

# Working With Business: Counselor Expectations, Actions, and Challenges

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to (a) explore state-federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency expectations for counselor engagement with business, (b) determine what VR counselors are actually doing in terms of interacting with businesses, and (c) identify challenges VR counselors experience to working with business.

**Method:** A mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative data from surveys and qualitative data from interviews, was used. Surveys were conducted with 47 VR agency administrators and 121 counselors, and interviews were conducted with 6 administrators and 19 counselors.

**Results:** Almost all VR agencies had a clear expectation that counselors will engage with business, but the specific expectations varied by agency. Counselors spend approximately 20% of their time interacting with businesses, and most counselors reported providing one or more service to businesses on a regular basis. Challenges experienced by counselors were lack of time, lack of comfort, and lack of preparation to engage with business.

**Conclusion:** Given the current expectations for business engagement and the increased importance of business engagement with the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (2015), it is vital that rehabilitation counseling master's programs increase their focus on working with business.

Working with business has always been a component of the services that state-federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies provide to generate employment opportunities for consumers. In the past decade, focus on this activity has increased significantly for VR agencies and VR counselors. More attention is being paid to use of the dual customer approach, or business relations model, which focuses on treating business as a customer of the agency and establishing long-term relationships, including at a national level (Anderson et al., 2006). The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) has taken a lead role in promoting use of the dual customer approach among VR agencies

by establishing a Business Relations department that has formed the National Employment Team (NET), which includes a representative from all 80 state VR agencies. CSAVR, through its Business Relations department and the NET, encourages agencies to establish relationships with business and treat businesses as customers of VR. All state VR agencies have been encouraged to participate in this effort, at a state, regional, and national level

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(Anderson et al., 2006). Working with business may be particularly important for counselors and agencies that serve consumers who are blind or visually impaired because negative employer attitudes are considered the major barrier to employment for this population and most employers do not understand how a blind person could perform basic job functions (Coffey, Coufopoulos, & Kinghom, 2014; Crudden & McBroom, 1999; Crudden, Williams, McBroom, & Moore, 2002; Kirchner, Johnson, & Harkins, 1997; McDonnall, O'Mally, & Crudden, 2014; Salomone & Paige, 1984).

Personnel within the VR agency must provide these services to business, and this, along with providing job placement assistance, is an important component of a VR counselor's job (Leahy, Muenzen, Saunders, & Strauser, 2009). Research conducted in 2000 indicated that VR counselors provide most placement services to consumers and were anticipated to continue providing that level of service in the future (Gilbride, 2000). That study also documented that VR agencies are committed to expanding relationships with employers in the future, which was expected to have a significant impact on the practice of rehabilitation counseling. The emphasis on engaging with employers will continue to expand with the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act—the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014), which may require even more counselor involvement in this activity than in the past.

Although working with employers and providing job placement assistance are essential job functions, many counselors are uncomfortable, or even apprehensive, about interacting with business (Fleming, Phillips, Kaseroff, & Huck, 2014; Schultz, 2008). Structural issues within the agency may prevent counselors from engaging with business, such as perceived lack of support from leadership (Schultz, 2008) or time constraints because of large caseload sizes (Fleming et al., 2014). Lack of confidence related to inexperience in interacting with businesses also appears to be a problem (Fleming et al., 2014). Lack of knowledge and limited experience makes the process more intimidating, and research has indicated a lack of preparation and a need for more training in developing employer

relationships for counselors (Chan et al., 2003; Froehlich & Linkowski, 2002; Lewis & Patterson, 1998). When the training needs of rehabilitation counselors were recently evaluated, results indicated that counselors' perceived level of preparation was far below the level of importance of many knowledge areas related to job development/job placement and vocational consultation/services for employers (Beveridge, Leconte, Shaine, Del Toro, & Penrod, 2015).

Although employers who had hired people with disabilities reported that disability employment agencies (such as VR) were critical for identifying applicants with disabilities, employers expressed concerns with some agencies for not providing appropriate support (Hernandez et al., 2008). Many employers report their interactions with the VR system are mixed, at best, with concerns expressed about VR's efficiency and efficacy (Fraser, Ajzen, Johnson, Hebert, & Chan, 2011; Gilbride, Stensrud, Ehlers, Evans, & Peterson, 2000; Henry, Petkauskos, Stanislawzyk, & Vogt, 2014). One study documented disparities between what employers want from agencies and what employment service providers are offering (Simonsen, Fabian, Buchanan, & Luecking, 2011).

When asked what they want from their relationship with VR, employers mention a desire for consistent follow-up services (Buys & Rennie, 2001; Crudden et al., 2002; Hernandez et al., 2008; McDonnall & Crudden, 2015); access to experts who can provide services such as diversity training and information about accommodations, laws, and tax incentives (Buys & Rennie, 2001; Simonsen et al., 2011); increased coordination across disability employment entities (Henry et al., 2014); and clear communication and information about scope of an agency's services (Kirchner et al., 1997; Simonsen et al., 2011). Many of the preferences stated by employers are consistent with the previously mentioned dual customer approach, which is based on the concept of mutual benefit (Anderson et al., 2006; Fry, 1997; Luecking, 2008; Tilson, 1996). Employers are concerned about the perceived risks posed by hiring individuals with disabilities, and they want to work with counselors who are mindful of employers' needs and who can provide qualified job candidates

who will improve the bottom line (Buys & Rennie, 2001; Simonsen et al., 2011; Stensrud, 2007).

Although some research has documented what employers want from VR and other employment agencies, fewer studies have focused on what VR counselors are actually doing in terms of working with businesses. Only frequency of employer-related activities has been reported. An early study documented the amount of time counselors devote to placement activities: placement for specific clients accounted for an average of 7.2% of counselors' time and job development accounted for 4.8% (Zadny & James, 1977). The authors reported that their findings were similar to the findings of even older studies regarding how counselors spent their work time (average time spent in job placement/development ranged from 4.3% to 8.6%). A more recent study documented the hours per week that VR counselors engage in job placement/development activities; the average was 3.25 ( $SD = 3.83$ ), but a majority spent 2 hr or less on this activity each week (Schultz, 2008). A few studies have evaluated frequency of use of major VR counselor knowledge domains. In 2003, a sample of rehabilitation counselors reported that they "somewhat frequently" provided vocational consultation services, which includes working directly with employers (Leahy, Chan, & Saunders, 2003). In 2009, another sample of rehabilitation counselors indicated they used vocational consultation/services for employers "monthly" and job development/placement services between "monthly" and "weekly" (Leahy et al., 2009), but both of these service areas were performed more frequently on average (both "weekly") by counselors working for public VR agencies.

Although there has been a push for VR agencies to engage more with business and these business interactions are considered an important part of a VR counselor's job, we do not have current information about what counselors are actually doing in this area or what VR agencies expect from them. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to (a) explore VR agency expectations for VR counselor engagement with business, (b) determine what VR counselors are actually doing in terms of interacting with businesses, and (c) identify challenges VR counselors experience to working with business.

## METHOD

Mixed methods (i.e., both quantitative and qualitative data) were used to investigate areas of interest. Surveys and interviews were conducted with VR agency administrators and VR counselors. The study focused on counselors who work with consumers who are blind or visually impaired because negative employer attitudes are considered a major barrier to employment for this population (Coffey et al., 2014; Crudden & McBroom, 1999; Crudden et al., 2002; Kirchner et al., 1997; Salomone & Paige, 1984). Because one potential way to overcome this barrier is interactions with employers by VR professionals, this study was undertaken.

### Surveys

Two separate survey questionnaires were developed, one designed for VR agency administrators and one for VR agency staff, including VR counselors. The overall focus of the surveys was to determine what VR agencies and VR staff are doing in terms of interacting with businesses. For this study, questions that pertained to agency expectations for counselors working with business and counselors' indication of what they are actually doing in this area are reported. (Questions on the survey did not address challenges to working with business.)

Administrators from all VR agencies in the United States, including the 50 states and Washington, DC, that serve most consumers with visual impairments in the state (i.e., combined agencies and blind agencies) were invited to participate in the agency survey. The survey was administered online in the fall of 2011, with a request to complete it sent by e-mail to the director or director of blindness services for each agency. Participants were given the option of completing the survey over the phone if preferred. Administrators received two e-mail follow-up requests if they did not complete the survey and follow-up phone calls after that to encourage their participation. A question on the survey asked the administrator for permission to survey VR staff within the agency on the same topic.

Forty-seven administrators responded to the survey, a 92.2% response rate. The administrators represented 24 blind agencies and 23 combined agencies. Because the focus of the administrator questions was on agency policy, demographic information about the respondent was not collected. Position title was the only personal information: 34.0% identified themselves as agency director, 21.3% as director of blind services, 6.4% as assistant agency director, and 38.3% as “other.” Other responses included such titles as assistant bureau chief, program administrator, and district manager.

The request to participate in the VR staff survey was distributed to CSAVR NET points of contact within each agency and was also distributed to counselors by VR agency directors who agreed to staff participation. Data were collected in the winter of 2012. One hundred thirty-three counselors responded to the survey, and 121 provided responses to questions of interest to this study. Respondents represented 23 agencies: 14 blind agencies and 9 combined agencies. Because we were not solely responsible for distributing the survey and responses were anonymous, it is not possible to report a response rate.

Some basic demographic and employment information was collected from counselors. Most participants were women (75.2%) and had an educational background in rehabilitation counseling (66.1%). Other educational degree areas included counseling, psychology, social work, and business. The average length of employment as a rehabilitation counselor was 8.36 years ( $SD = 7.37$ ), with a range of 1 month to 25 years. Most counselors (86%) served only consumers with blindness or visual impairment as their primary diagnosis, and the remaining 14% served consumers with various disabilities, including some with blindness or visual impairments.

## Interviews

Four VR agencies that participated in the surveys, reported a commitment to developing relationships with business and had indicators of success with placing blind or visually impaired consumers into

employment, were selected to participate in the interviews. Two of the state agencies serve only consumers who are blind or visually impaired, and the other two serve consumers with all disabilities. Interviews were conducted in the summer of 2013 with multiple agency staff, including 6 administrators and 19 counselors whose data was used for this study. The focus of the interviews was learning about how the agencies handled their business relations programs, including agency expectations for counselors, counselor reports of their activities in this area, and challenges counselors experienced to working with business. A semi-structured protocol was developed and reviewed by an expert in building relationships with businesses prior to data collection. Agency administrators who participated in the interviews provided names and contact information for counselors in their agency who (a) excelled at working with businesses and (b) had difficulty with that activity. In one small agency, all four counselors for the blind were interviewed. Each interview was audio recorded and recordings were transcribed for analysis.

Administrators included two women and four men; other demographic information about administrators were not recorded. Counselors included 13 women and 6 men, with an average length of experience as a rehabilitation counselor of 9.19 years ( $SD = 6.72$  years) and a range of 3–30 years. Eleven counselors (57.9%) mentioned previous experience in another field, which included business, human resources management, general counseling/social work, and job development. Ten counselors (52.6%) had a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling.

## Data Analyses

Basic descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey data (e.g., means, frequencies). Interview transcripts were loaded into a qualitative software program (MAXQDA Version 11) for analysis. Software programs are used for qualitative data analysis to facilitate coding and retrieving segments of data and promote accuracy in identifying and tallying the coded segments. Using a grounded theory approach, all transcriptions were reviewed

and segments were coded into broad categories using inductive and deductive analysis, where some categories corresponded to the research questions under investigation and other categories emerged from the data. Second-level coding of responses in each category was conducted using principles of content analysis. Consequently, within each theme similarities and variations in responses were identified and then tallied.

## RESULTS

### Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Expectations for Counselors

#### Survey

Almost all agencies (91.5%) reported that their counselors are responsible for making contacts with businesses for the purpose of business development, job development, and/or job placement (i.e., helping their consumers find employment). Agencies that have this requirement were asked if making contacts with business was expected only when counselors have a consumer who is ready for employment. (In other words, should these contacts only be made for a specific consumer?) Only 16.3% of agencies reported that making business contacts is only expected in this situation; the vast majority indicated making contacts with business should not be dependent on specific consumers (79.1%), and 4.7% declined to answer the question. Although almost all agencies require their counselors to make business contacts, most (65.1%) do not require a specific number of contacts each month. Of the 34.9% that do, the range of business contacts required was 1–10 and the average was 4.40 ( $SD = 3.38$ ). Even fewer (23.8%) require a specific number of contacts in the community (such as Chamber of Commerce or Lion's Clubs meetings), with a range of 1–10 community contacts required per month and an average of 2.80 ( $SD = 2.82$ ).

#### Interviews

All six administrators considered interactions with business to be an important part of their counselors'

job, but the actual expectations differed across agencies. Administrators from one agency indicated business contacts are included in counselor performance plans, and there are specific goals they have to meet in this area. One agency administrator reported the expectation is that counselors will interact with businesses in a professional manner and attempt to do as much outreach as possible but also indicated business contacts were most likely to occur when trying to place a specific consumer. An administrator from another agency indicated that business contacts happen most with job retention cases, although counselors are strongly encouraged to go out and approach new businesses. An administrator from the final agency indicated that counselors are expected to work with businesses as part of their job but not expected to be the primary placement person.

### Counselor Activities Related to Business Engagement

#### Survey

Counselors were asked to report what percentage of their work time is devoted to interactions with businesses. The range was 0%–75%, with a mean of 20.7% ( $SD = 16.2$ ). Most counselors spent 5%–20% of their time working with businesses, with a median of 15% and a mode of 10%. Counselors reported their frequency of attending networking events to connect with businesses (such as job fairs, Chamber of Commerce meetings, etc.). Most counselors report participating in networking events, but the majority did this infrequently (annually or quarterly, 55.6%). Almost a third (32.5%) participated in them on a regular basis (once per month or more frequently), whereas a small percentage (12%) rarely or never participated in networking events. Counselors also reported on the frequency they provide specific services to business: (a) identification of appropriate job accommodations, (b) assistance with obtaining or implementing job accommodations, (c) conduct job analyses, (d) support for former consumers employed with a business, (e) recruitment or referral of qualified applicants, (f) provide education about blindness and visual impairment, and (g) training for business' employees on working with people who

**TABLE 1. Frequency Counselors Provide Services to Business**

Service to Business	Rarely/Never	Infrequently <sup>a</sup>	Regularly <sup>b</sup>
Identify accommodations	17.1	40.5	42.3
Obtain/implement accommodations	17.0	41.1	42.0
Conduct job analyses	39.8	41.6	18.6
Support for former consumers employed with business	22.7	51.8	25.5
Recruitment/referral of qualified applicants	16.4	37.3	46.4
Education about blindness/visual impairment	14.5	38.5	47.0
Training for employees on working with people who are blind/visually impaired	30.4	53.6	16.1

*Note.* All numbers are percentages.

<sup>a</sup>Infrequently = annually or quarterly.

<sup>b</sup>Regularly = once per month or more.

are blind or visually impaired. Their responses are provided in Table 1.

### **Interviews**

There was also universal agreement among the 19 counselors that interacting with business is an important part of their jobs. As one counselor responded, “That is one of our major goals, our tasks, our duties.” Estimates of the time they spend on the activity were very similar to survey participants, with most spending between 5%–10% and 25% and one spending 60%–70% of time working with businesses. Types or purpose of contacts with businesses varied among respondents. Seven counselors (36.8%) reported that they primarily work with businesses in job retention cases, whereas three others (15.8%) discussed contacting businesses about specific consumers, and four counselors (21.1%) discussed developing relationships with businesses without a specific consumer in mind. Networking was an important way for respondents to make connections with businesses, with 11 counselors (57.9%) spontaneously mentioning this strategy. Counselors mentioned activities such as Business After Hours events through the Chamber of Commerce, business breakfasts with the Business Leadership Network, doing outreach to community organizations, and getting involved in local human

resources organizations. This is one counselor’s description of the advantages to networking:

Going to these community meetings, you get to meet people in a non-threatening environment, like Business After Hours through the Chamber of Commerce. You get to meet them in a social level and you get a chance to talk to people. You don’t even have to bring up what you do unless they ask, and you can kind of slip in things. In social settings, I don’t really bring that up because I want to get to know who that person is and what they like and what do they think about their business. I can ask questions and they won’t feel threatened.

### **Challenges to Working With Business Experienced by Counselors**

One of the challenges to effectively working with business is lack of preparation and skill in this area for newly hired counselors. Five out of six administrators (83.3%) thought that their new counselors are generally not prepared to work with business, with the exception of those that have a background in a business area. One administrator reported that his

counselors were working for the agency before he got there, and most had some kind of business background, and therefore were well prepared. Several commented that the education counselors get in a rehabilitation counseling degree program does not prepare them adequately:

I think that as far as coming out of school with a master's in vocational rehabilitation, I don't think that they are very well prepared at all. I think they may have one or two courses in their master's program, and I think that there really needs to be more emphasis on employment and more emphasis on how to work with business. I think there needs to be more emphasis on business as a partner. I would hope universities would get businesses involved in their curriculum so that right from the very beginning counselors realize what businesses are looking for so they in turn, while working with consumers, can convey that expectation.

Although not asked directly about their preparation to work with business prior to their employment as a counselor, three counselors (15.8%) commented that their graduate programs did not prepare them for this type of work. All three of these counselors had received a master's in rehabilitation counseling, which represents 30% of the subgroup that have this degree. For example, while discussing the role interactions with business play in her job, one counselor commented,

It's just not something that the majority of counselors that I speak with are trained to do. During graduate school, for example, it's just not part of the curriculum as much as disability, the rehab process. Spending time with employers is, again, encouraged [by the agency] but, how to go about it isn't always clear.

Another challenge experienced by counselors, and one which may be linked to a lack of preparation, is their lack of comfort in working with businesses.

Nine counselors (50%) reported that they were not initially comfortable with this aspect of their job. This was one counselor's response when asked about initial comfort level:

No, I didn't [feel comfortable] because, again, I don't know the best way to approach a business owner to discuss if they would be interested. I don't know how job developers go out there.

Of the nine who did initially feel comfortable working with businesses, five of them (55.6%) attributed this to their backgrounds in business or job placement. As one counselor stated,

I felt comfortable in the sense that I came out of the private sector. That part didn't bother me so much. I did understand. I used to do budgets; I did hiring. I did all those little pieces.

Five of the administrators (83.3%) reported that many or most of the counselors within their agencies were not initially comfortable working with business.

I think for the most part people that I've seen over the years in this organization are much more comfortable with that one-on-one counseling relationship, and they have a lot of confidence in their skills and abilities in that environment, but when you break them out and have them get into the business world or the corporate world, they're not nearly as confident.

Another challenge identified by counselors, and one that was not directly asked about, was lack of time to make contacts with business. Ten of the 19 counselors (52.6%) discussed their difficulty finding time to work with businesses. Comments

about lack of time were made both by counselors who are not comfortable or confident in working with businesses and by those who are:

I don't necessarily go out and bang on doors. We don't have the time. Our caseloads are much too big to be able to do something like that. It would be nice. To be honest with you, there are people in our agency who are counselors and that's not [within] their comfort level either. Being a past job developer, it's a piece of cake to me.

## DISCUSSION

The expectations for VR agencies to work with employers has increased in the past decade and is expected to continue to increase with the WIOA legislation. For counselors in most VR agencies, this equates to an increase in the work they will be expected to do with employers. Administrators in the vast majority of agencies reported in the survey that counselors are expected to interact with businesses, and all counselors and administrators who participated in the interviews unanimously agreed that interactions with business are an important part of counselors' jobs. The average amount of time spent on working with businesses by counselors in this study was approximately 21%, which is substantially larger than the percentage of time spent on this activity reported in previous studies (Schultz, 2008; Zadny & James, 1977). This indicates that the demand for working with employers had already increased for counselors, prior to the passage of WIOA.

WIOA requires VR agencies to provide more direct services to employers and authorizes several new services to employers (Bradshaw & Porter, 2015; WIOA, 2015). By necessity, counselors in many agencies will have to be involved in these activities because some agencies do not employ staff whose primary role is to engage with business, and many who do only employ one or two people in those positions (McDonnall, 2014). In terms of current services provided to businesses by counselors in

this study, several services are being performed on a regular basis by a large percentage of counselors, whereas some services, such as job analyses, support for former consumers, and training for businesses' current employees, were being performed infrequently. Looking across all seven services, a majority of counselors (68.1%) provide one or more of the services for businesses on a regular basis. It is anticipated that the frequency of providing these types of services will increase with WIOA.

Three major challenges for counselors to working with business were identified in this study: lack of comfort, lack of preparation/knowledge, and lack of time. The challenges of lack of comfort and time constraints have been documented in previous research (Fleming et al., 2014). Lack of preparation has been indicated in previous studies of certified rehabilitation counselors, with training in the area of working with businesses identified as an important need (Beveridge et al., 2015; Chan et al., 2003; Froehlich & Linkowski, 2002; Lewis & Patterson, 1998). This study links that lack of preparation to difficulties with working with business. Given the importance of business engagement documented in this study and the anticipated increased importance of business engagement with WIOA changes, it is vital that rehabilitation counseling master's programs increase their focus on working with business. This research documents that new graduates from these programs are not prepared to work with business, and many feel uncomfortable with this activity.

The existing CORE standards for master's programs have very limited requirements in terms of preparation of students for working with business. Only three knowledge domains apply generally to work with business (job analysis, transferable skills analysis, work site modification and restructuring; employer consultation and disability prevention; workplace culture and environment), and none of the knowledge domains apply directly to providing services to businesses as expected by VR agencies and conceptualized in the dual customer approach. We do not know what effect the merger of CACREP and CORE will have on these standards, but it seems safe to assume that a greater emphasis on working with business is not likely to happen with



the merger. According to the press release about this merger, both organizations recognize the need for a unified set of standards for counselors regarding disability, but nothing has been stated regarding the importance of the vocational aspects of a rehabilitation counselor's job.

Although the effects of the merger on the standards for master's rehabilitation counseling programs are unknown at present, it is clear that programs must do more to address the business engagement component of a rehabilitation counselor's job. This activity is important for graduates who work within the state-federal VR system as well as for graduates who work with community rehabilitation providers and other private agencies. Graduates are leaving programs unprepared to engage with business and perhaps unaware that working with businesses is an important part of the job. The personnel standards for VR have changed significantly with WIOA: Proposed personnel standards do not require counselor certification or licensure, and they specifically indicate that personnel should not only have specialized training and experience to prepare them to work with consumers with disabilities but also with employers (WIOA, 2015). Relevant personnel skills identified in the proposed rules for WIOA include developing effective relationships with employers in the public and private sectors.

Master's program curricula generally include one course related to working with business (e.g., job placement, employment strategies), and these courses may focus on learning skills such as job analyses or include an additional focus such as career counseling. Considering the personnel standards proposed in WIOA (2015), it is recommended that an additional course be added to the curriculum that has a specific focus on the business perspective, business engagement, and providing services to employers. A discussion of the use of networking and how to network would be a beneficial component of the course because counselors need this skill for business development. Perhaps, this course could be co-taught by a rehabilitation counseling professor and a professor from the business department or a business relations staff person from a VR agency. Alternatively, some business departments

offer a course for nonmajors that would be beneficial to students in learning about business in general and helping them take the "business perspective" when working with businesses. However, such a course would not provide direct information about working with businesses from the rehabilitation counselor's perspective.

If the addition of a course is not possible, programs might consider restructuring their current employer-focused course to include more information about the current climate and expectations for rehabilitation counselors within VR agencies. In addition, local business men and women could be invited to speak to classes, and assignments could be added in multiple courses that require direct interaction with a business. The more exposure students get to working with businesses while in graduate school, the more comfortable and prepared they will be for this activity at their first job.

The limitations of this study primarily focus around the samples, which include counselors and some agencies that provide services to a specific group of consumers, those with blindness or other visual impairments. Although the samples include combined agencies and their counselors, they do not include representation from general agencies (i.e., those agencies that provide services to people with disabilities other than blindness/visual impairment), and therefore the ability to generalize findings to these agencies and counselors within the agencies is uncertain. The results are in agreement with previous research that identified lack of comfort and lack of time as challenges to working with business, and lack of preparation in this area by rehabilitation counselors, and this is the first study that provides a personal (qualitative) perspective on the issue of lack of preparation to work with business and how this impacts business engagement. In summary, lack of comfort and lack of preparation to work with business are significant challenges that practicing state-federal VR counselors face, and one that master's programs in rehabilitation counseling could address. Given the climate of expectations to engage with businesses and the increased demand for business engagement driven by WIOA, it is vital for master's programs to increase this focus in their curricula.

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