates for during the HHC event. We will use the information you provide to prescreen and refer candidates whose skills align with your hiring needs. Please submit your completed questionnaire and employment opportunities by Wednesday, February 27th 2019.

If you have any questions please contact Business Relations Specialists:

Marion Batey mbatey@workforceboard.org

Tonya Cody Robinson <u>trobinson@workforceboard.org</u>.

We look forward to seeing you March 19th, 2019!

Tell us about your business/ organization:

Name of Business/ Organization *

Business FEIN Number *

Primary Contact Person's Name *

Title *

Email *

Phone Number *

Have you previously worked with the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and or any of its delegate agencies? *

Please Describe

Tell Us about employment opportunities with your business:

Which best describes your Sector/Industry? *

Retail Hospitality Food Service Transportation Other

How many positions are you looking to fill *



event? *

Please list any next steps a candidate should make after interviewing with your company and, what level of follow up should candidates expect from your company? *

Which of these best describes your application process? *

Please Describe *

Please supply your Online Employment Application URL Link * ①

Outside of the application submission and resume, should candidates include any other material (e.g., certifications)? *

Is there an online employment assessment *

How much time should candidate(s) dedicate to the online application process (minutes)? *

What is your company's method to notify candidates who do not fit the specifications of your employment process, i.e. unsuccessful application submission, background check, etc.? *

Event Coverage Information (day of event):

How many representatives will be onsite to conduct interviews during the hiring event? *

Total Number of Tables *

Total Number of Chairs *

What is your interview method(s), company representative to job candidate? *

One to One Two to One Group Other

Please Describe *

What are the names and job titles company representatives who will be conducting interviews? (a minimum of two are required)

Name Position/Job Title

- 1. Name Position/Job Title
- 2. Name Position/Job Title
- 3. Name Position/Job Title
- 4. Name Position/Job Title

IT IS OUR GOAL AND PURPOSE TO COLLECT AND REPORT ON THE STATUS OF ALL HOSPITALITY HIRES CHICAGO INTERVIEWS. IT IS REQUIRED THAT ALL EMPLOYER PARTNERS REPORT INTERVIEW OUTCOMES AT THE END OF THE HIRING EVENT AND 30, 60 AND 90 DAYS AFTER HIRE OR CANDIDATE DECSIONS.

Types of post data to be requested (see below):

- # of Candidates interviewed (including confirmation of individuals by name)
- # of Candidates not hired (including confirmation of individuals by name)
- # of Candidates declined (including names of each candidate)
- Projected hire date for each candidate interview
- # of Candidates retained for 30 Days or longer (including names of each candidate retained)
- # of Candidates who were not retained 30 Days or less (including names of each candidate)

I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN PRE/ POST EVENT PROJECT REPORTING *

I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS *

Is the company designee to receive the post event follow-up information the same as the individual noted above? *

Primary Contact Person's Name *

Title *

Email *

Phone Number *

Future Support Opportunities

Would you like to know more about other business services available via Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and the Chicagoland Retail Sector Center? *

	Yes	No
a. On-the-Job Training (OJT) – Employer is reimbursed up to 90% of a new hire's wages for individuals hired who need additional assistance (training) acclimating to job requirements	Yes	No
b. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) – Employer provides customized training support for current employees who need updated credentials or job up-skilling; employer is reimbursed up to 50% of the training costs	Yes	No
c. Credentialing classes for the retail industry including the National Retail Federation Retail Industry Fundamentals, Customer Service and Sales, Advanced Customer Service and Sales	Yes	No
d. Credentialing classes for the hospitality industry including ServSafe Food Handling; Skills, Tasks, and Results Training for Hospitality	Yes	No
e. Retail-Focused Skills Assessment – Skills assessment for current or potential employees to determine where additional training may be needed	Yes	No
f. Hiring/Recruiting Assistance – Referrals of pre-screened employment candidates based on position requirements and job description(s); facilitate hiring events	Yes	No
g. Layoff event services	Yes	No

Please identify who we should follow up with regarding the above.

4 of 5

N	ame	*

Title *

Email Address *

Would you like to participate in an employer focus group and/or advisory team focused on retention strategies via the Reimagine Retail Initiative? <u>Click here</u> to download a Reimagine Retail brochure. *

Name *

Title *

Email Address *

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and our HHC Partners are Equal Opportunity Employers:

It is against the law to discriminate on the following basis: Race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, Childbirth), and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Request for reasonable accommodation is available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Exit this survey >>



HOSPITALITY HIRES CHICAGO –POST EVENT EMPLOYER SURVEY

Thank you for participating in the 4th Hospitality Hires Chicago hiring event on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel hosted by Choose Chicago, Illinois Restaurant Association, Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association, Magnificent Mile Association, Near North Planning Board, Chicago Loop Alliance, and the Greater Bronzeville Neighborhood Network. We hope you and your team had a phenomenal experience and met with great candidates.

Your response will help continue to improve the experience for you and other participating employer partners; and, the information you provide will help fulfill your company's talent needs by connecting qualified candidate(s) to employment pipelines in Chicago and surrounding areas. We appreciate your feedback on this quick survey. If you have additional questions and/or concerns, contact Marion Batey at (312) 603-0270 or mbatey@workforceboard.org.

	Please tell us about yourself:	
*	1. Company Name	
*	2. Your Name:	
*	3. Title:	
*	4. Email	
*	5. Phone	
	USE THE SCALE BELOW TO RATE YOUR HIRING EVENT EXPERIENCE Strongly Agree= (5) Agree= (4) Neither Agree / Nor Disagree= (3) Disagree= (2) Strongly Disagree (1) N/A= (0)	CE:
*	6. GENERAL IMPRESSION – The event met my expectations.	
	Strongly Agree	
	Agree	
	Neither Agree / Nor Disagree	
	Disagree	
	Strongly Disagree	
	○ N/A	

~	REGISTRATION PROCESS – The event registration process was	easy.
	Strongly Agree	
	Agree	
	Neither Agree / Nor Disagree	
	Disagree	
	Strongly Disagree	
	N/A	
*	INTERVIEW PROCESS – The interview process met my expectat	ions.
	Strongly Agree	
	Agree	
	Neither Agree / Nor Disagree	
	Disagree	
	Strongly Disagree	
	N/A	
*	CANDIDATES – The quality of pre-screened candidates met the i	needs of my business.
	Strongly Agree	
	Agree	
	Neither Agree / Nor Disagree	
	Disagree	
	Strongly Disagree	
	N/A	
	D. What components of the hiring event worked well and should bires Chicago events?	e carried on to future Hospitality

11. Is there anything the organizers could have done differently to help your company prepare for the hiring event?

			//	
12. Is there anything the organizers could have done to improve your interview area?				
*	* 13. How many applicants did	you interview at this hiring e	event?	
*	* 14. Did you make any "cond	tional offers?" If so, how ma	ny were made to applicant(s	s)?
	How Many FT =		ny word made to approam(
	How Many PT =			
	How Many Seasonal			<u> </u>
	=			
	How Many Other =			
*	* 15. Would you like to particip	eate in future hiring events?		
*	* 16. Would you recommend t	nis hiring events to a peer or	colleague?	
*	* 17. Would you like to participus Retail.	ate in employer "Retention"	focus and/or advisory team	s via Relmagine
	Yes			
	No			
	if "YES" email			
	address			

Thank you for completing the Hospitality Hires Chicago survey, we appreciate your feedback and look forward to continued partnership.

Next >>

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SurveyMonkey

See how easy it is to create a survey.