Social Media

CURRENT TOOLS FOR JOB-SEEKING
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Background

- Telecommunications is an important rural VR strategy
  - Reduces access and transportation barriers
  - Improves contact rates between counselors and consumers
  - Associated with greater attachment to the VR system

Telecommunications—more broadly, can refer to a variety of online job search strategies as well.
21st Century Job Seeking

- Internet is the primary resource for job seekers
  - Research employers
  - Network with family, friends, and professionals
  - Promote themselves by developing a positive online presence

- Employers use online resources for recruitment and screening
  - Head hunt on professional networking sites
  - Fact-check resumes
  - Investigate job candidates
  - Research common connections
Background Research – Counselor Use

Surveyed VR staff on use of online tools during the VR process (n = 1447)
- 25 states represented
- 65% counselors, 10% supervisors/managers, 8% employment consultants

Findings
- 57% did not use any social media sites for work
- 26% used Facebook
- 24% used LinkedIn
## Training Desires (n = 1447)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Desire</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Definitely &amp; Maybe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strategies to improve online privacy</td>
<td>64 %</td>
<td>91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. HIPPA and ADA policies and social media</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Online professional networking practices</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Online ethical practices</td>
<td>61 %</td>
<td>91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strategies for improving a consumer’s online reputation</td>
<td>57 %</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Developing an online professional profile</td>
<td>51 %</td>
<td>84 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Basic <em>how to’s</em> of using different social media sites</td>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>82 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intervention Research

- **Quasi-experimental Design**
  - 3 states – Washington, Alabama, Montana
  - Random assignment of offices in each state
  - Survey data – baseline, 4-months

- **Social Media Intervention**
  - 7.5 hours of webinar training
  - 1.5 hours per week for 5 consecutive weeks
  - Live captioned

- **Webinar Topics**
  - Intro to Social Media
  - Online Networking with LinkedIn
  - Facebook, Twitter, and others
  - Resumes, Cover letters, and Job Boards
  - Talent Acquisition Portal
Counselor Surveys

- **Baseline data (n = 289)**
  - 77% counselors, 9% supervisors, 6% employment consultants
  - 56% did not use any social media sites for work
  - 23% used Facebook
  - 31% used LinkedIn

- **Baseline data similar to exploratory research data (n = 1447)**
  - 57% did not use any social media sites for work, 26% used Facebook, 24% used LinkedIn
Outcomes – How Sites Used

- More training group participants used Linkedin (p = .039)

At follow-up, significantly more participants in the intervention group used:
- Facebook to stay in contact with other VR counselors, (p=.036,)
- Facebook to assess a consumer’s online reputation (p=.031)
- LinkedIn to develop relationships with local employers (p = .028).
Outcomes - Preparedness

- Rating scale of 1 to 5
  - 1 = very unprepared
  - 2 = unprepared
  - 3 = somewhat unprepared
  - 4 = prepared
  - 5 = very prepared

- Total score across 9 items (p=.009)*
  - 3 items were not significantly different between the training and no training group and six items were significantly different

- How prepared are you to help consumers...
  - Research job opportunities online
    - 3.9 vs 3.9
  - Post resumes to online job boards
    - 3.5 vs 3.4
  - Address issues of disability disclosures on social media sites
    - 3.1 vs 3
How prepared are you to help consumers...

- Develop skills for online professional networking ($p = .001$)
- Improve their online reputations ($p = .063$)
How prepared are you to help consumers...

Change privacy setting on social media sites ($p = .019$)

Format their resumes for applicant tracking software ($p = .031$)
How prepared are you to help consumers...

- Develop a keyword optimization strategy for online resumes ($p = .041$)
  - Baseline
  - 4 Months
  - No Training
  - Training

- Develop an online professional brand or identity ($p = .041$)
  - Baseline
  - 4 Months
  - No Training
  - Training
VR administrators provided feedback about agency policies and use (2013, n = 41)
- Agency supports social media use by staff
  - 34% “yes”
  - 37% “on a limited basis”
  - 29% “no”
- 61% of agencies did not have any policy to guide social media use
- Respondents indicated that agencies were moving towards more access
VR Policies (22 agencies represented)

- Policy types analyzed
  - 14 agency specific
  - 8 state level
  - 2 guidelines

- Policy Themes (6 themes, 23 sub-themes)
  - Policy description (n = 20)
    - Justification, scope, oversight
  - Administrative controls (n = 19)
    - Account management, approvals, reviews, policy adherence, evaluation
  - Prohibited Uses (n = 18)
    - Confidentiality and personal use violations
  - Security (n = 13)
    - Technical support, passwords, security
  - Public engagement (n = 17)
    - Ethics, professional use, disclaimers, public perceptions, releases, public records
  - Posting guidelines (n = 17)
    - Accessibility, general, frequency, responding to the public
Policy Scope - Justifications

Justifications for social media use (n = 15)

- Agency communication strategy (n=9)
- Consumer engagement with agency (n=7)
- Market agency to the public (n=7)
- To gather feedback about the agency (n=4)
- Increase VR agency transparency (n=3)
- Broadcast emergency information (n=2)
- Engage employers (n=2)
- Consumer job seeking activities (n=1)

Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

“providing job seekers with current job seeking skills”

Helping consumers “establish a professional online presence”

Using “current employment practices in a digital era”
Research Implications

- Policies are incomplete
  - 2 policies covered themes in a comprehensive way.
  - Most policies were framed in terms of agency vs counselor uses

- Counselors are unprepared (n = 1447)
  - Approximately 30% of counselors feel prepared to assist consumers with improving online reputation and professional development activities
  - Training can improve preparedness

- People with disabilities are not coached in contemporary job search skills.

Implications

- Staff need access to training that outlines strategies for using social media tools in practice
- Policies need to reflect and support growing social media trends
Building VR Social Media Capacity

TELECOM TOOLBOX
A resource for using online tools during the VR process
- telecomtoolbox.ri.umt.edu
Toolbox Elements

- **Counselor-Consumer Communication**
  ~ Email, text messaging, video chat, web conferencing

- **Online Career Development**
  ~ Building an online presence using social media, managing your online presence, active online job search

- **Ethics**

- **Monthly blog posts**
  ~ New and emerging job search tools and strategies