

Team Building from an Unlikely Source

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Short Communication

Building organizational capacity is needed for profit and sustainability. Diversity is recognized as one way to achieve the desired outcome because the unique culture, traditions and customs are supportive of the hospitality industry. An emerging diverse population is now becoming a part of the industry, but not necessarily embraced [1]. This sector is incarcerated individuals who are making a reentry into society. Trades are being taught and certification earned, by offenders who truly are looking to reinvent themselves [2]. Using this population should be considered as an outlet for team building because there are advantages in the concept.

Why Should We Care?

Organizations need to take notice and consider hiring the offender due to the tremendous cost states allocate housing, meals, medical, and education cost. Recidivism has long been a problem in the penal system [3]. The school of thought is to educate the offender aiding them to make a better decision, and become a contributing member of society [4]. Offenders who complete a vocational program during the time served, showed 80% of all academic students who completed the programs did not return to the penal system [2]. Furthermore, 91% of all vocational certified offenders were still employed in the free world within five years post release.

Post release employment was the most critical predictor of recidivism amongst free world offenders [4]. A significant number of employed offenders will most likely be found in food service operations, and temporary agencies. This group of potential employees will face inadequate education, a lack of skill sets, little to none interpersonal skills or cognitive skills prior to being educated in the system. Some problem may align to previous employment issues before conviction and incarceration [4], but programs in hospitality and tourism, restaurant management, and culinary arts has made progress in changing the employment outlook.

Addressing the Problem

One way offenders are becoming more employable is completing the most appropriate vocational course available based on individual assessments of current skills. A meta-analysis to examine the association and effectiveness of correctional education, improving the chance of gainful employment post release is finding those odds were 13% higher than those who did not participate in prison educational programs [5].

Research suggest among the risk factors influencing recidivism is employment status, and educational attainment. Other factors include race, gender, socioeconomic status, as well as marital status. Reaching the goal of employment helps because this population still needs to provide for a family [6]. Historically poor patterns of bad decision and poor self-esteem can be turned around by investing in the human value. This also will help society, and the organization.

This group of potential employees learns to be committed to an employer. Cross straining is encouraged, following rules and policy is presented to the student as critical to their success, offenders are taught to take pride in self and the job. In addition, they know the days of a

quick turnaround in a job is going to keep them from moving up the career chain, and they realize that doing the job the best they can will be rewarded. This diverse group may reduce turnover for the hospitality organization and produce a more efficient work environment with a higher output of completed tasks.

Conclusion

Most will have a felony conviction. A second chance to be a part of a fast growing organization with possibilities of advancement may be all they seek in the free world. This is a win-win proposition for all involved.

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