D4AD | STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING JOBSEEKER TOOLS

Many of the existing efforts to develop effective jobseeker tools have been met with the same challenge: providing actionable, timely, and personalized training and career pathway information to audiences that need it most. Many of these efforts have taken an "if you build it, they will come" approach. They have not focused sufficiently on implementation and outreach to the workers and jobseekers who will use and benefit from the tools and resources. This has resulted in limited success, especially among low-income, lower-skilled, un- and underemployed workers.

The Data for the American Dream (D4AD) initiative focuses on creating jobseeker tools that will have the greatest impact on the lives of our country's most vulnerable workers. The strategies outlined below, based on the work of D4AD sites and partners, provide a brief guide for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers seeking to develop processes for increasing the use, effectiveness, and success of these tools.

Common pitfalls and suggested solutions

Jobseeker tools need to be useful and accessible for jobseekers as well as intermediaries such as coaches, case managers, advisors, and mentors. Because of the varied audiences these tools must cater to, there are a number of common pitfalls that the designers of these tools should avoid. An overview of the most common pitfalls, strategic approaches for avoiding them, and key questions is in the table below. This table can help product managers as they design and implement the use of jobseeker tools.

Common Pitfalls	Strategic Approaches	Key Questions
Lack of a clear problem to be addressed.	• Work with stakeholders to clearly define the problem or need for jobseekers in your area. • Identify the gaps in existing programs and services. • Specify what success looks like and how it will be measured.	• What are the greatest needs facing low-income, lower-skilled, un- or underemployed jobseekers in our area? • What are the existing programs and services this tool can be integrated into, supplement and strengthen? • What makes this tool different and how does it address specific challenges jobseekers face? • How will you evaluate the impact of the tool on jobseekers and the community you hope to serve?

Common Pitfalls	Strategic Approaches	Key Questions
No clarity as to who the intended audience of the tool is.	• Identify what groups are experiencing the problem you have defined. Clearly name those groups as the intended audiences. • Test your assumptions about the characteristics of people that are experiencing the problem you are seeking to alleviate. • Gather demographic data, data on usage of similar tools, and data on participation in programs you can weave the tool into. • Develop a clear implementation plan, including intermediaries (e.g. coaches, case managers, advisors, and mentors), based on data (quantitative and qualitative).	• What meaningful subgroups exist within the target population, and how might their need for and usage of the tools differ from one another (e.g., rural vs. urban)? • What images will resonate with the target population? • How will you track levels of usage and engagement of key user segments of the target population?
Tool design that is not useful or accessible to the intended audience.	• Learn from intermediaries who understand the experiences of the target population. • Seek input from a representative sample of the populations you are aiming to serve and test your assumptions about barriers they face. • Understand how the tool will complement existing resources and processes already in use to serve the target populations' needs. • Test the tool with end users, make changes based on feedback, and retest. • Make a clear plan for how the tool will be offered to the intended audience.	• What is their range of access to technology and the internet, as well as their range of computer literacy? • What are the best formats to communicate with this audience? Social media, text, email or even print? • Are there segments within the target population that should be communicated with differently? • What does your audience prioritize?
Not involving intermediaries in the development and implementation of tools.	• Partner with, and learn from, organizations that have regular contact with the people in your target population who need the most help. • Remember that partnerships are two-way streets and that the benefits of the partnership need to flow in both directions. • Ensure that your tool is complementary to existing tools and services that are effective and doesn't create confusion or competition among intermediaries.	• What relationships of trust can you leverage to increase your reach and impact? • What are the workflows of the intermediaries? • What are the pain points intermediaries are experiencing? • What are the current solutions intermediaries are using and what are those solutions lacking? • What are the characteristics that may be associated with different needs and pain points (e.g. working with rural vs. urban communities)? • What form will the tool need to take to alleviate pain points and integrate with workflows?

Resources

Following are resources for creating effective consumer information tools and maximizing their impact.

• Data Sharing Agreements: Moving Beyond Compliance to Ensure Effective Governance

• Communicating with Vulnerable Workers About Resources, Training, and Improving Job Prospects

• Making Data Work for Low Income, Lower Skilled, Unemployed, and Underemployed Individuals

• Job Seeker Carnival Infographic

• Ten Strategies for Reaching out to Vulnerable Workers

• Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Workers and Workforce Development Systems