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International  
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# **Practitioners' guides on employment service centres**

## **Providing effective employer services**

**Volume 4**



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**Providing effective  
employer services**

**(Volume 4)**

**Donna C. Koeltz and Carmela I. Torres**

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## Preface

Public employment services (PES) have been recognized in the mandate of the ILO since its creation. The ILO Convention on Unemployment, 1919 (No. 2) recognized the role of employment services and promoted the establishment of national employment services in all member States. The role of public employment services was fully elaborated at the international level with the adoption of the ILO Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88). Both jobseekers and employers are customers of employment services, both public and private, and most national employment services are guided by an advisory body that reinforces the principles of social dialogue between government, employers, and workers.

The *Practitioners' guides on employment service centres* (hereafter referred to as "the Guides") are designed to assist member States, including within Asia and the Pacific, to improve labour market efficiency and participation, reduce unemployment, and enhance linkages and information flows between jobseekers and employers. This is consistent with the core elements of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, which emphasizes the creation of productive employment and skills development to increase the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises, and the inclusiveness of growth.

The Guides draw upon content originally published in the *Facilitator's training guide on employment services* (2015), by the Employment Policy Department, with the

current Guides focusing more specifically on the practical operations of employment service centres and the delivery of employer and counselling services. The Guides also reflect the authors' professional experiences and international good practices of public employment services (PES) worldwide.

The Guides are a collection of resource manuals on public employment services delivery. There are four volumes in this collection. *Training of trainers on operations, counselling, and employer services (Volume 1)* is a companion to the three other procedural manuals on employment services: *Operating employment service centres (Volume 2)*; *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*; and *Providing effective employer services (Volume 4)*.

It is our hope that the Guides will assist member States to enhance their employment services, a core component in the promotion of decent and productive work opportunities for women and men.



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Assistant Director-General and Regional Director  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific



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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CAMFEBA	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations
ESC	employment service centres
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
JVR	job vacancy report
LMI	labour market information
NOC	national occupational classification
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises



## Introduction

*Providing effective employer services (Volume 4)* is the third of three procedural manuals which, when used together, are intended to guide management and staff in delivering effective and efficient assistance to their jobseeker clients. It aims to assist employment service staff to develop a clear understanding of:

- a. the role of employment service centres (ESCs) in assisting employers;
- b. how to reach out to employers as both clients and partners of the ESC; and
- c. how to effectively help employers recruit workers to fill their job vacancies.

*Providing effective employer services (Volume 4)* was initially prepared as a key output of the ILO/China South-South Cooperation Project to Expand Employment Services and Enhance Labour Market Information in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Project). Following its introduction in October 2015, and based on specific requests from other countries, a decision was taken to publish the manual for use within the region as ministries work towards developing and enhancing their employment service operations. The preparation of the manual was facilitated by a review of existing resource materials developed through capacity building activities funded by the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific (DWT-Bangkok) and utilized by job centres in both Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. This guide presents updated and enhanced information reflecting international good practices in the operations of public employment service offices.

*Providing effective employer services (Volume 4)* is intended to be used as an ongoing resource guide by the managers and staff of ESCs as they carry out their mandate to provide fair and accessible employment services to all jobseekers and enterprises who seek their assistance. It can also be used as a self-help instruction guide for new staff as they become oriented to their new job.

While much of the information contained in this manual will be universally applicable for ESC operations, some sections may require some customization in order to accurately reflect procedures within individual countries. This adaptation would most appropriately occur at the national level in each country.

The other two manuals in this collection focus on providing guidance to assist managers and staff to develop a clear understanding of employment services concepts, systems, and procedures; how to organize and manage these services efficiently; to ensure uniformity in the application of procedures in all ESCs by all staff, and how to provide high-quality counselling services to jobseekers – *Operating employment service centres (Volume 2)* and *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*, respectively.

The development of *Providing effective employer services (Volume 4)* is a continuous process, as the ESCs strive to respond to the changing needs of society and jobseekers. The overall responsibility for maintaining this manual should rest at the national headquarters level within the appropriate ministry or department responsible for providing oversight and technical guidance in the area of skills development and employment services. When changes or improvements in the procedures outlined in this manual are required, recommendations should be forwarded to this office. Recommendations for change will be considered, and the department will issue amendments to all ESC as appropriate.

As information is updated or enhanced, these amendments should be reviewed by the ESC management and staff, and incorporated in this manual. It is the responsibility of the director or manager of each ESC to ensure that manual is accessible to all staff, and is kept up to date. In order to facilitate this process, it is recommended that this manual, as well as the other procedural manuals in this series, be published in a format that makes it possible to add or delete sections of the manual without the need to reproduce the full document. Producing the manuals in a loose-leaf binder format is an ideal way to ensure maximum flexibility.



## 1. The role of employment service centres for employers

While most people feel that the main emphasis of employment service centres (ESCs) is to assist jobseekers make labour market transitions, the mandate of the ESCs includes two key clients – jobseekers and employers. It is clear that if an ESC is to be successful in assisting jobseekers, it must also interact regularly with employers within its office area.

This interaction with employers is important in order to understand the demand side of the labour market, which will provide policy makers with information required to introduce appropriate labour market measures, as well as help jobseekers make informed career choices.

Establishing good working relationships with the employer community is also important in order to gather information on as many job opportunities as possible, which in turn increases the value of the services offered to jobseekers.

Employers can also be valuable partners of the ESCs as they plan special labour market interventions and programmes including job fairs, careers fairs, and training programmes, all designed to increase the employability of jobseekers and to facilitate the matching of available workers to vacant jobs that employers need to fill.



## Providing effective employer services





## 2. Services provided to employers

As well as being important partners of ESCs, employers are also clients who can benefit from the specialized expertise of employment officers. There are three main areas where ESCs can offer specific services aimed at the employer community:

- a. human resources planning;
- b. assistance with recruitment; and
- c. provision of labour market information (LMI).

### 2.1 Human resources planning

Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) cannot afford to employ a full-time human resources expert to manage the many personnel requirements of the business. This often results in the absence of an organizational chart and clear job descriptions for the business. Recruitment procedures, when required, are generally dealt with in an unstructured way by supervisors and managers, or the business owner, and often lack transparency. Employers may also lack experience in developing realistic job descriptions for the positions they offer, and again this can result in difficulty in finding the best workers for the business. The lack of clear policies related to personnel can lead to situations where employees are unclear as to what is expected of them on the job, and may result in performance issues and employee dissatisfaction.

Employment officers are able to provide advice and guidance to employers who request assistance in developing a human resource strategy for their business. This may include advising them on how to develop a simple organizational chart, including precise job descriptions, and how to introduce performance evaluation systems and training and development strategies for employees. Employment officers can also facilitate a process in which employers are able to anticipate increases or decreases in staffing levels, and to develop contingency plans to address these situations in advance.

### 2.2 Assistance with recruitment

Many employers do not have sufficient training in human resources management to conduct an efficient recruitment process, and will often rely on a variety of external sources when they do need additional workers.<sup>1</sup> As well as being expensive, this can result in the employer not always finding the most qualified candidate. Even when there is no fee for the actual recruitment of new employees, there are costs associated with hiring and orientating new staff, and if they are not suitable and do not remain with the enterprise, this can be a costly undertaking.

Using occupational information available at the ESC, employment officers can provide invaluable help in developing job vacancy notices that emphasize the essential qualifications, to guarantee appropriate recruitment efforts. They can also provide the employer with a manageable number of pre-screened candidates who meet the basic requirements of the position, which will substantially reduce the amount of time the employer will have to commit to interviewing potential candidates.

### 2.3 Provision of labour market information

Employers require comprehensive and reliable information related to the labour market, provided in a timely and understandable manner. They can make use of this information in a variety of ways, including determining the market wage rate for positions they offer, and assessing the availability of labour when considering

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1. Annex 1 describes a recruitment model also found in Annex 4 of *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*.



expansions or before introducing new business lines. While this information is generated by many different sources within the labour market, accessing a concise, user-friendly summary is often difficult.

Collecting, analyzing, and sharing robust and reliable LMI is one of the core functions of all ESCs, which should make them excellent sources of information. They should be able to generate very useful information on the supply side of the labour market, simply through the details they collect through jobseeker registration forms, and on the demand side from job vacancy notices they receive from employers. The employer directory,<sup>2</sup> which should be maintained in every employment office, will further enhance the information database on the demand side of the market. In addition to the information they collect through their own work, ESCs have access to many other statistical reports produced by various government agencies, including regular census data and labour force surveys. In many countries, employment centres are recognized as having the single most comprehensive LMI available.

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2. A copy of the employer directory form (ESC-ER-DIR) and instructions on completing the form can be reviewed in section 7.4, *Operating employment services centres (Volume 2)*.



## Providing effective employer services



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### 3. Promoting the employment service centres

In spite of the clear benefits that enterprises can gain from maintaining a strong working relationship with their local ESC, in many cases they have little knowledge of the services available to them. As a result, the enterprises themselves, jobseekers, and the ESC suffer from a gap in the provision of information – which prevents a smoothly functioning labour market.

It is clear that promoting the ESC services to all employers within the office area must be a top priority for the management and staff of all ESCs. In order to effectively promote the employment services to employers, the ESCs must use a **marketing approach** to develop a strategy aimed at assessing and meeting the needs of enterprises. Three principles should guide this marketing approach:

- A customer orientation that ensures the ability to meet the evolving demands of employers, and which orients services to respond proactively to these needs.
- The development of an integrated marketing approach that requires the effort and involvement of all ESC staff, each of whom is aware of their individual role in the marketing plan.
- Successful marketing is measured by the degree of client satisfaction. It goes well beyond promotions and visits to employers. It includes a variety of activities, from order taking to service procedures that are integrated into a well-conceived action plan. Employer satisfaction may be viewed from two critical dimensions –

helping them solve their employment-related challenges, and providing a quality service that generates a positive image for the employment office.

The practical application of the marketing concept provides positive results by diminishing problems in meeting the employment office's objectives, and revealing opportunities in the labour market. Marketing, as a focus for the ESC's services, benefits employers and workers, improves the image of the ESC, helps to achieve organizational goals, and leads to greater job satisfaction by employment staff.

The main emphasis of the **marketing strategy** will be to approach employers in such a way as to enable them to realize the value and advantages of collaborating with the ESC for their employment needs. Once a marketing strategy has been developed, the next step will be the preparation of a **marketing plan** for the ESC. This marketing plan should not be viewed simply as a management tool, but should be prepared with the involvement of all staff, with their full commitment to its implementation. The plan need only be a very simple and concisely expressed statement specifically defining what is required to promote the services to employers covered by the ESC.

In order to develop a comprehensive marketing plan, it will be necessary to first divide the employers covered by the ESC into logical segments. A number of criteria may be used to determine which employers should be targeted in the marketing plan, including enterprises in growth sectors, or sectors in decline; those who employ workers in high demand in the labour market; new employers or industries to the area; and employers that experience high rates of staff turnover.<sup>3</sup> It is important to remember that this is not an exhaustive list, and there may be other significant criteria to be considered. It is also important to be aware that the criteria may change over time, depending on the office priorities, the overall labour market conditions, as well as any policy decisions that may affect the employment situation in the ESC area.

While selecting specific divisions of employers for special targeting in the marketing plan, it is important to ensure that most if not all employers within the geographic scope of the ESC should be scheduled for some form of ESC contact, at least once per year.

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3. Annex 2 contains a format that is effective in recording a listing of employers to be targeted based on specific criteria.



## 4. Reaching out to employers

Unlike jobseekers who present themselves at employment centres requesting assistance, the majority of employers do not typically reach out to the ESCs. It is much more common that employment officers will need to initiate contact with employers in order to promote the services of ESCs, as well as to encourage them to list their job vacancies with the office.

There is more than one way to approach an employer when promoting the services of ESCs, and each method has both advantages and disadvantages. Whenever possible, it is recommended that an **in-person employer visit** be planned. On-site visits to the employer's place of business offer the opportunity to view the actual premises, equipment, and meet face-to-face with the employer. It is often possible to request a tour of the operation, which will generally provide excellent insight into the overall operation of the business, including such things as the general working environment and the number of employees engaged in various tasks. This information will be useful in assessing what services might be of most interest to the individual employer, and can also be added to the employer directory form (ESC-ER-DIR).<sup>4</sup>

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4. *Operating employment service centres (Volume 2)*, section 7.4.

Information contained in the employer directory will become part of the LMI, which was discussed in *Operating employment service centres (Volume 2)*, and will help provide policy-makers with insight into the types of services most needed by the demand side of the labour market, and will be useful for employment officers as they provide counselling services, advice, and guidance to jobseekers. Meeting with the employer in person will also signal to the employer that you are respectful of their time and are approaching them as an equal partner, willing to take the extra step to provide them with information that will be useful to them. The personal approach will also help to establish a good working relationship with the employer, and set the stage for productive future collaboration.

In-person employer visits, however, can be time consuming and costly, particularly when the place of business is some distance from the ESC. This may require the employment officer to rely on public transportation or to use private transportation, and many offices are not able to provide adequate funds to fully compensate officers for expenses incurred. It can also be difficult to meet with the most suitable person at the business, particularly if the employment officer has not pre-arranged an appointment, or arrives without adequate identification.

Even with a scheduled appointment, the employment officer may arrive to discover that the person he or she were to meet is not available due to unanticipated events. It is also possible that the employer will dominate the interview, using it as an opportunity to express opinions regarding government services, the overall conditions of the labour market, and other topics not specifically within the control of the ESC. Finally, by meeting on the employer's premises, the employment officer will not have all of the resources of the ESC readily available, and therefore it is extremely important to be well prepared for the meeting.

Although there are many advantages to the in-person visit, the disadvantages may sometimes lead to a decision to conduct a **telephone discussion** with the employer as an alternative approach. This type of interaction has the advantage of conserving time and money by eliminating travel to and from the place of business, and is often a more comfortable approach for employment officers, as they remain in the "comfort zone" of the ESC, where their information resources are at hand. While it is still possible to promote the services of the ESC and to address the personal concerns of the individual enterprise by telephone, these types of contact with employers are most effective when the purpose of the contact is very straightforward, such as verifying information or addressing a specific complaint.



There are, however, clear disadvantages associated with contacting employers by telephone. Since most telephone contacts will not be pre-arranged, there is no guarantee that the employment officer will be able to speak to the most appropriate person in the enterprise, and even if able to do so, the duration of the conversation will most probably be brief. This will make it difficult to conduct a full promotional interview with the employer. There is also no opportunity to view the facilities or assess the working conditions, so any information provided by the employer remains unverified. Perhaps one of the most significant disadvantages to telephone interviews is the lack of personal contact with the employer, which prevents the employment officers from utilizing non-verbal communication techniques to convey their message, as well as to accurately understand the employer's reaction to the conversation.

Every employment officer should develop an individual plan<sup>5</sup> for employer visits, based on the overall listing of employers within the local community. Depending on the priorities of the ESC, one or two categories of employers may be selected, such as ones experiencing industry growth or high turnover rates of employees, or employers based on geographic location, and deal with a number of the segmented groups.

When preparing a plan to reach out to employers, the best approach will be to aim for in-person visits to as many enterprises as possible. In order to ensure that the time and money is well spent on these visits, it should be a standard operating procedure for the employment officer to contact each enterprise at least one week before the proposed visit, to arrange an appointment with the person responsible for employment-related decisions within the business. The phone call should be brief and respectful of the employer's time, and should provide a concise overview of the purpose of the meeting being requested. The employment officer should also be well prepared, in order to maximize the time spent during the meeting.

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5. Annex 3 provides a format for use in developing individual employer-visit plans.





## 5. Preparing for the employer visit

A successful employer visit will be a reflection of how well the employment officer has prepared for the contact. There are a number of steps that can be taken to ensure that the meeting is productive and time well spent. First, it is essential that the employment officer is well informed about the local priorities of the office area in terms of the overall labour market situation, as well as the priorities specifically related to the industry and enterprise they will visit. Access to high-quality LMI will play a key role in this step, and this should be complemented by a review of relevant information in the employer directory. While reviewing this information, the employment officer should consider any potential issues that may be raised by the employer, and try to arrive at the meeting with some ideas in response to these issues, should they be discussed.

Since the main purpose of the visit with the employer will be to promote the services of the ESC, with the goal of interesting the employer in a closer working relationship, it is also very important that the employment officer has a thorough knowledge of all services available through the ESC. The employment officer should be prepared to make a formal or informal presentation<sup>6</sup> on these services during the visit, and should plan a concise presentation well

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6. Annex 4 provides more information on preparing and delivering presentations.

in advance. This may involve the preparation of speaking notes; perhaps a short PowerPoint presentation if it is anticipated that the meeting will involve several people at the enterprise; and, if available, the employment officer should also gather brochures and fact sheets to leave with the employer.

While it is not possible for the employment officer to have access to all files during on-site visits, there are certain items to take when meeting an employer. It is advisable to take the most up-to-date copy of the employer's records in the employer directory. Also take a list of current jobseekers who have similar qualifications to those who are employed at the enterprise, in case the employer mentions an existing or upcoming job opening. A well-prepared employment officer will always have a notebook and calendar, to make notes on any important information gained during the interview, and to record any follow-up actions required. As some employment officers are less confident in meeting with employers, a good strategy would be to begin the interview by quickly verifying that all information on the employer record is correct and up to date.

Finally, the employment officer should get accurate directions on how to reach the employer's business; decide upon the best mode of travel; and determine how much time will be required to reach the business. Being prompt for an employer visit is another way of demonstrating to the employer that the employment officer is respectful of the employer's time. Promptness is also an indication of professionalism, and will help to convey the message that the ESC is serious about the services it provides.



## 6. Conducting the employer visit

In addition to being well prepared for the interview, there are two key factors that can contribute to the overall effectiveness of the employer visit. Similar to when they are providing counselling services to jobseekers, employment officers will benefit from a structured approach for the interview, and strong communication skills, including the use of a range of questioning techniques and active listening behaviours.<sup>7</sup>

### 6.1 Steps to an employer marketing visit

Arriving at the meeting with a pre-set structure for the discussion can contribute to the success of the meeting. This will be prepared by the employment officer during the pre-visit preparation, and while it may be presented verbally to the employer as a way to begin the interview, it will not be presented as a formal agenda. Generally, a structured employer visit will consist of four steps, which will flow seamlessly during the conversation and ensure that at the end of the appointment time, the employment officer will have achieved all of the objectives set for the visit.

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7. Questioning techniques and listening techniques are also covered in *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*, sections 3 and 4, respectively.

The structure is again similar to the one used in a counselling services interview. The first step is intended to **set the stage** for the meeting, and will include an introductory phase in which the employment officer clarifies his or her role and the overall role of the ESC, doing so in a manner that conveys a sense of wanting to work with the employer and having a genuine interest in addressing any concerns he or she may have. This is very important in establishing a collaborative relationship with the employer. The employment officer will also briefly explain the purpose of the visit, and seek to obtain the employer's agreement and willingness to continue the discussion.

The next step will offer the employer the opportunity to discuss concerns, issues, and difficulties in finding suitable workers to fill job vacancies. The objective of this step is to gain as much information as possible in order to **identify and understand the employer's needs**. This step will often utilize most of the time set aside for the meeting, but it is essential for the employment officer to ensure a full understanding of the employer's needs, and to have the time to determine if these needs fit within the overall mandate of the ESC.

The meeting will then move to a **decision-making stage** of the discussion. The officer will need to address each of the needs raised by the employer, and must explain if some or all of them fall outside the mandate of the ESC. If this is the case, the employment officer should try to suggest other options for the employer; restate the types of services the ESC **can** provide; and allow the employer time to respond. If there is no need for ESC assistance, the meeting can be concluded at this point, with the employment officer offering to contact the employer again at a later date.

If the employer's needs do fall within the scope of the ESC mandate, the employment officer will move to the final step of the interview, to work collaboratively with the employer to clarify the specific needs to be addressed, and **develop a concrete plan of action**. At this stage in the process, it is essential that the real needs have been identified, in order to ensure the full commitment of the employer to any plan of action.

Once the employer's needs have been identified, the employment officer will briefly explain the overall services available through the ESC, and provide suggestions on the types of interventions that might be of most value to the employer, based on the stated interests and needs. The discussion will then continue with a focus on the various options that are proposed, with the goal of reaching agreement on the implementation of one or more of these options. It is also necessary during this process to verify that there are no underlying factors that may prevent the employer from fully implementing



the agreed-upon action plan. Similarly, the employment officer will need to ensure that he or she is able to fulfil any commitments made to the employer.

Once agreement has been reached to proceed, the employment officer will briefly summarize the next steps, indicate a time to follow up with the employer either by telephone or another on-site visit, and conclude the meeting by thanking the employer for the meeting.

## 6.2 Communication skills for an effective employer visit

Many employment officers are much more comfortable and confident when providing counselling services to jobseekers than in conducting employer visits; however, they tend to draw upon the same techniques and procedures for both types of client interaction. This is quite logical, since whether they are meeting a jobseeker to help increase their chances of employment, or meeting with an employer to provide information on the services available through the ESC and to discuss assisting in recruitment practices, excellent communications skills are essential.

As is the case when dealing with jobseekers, attention must be paid not only to the verbal message but also the non-verbal parts of the interaction. This begins with the first impression that the employment officer makes when meeting the employer. It is true that first impressions are lasting, and that many people form this impression within seconds of meeting a person. Therefore, appearance is important and should convey professionalism, poise, and respect. Whether the meeting with the employer is scheduled for the start of the day or nearer to the close of business, employment officers should always ensure that they are well-groomed and dressed appropriately. Since normal business attire may vary depending on the type of services provided by the enterprise, it is always best to dress in a conservative, business-like manner, reflecting the image of the ESC.

When first meeting the employer, and throughout the interview, the employment officer should maintain a pleasant demeanour, smiling when appropriate and always being polite. If business cards are provided through the ESC, the employment officer should provide a card to the receptionist when arriving for the interview. Often the receptionist will provide the employer with the card when announcing that the employment officer has arrived, but if not, will still need it to announce the name over the telephone. If the latter is the case, when the employment officer meets the

employer, he or she should present their business card directly to the employer. This will often prompt the employer to also offer a business card, which should be quickly reviewed and then placed where the employment officer will have easy access to it.

Communication will be accomplished through both verbal and non-verbal techniques, and an awareness of the messages being conveyed by both parties is essential to achieving the goal of the meeting.

Verbal communications are generally centred on the use of questioning techniques. Briefly, there are two main types of questions. **Open questions** provide room for the employer to express views and elaborate on a topic according to what they deem to be significant to the discussion. These questions can provide a great deal of important information that the employment officer may find helpful in determining the needs of the employer and how the ESC may best assist the enterprise. The employer's responses will also provide insight into their current impression of the ESC, and may provide openings where the employment officer is able to clarify a policy or position of the ESC. Generally, open questions will result in the employer providing most of the input to the conversation, with less need for the employment officer to respond. When the employment officer is not as familiar with the enterprise, or unsure of how best to assist the employer, beginning the interview with an open question may provide clues as to how the interview may proceed. While there is a danger that this strategy could take control of the interview from the employment officer, resulting in failure to meet goals, having a structure to follow for the interview, as discussed in the previous section, should help to avoid this situation.

**Closed questions** are designed to provide factual information requiring very short and concise responses, usually with only one correct answer such as "yes" or "no." While they will enable the employment officer to keep the discussion on track, they will also not provide a great deal of new information, but rather serve to validate existing information. Productive conversations will often go beyond a simple question-and-answer style of discussion, to counter-questions being raised by the employment officer to probe information provided by the employer. **Probing questions** may be either closed or open, and will depend on the type of clarification sought.

Non-verbal communication consists of a complete package of expressions: hand and eye movements, postures, and gestures – which should be interpreted along with speech (verbal communication).



At all times during the discussion, it is important that the employment officer remains completely engaged in the conversation, even if the employer is expanding at length on a topic. This engagement by the employment officer is achieved through what is often referred to as attending behaviour. Examples of this include maintaining a comfortable level of eye contact with the speaker; occasionally nodding or politely smiling; assuming a relaxed, though not casual, posture; and at appropriate times adding brief comments to the conversation.

Other techniques such as restating key points (paraphrasing) or reacting to the feelings and emotions being expressed either verbally or non-verbally<sup>8</sup> by the employer, and reflecting them back using a label for the actual emotions, will not only demonstrate attentiveness to the discussion, but will assist the employment officer in clarifying and verifying the interpretation and understanding of the discussion. As the meeting nears its conclusion, the employment officer will also make use of summarizing skills to recap and restate the main points raised by the employer, as well as any agreed-upon actions to be taken following the meeting either by the employer or the employment officer.

### 6.3 Follow-up to the employer visit

As is the case when providing counselling services to jobseekers, documenting the results of each meeting with an employer is very important. Not only can some of the information received contribute to the LMI database, but all the information will provide additional insight and make future communications more productive.

Immediately after the visit, the officer should prepare an employer visit report,<sup>9</sup> highlighting the key points covered during the meeting. When completed, this report should be affixed to the employer directory record. All notes taken during the interview, or upon leaving the enterprise, should be outlined in the report, with sufficient detail to make it understandable and useful to all ESC staff. It is important to elaborate on any issues or concerns expressed by the employer, whether specifically directed at the ESC and the services offered, or more general concerns related to labour market

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8. More information on non-verbal communications can be found in section 4, *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*.

9. A format for the employer visit report can be found in Annex 4.

issues. All ESC staff that may have future contact with this employer will benefit from an awareness of these issues before making contact with the enterprise again. The employment officer should also ensure that all pertinent information on record at the ESC regarding the employer is reviewed for accuracy, and updated if required.

Any actions that have been agreed upon during the discussion must be highlighted in the record, as well as on the work agenda of the employment officer, in order to ensure that appropriate follow-up actions will be taken. Should any of the commitments require support from other staff members or contacts with external agencies, the employment officer should ensure that all necessary personnel are advised of what may be required. Every effort must be made to place a high priority on these actions, and the employment officer should begin implementing them without delay.

The employment officer will need to determine an appropriate follow-up schedule, basing the dates and frequency of contact with the employer on the amount of time considered reasonable to accomplish any actions to be undertaken. If there are no immediate actions to be implemented, the employment officer should tentatively schedule a follow-up call to the employer after six months.



## 7. Job vacancy notices

Another core function of the ESCs is providing job-search assistance to jobseekers and job placement services for employers. A key component of placement services is acquiring job vacancy notices, and the chances of successfully filling these vacancies are largely dependent on the quality of the vacancy notice. Employment officers have a key role in this activity.

### 7.1 Receiving job vacancy notices

The first requirement when discussing a job vacancy notice from an employer is to record the name and address of the enterprise, and the contact person who will be handling the recruitment process. Even if the ESC interacts with the employer regularly, it is always good practice to verify that these basic details remain up to date.

In order to ensure that the job vacancy notice accurately reflects the actual needs of the employer, the employment officer must be able to completely understand the requirements of the position. It is important, therefore, to gather a complete and accurate job description that outlines the duties and responsibilities, working conditions, wages and benefits offered, and any unique requirements for the position, such as special licenses, use of a vehicle, or the willingness to work shifts

or weekends. The employment officer should also be aware of any specialized skills that are of interest to the employer, such as a preference for candidates with previous experience in related fields of work, specific certificates from specialized training institutions, competencies in various computer technologies, or demonstrated leadership qualities.

While discussing the various requirements listed by the employer, the employment officer should clarify which of the requirements are essential and which are preferred but not absolutely necessary. Discussing these details will provide insight as to how flexible the employer might be when considering candidates who may be referred to the position. If the employer appears to be adding unrealistic requirements to the job vacancy notice, the employment officer should advise that this may affect the chances of finding a suitable candidate.

High-quality job vacancy notices should strike a balance between the employer's personal preferences of "nice to have, but not essential skills" and the reality of the labour market, in order to ensure that a suitable candidate can be found.

Ensuring that the employment officer has sufficient information regarding the vacancy – to be in a position to accurately screen potential candidates – can take time, but both the employer and the ESC will benefit from the extra effort. Employers value their time, and will appreciate having only candidates referred to them for consideration who clearly meet the requirements. Job candidates who are already well aware of the tasks and duties, working conditions, and wages and benefits of the prospective job, will have fewer questions to raise and thus save time during the interview, and are more likely to be prepared to accept these conditions if offered the job. Therefore, the employer can be assured about not wasting time to interview disinterested applicants.

The benefits to both the employee and employer of a complete understanding of working conditions and the job description can extend beyond the actual recruitment process, and can result in less employee turnover, higher productivity, and, as a result, employer satisfaction with the ESC services.

The ESC will also benefit from well-prepared, quality job vacancy notices, as the specific details will facilitate more effective screening of jobseeker registrations, and



will result in more satisfactory referrals to the employer. This will often result in job vacancies being filled quicker, which will improve the ESC's performance related to the referral-to-placement ratios. Again, employment officers and the ESC will benefit from the satisfaction of the employers, and this will contribute to their own job satisfaction.

Once the particular requirements for the job vacancy have been recorded, the employment officer should enquire about the application process used by the employer. Depending on the position, as well as the policies of the enterprise, potential candidates may be required to undertake a medical examination or participate in an aptitude or skills test as part of additional pre-screening. In some cases, there may be a series of interviews as the enterprise narrows the choice of candidates. This information should also be recorded on the job vacancy notice, in order to ensure that all job applicants are prepared for these special procedures. It will also be useful information for the employment officer to bear in mind, since it will mean that the final decision on the successful candidate may well take longer than usual, depending on the number of steps in the process.

Once all of the details of the job vacancy have been clarified and recorded, the employment officer will need to assign an occupational code<sup>10</sup> to the job vacancy notice based on these details. The need to exercise care in accurately coding job vacancy notices cannot be overstated. The ability of employment officers to efficiently match jobseekers with job vacancy notices is entirely dependent on accurate occupational coding. In order to assign an appropriate occupational code to a job vacancy notice, the employment officer must match an occupational job description from the national occupational classifications (NOC) – discussed in more detail in the next section – to the tasks, educational background, and work experience described by the employer.

When assigning an occupational code to a job vacancy notice, it is important to look beyond the job title and consider the main duties, education, and experience requirements related to the occupational code. Employers may choose important job titles to add prestige to a job that requires entirely different qualifications than the title would suggest.

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10. Information on how occupational codes are assigned is discussed in section 5, *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*.

## 7.2 Selection and referral of suitable jobseekers

There are typically two methods of selecting suitable jobseekers for referral on a job vacancy, and often both methods are used when handling a job vacancy notice.

### 7.2.1 In-person selection

Once the job vacancy has been recorded and coded according to the occupational classification, it will normally be posted for public access either on job boards in the reception area of the ESC, or electronically on a web-based job bulletin board. Jobseekers who believe that they meet the requirements listed on the vacancy notice will apply to the ESC for further details on the position, and request a referral to the enterprise.

In this situation, it is the responsibility of the employment officer to conduct a pre-screening interview with the jobseeker before providing the requested job referral. This interview will be similar in structure to the initial intake interview.<sup>11</sup> The employment officer will review the jobseeker registration form with the client, to compare the information against the requirements outlined in the job vacancy notice, to determine if the jobseeker is a suitable candidate for the position. While conducting the pre-screening interview, it is essential that the employment officer is at all times mindful of satisfying the needs and expectations of both the jobseeker and employer. If there appear to be gaps between the jobseeker's qualifications and the requirements of the job, the employment officer should discuss this and seek further clarification from the jobseeker using probing questions. It is important that the employment officer advise the jobseeker if he or she does not meet the minimum requirements for referral, and to explain the reason.

It is likely that the jobseeker will be unhappy if the employment officer is not willing to provide the job referral, and will seek at least the chance to change the employer's mind. Many jobseekers will feel this is a reasonable request, and often employment officers may be tempted to comply. However, there is an obligation to respect the wishes of the employer as well; disregarding the requirements listed, and referring unsuitable candidates to the employer, can have a lasting negative impact on the

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11. Section 1.1, *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*.



employer's willingness to trust future vacancies to the ESC. The employment officer will therefore need to determine the best approach that will satisfy both clients of the ESC.

The employment officer may be able to offer alternatives to the jobseeker, so that person will not leave the ESC without any job referrals. If this is not possible, the employment officer should enquire as to the overall job-search strategies that the jobseeker is undertaking, and decide with the jobseeker if the time has come for more in-depth employment assistance through an individual counselling assessment. In this case, the jobseeker will be given an appointment time for a counselling interview, and will be encouraged to continue to look for job opportunities that match their current qualifications.

Another approach to a situation of a skills mismatch between the jobseeker and the vacancy may be considered if the vacancy has been open for some time. In this case, if the gap between the jobseeker's qualifications and the requirements listed in the notice are not significant, the employment officer may contact the employer to discuss the situation. This call should be made after the interview with the jobseeker has concluded, and the employment officer is alone. The employment officer can advise the employer of the particular qualifications of the jobseeker without providing any information that would reveal identity, and ask the employer whether a meeting with the jobseeker would be worthwhile, to consider if he or she might be suitable. At times, employers will not be willing to downgrade their requirements, and the employment officer will need to respect this, but in some cases an employer might agree to meet a lesser qualified jobseeker. Regardless of the outcome of the discussion with the employer, the employment officer will have created a very positive impression. It will be clear to the employer that the employment officer is respectful of their wishes and requirements, but is also anxious to assist in filling the vacancy.

### 7.2.2 File search for suitable referrals

Once the job vacancy notice has been recorded and coded by occupation, employment officers should always review the jobseeker registry, based on the same occupational code, to determine if any of the currently registered jobseekers meet the qualifications for the position. While all jobseekers are advised at the time of the initial intake interview that it is important to maintain regular contact with the ESC, they will not be in daily contact, and may therefore miss many of the job postings. If

a jobseeker has been judged to be “job ready” at the time of the last contact with the ESC, he or she should expect to be notified if suitable jobs become available.

Once the employment officer has done a desk review of the jobseeker registry, and identified some possible candidates for referral, the next step will be to review the job records completely, and to verify that the information is up to date and accurate. The most efficient way to do this is by telephone. The telephone interview will have a very similar structure as for an in-person, pre-screening interview, and is intended to provide the employment officer with enough information to determine if the jobseeker can be referred to the employer.

If the jobseeker is a suitable candidate, he or she will be asked to report to the ESC for the referral notice, specific instructions on the job, and the location of the enterprise. If it is decided that the jobseeker would not be an appropriate candidate for referral, the employment officer will explain the reason and discuss other options that might be available, as well as enquire into the job-search strategy. As is the case with the in-person interview, the employment officer may suggest that it is time to consider more in-depth personalized counselling assistance, and if this is agreeable to the jobseeker, an appointment can be made.

Regardless of the outcome of the telephone interview, the jobseeker’s registration form should be updated with the relevant details and returned to the registry.

### 7.3 Following up on job vacancy notices and referrals

Whether the referral of a jobseeker is done through an in-person selection process or a telephone interview, all jobseekers who are referred on a job vacancy notice should be recorded on the job vacancy notice referral and follow-up record (ESC-JVNR).<sup>12</sup> This record should be attached to the employment officer’s copy of the job vacancy notice, and must be kept up to date with every jobseeker sent for an employer’s consideration. As a general guideline, no more than five jobseekers should be sent to an employer for a single job vacancy unless the employer specifies either fewer or more applicants when registering the vacancy. It is therefore very important to maintain this record and to engage in timely follow-up with the employer, in order to

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12. A copy of the ESC-JVNR can be found in Annex 5.



be aware at all times of the outcome of each referral. This follow-up is most frequently done by telephone, which reduces the amount of time spent by both the employer and employment officer.

The outcome of each referral should be recorded on the job vacancy report (JVR), and these results should be discussed briefly with the employer, particularly if the referral was unsuitable. It is important for the employment officer to receive feedback from the employer when referrals are considered to not meet the employer's expectations, as this will help the employment officer better understand the employer's needs, and will also provide feedback that can be relayed to the jobseeker. If the employer continues to reject jobseekers referred by the ESC, there may be a need to reconsider some of the requirements of the job vacancy, or some of the features of the job, including working conditions. The employment officer may also propose other options for filling the vacancy, such as sharing the job notices with other ESCs, looking for jobseekers who may meet some but not all of the stated requirements, or perhaps proposing that the employer consider providing on-the-job training.

Follow-up with the employer should continue on a frequent basis, even during periods when no jobseeker referrals are made, in order to demonstrate commitment to assist the employer. The JVR should be kept active until such time as the employer reports that the position has been filled, either through a referral from the ESC or by other means, or that the job vacancy notice should be cancelled for other reasons. If the vacancy is filled by other means, it will be useful to record how the employer did find a suitable worker. This information is still useful LMI and can provide insight into how the ESC may improve its services.



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## 8. Using the national occupational classification in employer services

One of the most important tools available to employment officers is having access to a national occupational classification (NOC) system, which ideally is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO).<sup>13</sup>

As discussed in section 7.1, an occupational classification or code should be assigned to every job vacancy notice, and this is done by comparing the job duties and entry requirements provided by the employer, to occupational descriptions available in the NOC system. These occupational descriptions are also used to assign occupational codes to jobseekers when they register for work. When the assignment of codes is done carefully and accurately, it is much easier for employment staff to match jobseekers to job vacancies.

While coding job vacancies to facilitate the job matching process is in itself an excellent application of the NOC system – as is the case in counselling jobseekers – employment officers can also benefit from the occupational descriptions in the NOC when providing other services to employers.

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13. Detailed information on the structure of the ISCO is provided in section 5, *Providing effective counselling services (Volume 3)*.

As mentioned in section 2.1, many employers do not have the expertise to handle personnel issues themselves, and this is a service that can frequently be provided by the ESC. Aside from the obvious need to have clearly stated job requirements when searching for qualified workers, it is also very important for employers to have well-defined job descriptions for all of the positions within their enterprise. Job descriptions provide important guidelines to existing employees, and can help to improve morale in the company, as well as contribute to increased productivity. Job descriptions are also useful to the employers as they develop training and development strategies for their employees; consider succession planning to avoid vacancies when employees retire or advance to more senior positions; and are also key to the development and implementation of performance measurement systems. All of these activities, when implemented as part of the overall management strategy of an enterprise, can lead to a more efficient operation, which in turn can result in the sustainability of the business.

Employment officers can also benefit from the availability of the job descriptions contained in the NOC when they prepare for an employer visit. As part of the pre-visit research, an experienced employment officer will make note of the key occupations in the enterprise, and will take copies of the job descriptions for these positions to the employer visit. It is a good strategy for the employment officer to invite the employer to validate the requirements of the job positions, in comparison to the more general NOC descriptions. This provides both an excellent starting point for preparing job vacancy notices in the future, as well as conveying the message to the employer that this type of assistance is available from the ESC.

One final application of the coding information contained in NOC is when analysing LMI and preparing reports on trends and other important elements of the analysis. When all providers of LMI are familiar with, and are utilizing, the same occupational classification standards, it is much more likely that the resulting LMI and analysis will be accurate, reliable, and credible. As a key provider of LMI to a variety of stakeholders, the ESC can realize significant benefits when promoting the use of the NOC system and producing all labour market reports based on this standard.



## Annex 1

### A recruitment and job search model

#### Job recruitment search model

How employers with job openings, and potential workers, learn about and find each other is of crucial concern to employment officers

The job search model consists of two triangles. The inverted triangle, Figure 1.1, represents the method used by the employer to announce the vacancy. The matching coloured area on the upright triangle, Figure 1.2, represents the place the jobseeker must be, or the action they must take, in order to become aware of the announced vacancy.

The sequence of levels is generally ordered according to the degree of openness of the announcement and the exclusiveness of the audience, with the most exclusive, i.e. in-house opportunities, at the top of the figure. The various levels do not represent the number of vacancies, size of the audience, or frequency with which the matches occur.

# Providing effective employer services

Figure 1.1 How employers announce vacancies

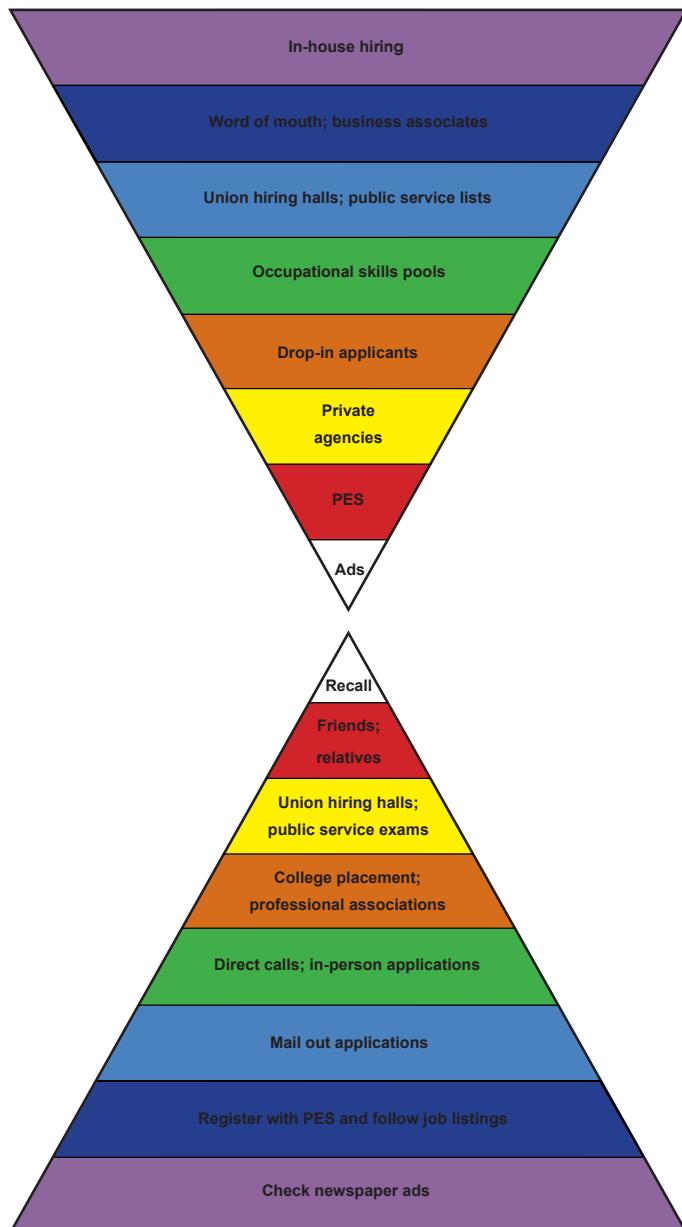


Figure 1.2. How jobseekers hear of vacancies



Annex 2

## **Employer community mapping form – ESC-ECMF**

### Instructions for completion of the ESC-EMF

This form is to be used when conducting a mapping exercise of the enterprises in the ESC area of responsibility, and should become a permanent record to be updated and maintained as required.

The full and legal name of the employer should be entered, along with the industrial code, which can be found in the industry classification code.<sup>14</sup>

Using the list of codes provided in figure 3, all valid reasons for targetting the enterprise should be listed.

Using the list of codes provided in figure 4, indicate all possible reasons for scheduling a marketing visit to the enterprise.

Additional information that might affect the reason for contacting the enterprise, or the types of services that might be suitable to offer, should be recorded in the comments section of the form.

**Figure 3. Reasons for targetting**

Reasons for targetting	
Industry growth	= IG
Industry decline	= ID
Require occupations in demand	= D-Occ
New employer	= New Er
New industry	= New Ind
High staff turnover	= TO
Frequent vacancy cancellations	= VC

**Figure 4. Marketing initiatives**

Marketing initiatives	
Determination of needs	= SND
Marketing jobseekers	= JS
Vacancy notice issues	= VN
Promotion of ESC services	= Promo

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14. Each country should have an industry classification code ideally based on the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC).



## Annex 3

## **Individual employer visit schedule – ESC-IEVS**

## Instructions for completion of the ESC-IEVS

This form is to be used by employment officers when developing their annual employer visit plan. Each employment officer should develop an individual plan and submit it for approval by the ESC manager. While every effort should be made to implement the plan as it is originally developed, flexibility can be exercised. However employment officers should aim to visit a targeted number of enterprises each quarter.

The full and legal name of the employer should be entered in the left hand column.

Indicate in the appropriate column in which quarter (Q1–Q4) the visit will be scheduled.

Using the list of codes provided in figure 5, indicate the main goal(s) of the visit.

Following the visit, the rest of the IEVS form should be completed.

In the comments/outcome section of the form, and using the list of codes provided in figure 6, indicate all possible issues that were identified and discussed during the visit to the enterprise. Briefly indicate any follow-up actions agreed upon.

The date that the visit actually occurred should be recorded.

**Figure 5. Goal of the visit**

Goal of the visit	
Solicit vacancies	= VAC
Determination of needs	= SND
Marketing jobseekers	= JS
Vacancy notice issues	= VN
Promotion of ESC services	= Promo

**Figure 6. Issues identified and discussed**

Issues identified and discussed	
Industry growth	= IG
Industry decline	= ID
Require occupations in demand	= D-Occ
New employer	= New Er
New industry	= New Ind
High staff turnover	= TO
Frequent vacancy cancellations	= VC



## Annex 4

### Format for an employer visit report – ESC-EVR

Name of enterprise visited	Date of visit
Names of those present during the meeting	
Purpose of the visit	
Items discussed, including any issues, problems, or complaints raised by the employer	
ESC service options discussed (if any job vacancy notices were received during the visit; the job titles and JVN number should be included in this report)	
Actions requiring follow-up	
Anticipated timing for the next contact with the employer	Name of employment officer



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## Annex 5

### Job vacancy notice referral and follow-up record – ESC-JVNR

Name of enterprise:

Job title of the job vacancy:

Occupational code:

Name of job-seeker	Occupational code	Date of referral	Outcome of the referral	Follow-up with enterprise				Comments
				Within 24 hours	Within 48 hours	Within five business days	After at least one week	

**Codes for outcome of the referral**

- H = Hired.
- FTR = Failed to report for interview.
- R = Rejected by the employer.
- P = Decision on hiring pending.
- C = Vacancy notice cancelled.



## Annex 6

### Preparing and delivering presentations

There will be times when the employment officer may be asked to make a presentation at an individual enterprise, or to a business association. These are excellent opportunities to promote the services of the ESC; to clarify the role the ESC undertakes in strengthening the labour market; and to gain increased collaboration with employers.

Making a formal presentation may be outside the employment officer's "comfort zone" – however, following a structured approach will help build confidence as well as ensuring a more professional presentation.

#### Understanding the basics

When an invitation is extended to the employment officer, he or she will first need to gather some facts. He or she will need to consider the **source of the request** and how it is articulated, in order to determine the employer's needs. This will help define the **purpose** of the presentation. He or she will also want to consider the potential benefits of making the presentation, and determine what effect would be best for the audience.

Knowing the general composition of the audience will help determine existing knowledge it has about the ESC, thus providing guidance as to the scope of information that should be covered during the presentation. The employment officer should also anticipate the reaction of the audience in terms of any potential issues or concerns that might be raised. This will enable better preparation and responses to these points, should they actually arise.

It is important, when discussing the invitation, to gather as much information as possible regarding timing issues such as the date and time for the meeting, as well as the overall amount of time to be allocated to the presentation, and if there will be time set aside for audience interaction. The actual location of the presentation, the anticipated size of the audience, as well as whether the presentation will be one of several to be given during the meeting, will also provide insight into the overall expectations of the organization.

When invited to make a presentation, the employment officer should begin by gathering answers to five key questions: who – the source of the request and the potential audience; why – the purpose of the request; where – the location of the meeting; when – the timing issues; and, based on these facts, what – the actual content and resources required for the presentation.

Once all these details have been collected, the employment officer will be in a much better position to develop the content of the presentation. He or she will want to consider the nature of the content to be covered, any possible resources that might be available, and anticipate any difficulties in developing the content, such as lack of sufficient time for preparation.

### Preparing the presentation

Experienced presenters will always begin to prepare by developing an outline to provide structure to the presentation. A good model for any presentation includes an introduction that will include some general background on the presenter and the organization he or she represents (in this case the ESC), as well as a short outline of the points to be covered in the presentation. If there will be time at the end of the presentation for questions, the presenter will generally indicate this as a way to forestall questions as they make the presentation.



The introduction will lead directly into the content of the presentation, which should use approximately 70 per cent of the entire allocated time. If there are several distinct topics included in the presentation, there should be a brief summary of each point before moving smoothly into the next topic. When all of the content has been covered, the presenter should quickly summarize all of the key points to emphasize from the presentation, and then conclude by thanking the participants for their attention and opening the floor for discussion.

### **Some points to remember**

When planning a presentation, it is important to decide from the start what key points to cover. It is always best to focus on a few points and cover them well, than try to squeeze too much information into a presentation and either rush through the content or go well beyond the allocated time. Both situations will be very frustrating, both for the audience and the presenter.

Using PowerPoint slides can help keep the presenter on topic, and following the pre-set structure. They can also serve to remind the presenter of what to say, and this can be particularly useful for less experienced or nervous speakers.

However, when using slides there are a few things to keep in mind:

- Slides should be simple and use a combination of graphics and text to maintain interest.
- Slides should not contain every word the presenter will say; only the key points should be on the slide. When there is text on the slide, colours and font size should be legible for audience members at the back of the room.
- Presenters should consider that it will take an average of five to seven minutes to present the points on each slide. Therefore, a 30-minute presentation should have no more than four or five slides.
- Experienced presenters always ensure that they have a hard copy of their slides for use in the event of a power failure or some other technological issue. This means that while the participants may not be able to view the presentation, the presenter will still be able to speak.

It is always important to respect the time. When experienced presenters find that their allocated time is nearly finished, they immediately begin to draw their presentation to a logical conclusion. They may choose to use the remaining time to summarize key points, as well as to indicate that while they were not able to complete the

entire presentation, they would be happy to leave a copy of the full presentation for interested participants to review independently. It is far better to end on time and with a concise summary of the main points, than to rush to finish the full presentation and end inconclusively.

Finally, it is always good practice to have a one-page handout summarizing the key points covered in the presentation. This will serve as a reminder to participants, and can also contain the presenter's name and contact information in case anyone wishes to follow up with additional questions and comments after the meeting.

# **Practitioners' guides on employment service centres**

## **Providing effective employer services**

### **Volume 4**

*Providing effective employer services (Volume 4)* is the third of three procedural manuals on employment services in the collection entitled *Practitioners' guides on employment service centres*. All the manuals in this collection are designed to provide guidance to management and staff in delivering effective and efficient services to their clients.

This guide is aimed at assisting employment service staff in developing a clear understanding of: the role of employment service centres in providing assistance to employers; how to reach out to employers as both clients and partners of the employment service centres; and how to effectively help employers recruit workers to fill job vacancies.

These guides are intended to be used as an ongoing resource by the managers and staff of employment service centres as they execute their mandate to provide fair and accessible employment services to all jobseekers and enterprises who seek their assistance.

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