

BREAKING OUT OF THE CETA MOLD

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I must confess that ever since the PSIP program was first announced in May 1978, I have been alternating between flights of soaring optimism and utter pessimism and despair--but for perhaps quite different reasons than many of you.

On the one hand I see Title VII and, more important, the PIC's authorized thereby as an unparalleled opportunity to forge a missing link in our national industrial training system as we prepare to enter the 1980's; alternatively, they may become merely a vehicle to peddle a plate full of warmed-over programs which harken back to the ineffective efforts undertaken in the late 1960's and throughout the 1970's.

What are the possibilities and probabilities for PSIP? The stated purposes of PSIP are:

To foster the involvement and assistance of the business community in the development of local CETA programs (1) to secure more private sector jobs for the economically disadvantaged and (2) to attract greater private participation in all aspects of local employment and training activities.

It is also a demonstration Title, the purpose of which, is

To demonstrate the effectiveness of a variety of approaches... over a two-year period.

I interpret this to mean that something new should be tried--not just past programs of little substance or value replicated.

What about the past? What can we learn from it? I think we are all aware that the private sector approach to training embodied in Title VII is not new and that the PIC approach was adopted to address some fundamental issues that have previously been ignored in the operation of CETA. It might be useful to refresh our minds as to what some of these problems are. The

following quotations have been taken from a 1975 report on the direction CETA programs were then taking, and a 1978 paper which discusses the relationship of CETA to the nation's industrial training system.

One does not have to read very much of the literature emanating from the CETA system or attend very many of their meetings to understand that most of the well intentioned bureaucrats in the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and the local administrators of the CETA system are only interested in private employers and industrial training to the extent that they can be used to accomplish the primary objective of CETA--which is placement of the unemployed and disadvantaged in jobs. Little else really matters--even good training, and certainly the employer's concerns about it or his ability to deliver it are for many prime sponsors of little real concern. Consequently, there is a wide chasm existing between the CETA system and private employers and their world of industrial training, and the limited objectives and rigid, narrow ethos which permeate CETA make it almost unbridgeable. The consequences of this problem are only now beginning to be recognized--in terms of the failure of the CETA system to elicit the support and involvement of the private sector.

Washington IFTDO Paper, June 1978

- The overwhelming concern and narrow focus of manpower programs on the disadvantaged as clients and upon providing pre-employment, counseling, and placement services for them, have resulted in a widespread lack of understanding of employers, their manpower concerns, and the manpower and training problems extant within the workplace--on the part of CETA manpower planners and administrators.
- There is a corresponding failure on the part of most CETA manpower planners and program administrators to recognize that the successful resolution of the manpower development problems of the disadvantaged must include real concern for and meaningful programs designed to deal with the manpower practices and environment within the employing organizations.
- There is a persistent refusal to accept as legitimate, and hence worthy of support under existing manpower legislation, those programs and services designed to deal with the needs of the employed workforce, particularly if they are delivered through the employer.
- The nation's existing manpower system, including the recently created CETA manpower planning machinery at the local level, lacks suitable institutional mechanisms (i.e., a delivery system) to deal effectively with either the manpower management and training problems of the disadvantaged ~~■~~ arising in the workplace, or those experienced by the employed workforce generally.

*Manpower Advisory Session in the
Workplace: A Mission, July in National
Manpower Policy, 1977*



- The communication and other linkages which should exist between those engaged in public manpower planning and program operations, as represented by CETA, and those involved in the broader spheres of training and development in industry as well as the productivity and the quality of working life are virtually nonexistent--with detrimental consequences for all concerned.

Others have also identified some of the specific weaknesses of past efforts to involve the private sector.

1. Read from Brown article
2. Cite the Chamber of Commerce Survey results
3. Cite speakers at recent NAB Conference in Washington
4. Cite Lloyd Hand article in Enterprise

Based upon these surveys and the comments cited a moment ago, what might be some of the characteristics which we could look for as a basis for predicting success or failure of the PSIP program?

- Failure:
- 1) Continuing to involve and focus efforts only on large firms
 - 2) Continuing to emphasize placement in low-level jobs
 - 3) Devoting all program efforts to central cities
 - 4) Devoting all program efforts to the manufacturing, finance, and transportation sectors
 - 5) Focusing entirely on the employment and training problems of the disadvantaged and ignoring the problems of the employer
 - 6) Not trying to understand the manpower practices and environment in employing organizations
 - 7) Refusing to be concerned with the manpower management and training problems of the disadvantaged in the workplace
 - 8) Not attempting to develop linkages with the broader spheres of training and development in industry
 - 9) Not accepting as legitimate the delivery of any programs or services designed to deal with the full-range of training and manpower management needs of employers
 - 10) Depending on those organizations to help implement PSIP and give advice to the PIC whose previous record has demonstrated very little innovation and success

- 11) Not trying to understand what "good" training is but rather putting emphasis on placement without regard to the quality of training provided *or the ability of the employer to provide it.*

- Success:
- 1) Involving small businesses in all aspects of PSIP activities
 - 2) Helping businesses develop upward mobility positions and career ladders
 - 3) Developing programs for rural areas
 - 4) Expanding program efforts to include other sectors, for example, the services sector
 - 5) Placing considerable emphasis on the problems of employers
 - 6) Trying to understand the manpower practices and environment in employing organizations
 - 7) Being concerned with the problems of the disadvantaged in the workplace
 - 8) Developing linkages with the broader spheres of training and development in industry
 - 9) Being prepared to actually deliver programs and technical assistance services which will deal with all of the substantive training and development needs of employers and not just the needs of the disadvantaged
 - 10) Understanding what "good" training encompasses and insisting that all such activities measure up to this standard

Can we expect to succeed in accomplishing the objectives of Title VII if we use the old methods--even with the addition of a PIC--or is something more needed?

It is at this point that I shall let my optimism run wild to suggest what might be possible if we really want to be innovative in our use of the PSIP--and be successful. I will also let my pessimism hold sway for a moment to suggest what some of the other alternatives might bring about.

As I see it, there are basically three possibilities open to the PIC's under the PSIP program. They can become:

- 1) "Another Advisory Committee" in the CETA system;

- 2) A marketing arm for the CETA Planning Council whose primary purpose is to "sell" private employers on CETA;
- 3) A vehicle on which to build a full-fledged Private Industry Training Service which can be used to meet the full-range of training and development needs of the private business community in the geographic area covered by the PIC.

My own assessment, for whatever it is worth, is this:

If the PIC becomes just another advisory committee, akin to the Youth Advisory Council (or even the JSIP), I predict a short and ^{ineffectual} ignominious life for it--maybe six months or a year will pass before the membership decides that they have more important things to do. Small businessmen especially don't have the time to be involved in these kinds of unproductive activities.

If the PIC becomes primarily a marketing arm to sell private employers on CETA, it will soon meet the same fate as NAB has--a well intentioned, but stagnant bureaucracy struggling to justify its existence--with the same likelihood of failure experienced earlier. If most PIC's follow this option, I would predict that after two years the PSIP program will experience a quiet, uneventful demise. That is about the length of time it takes for public-spirited citizens from large businesses to lose their enthusiasm and look for other community activities to engage in.

What about the third alternative?

It is my firm belief that the third alternative offers the best chance for the successful long-term implementation of the PSIP program. And, even more important than this, it offers an exciting opportunity to create a framework for a permanent system which can meet the training and development challenges U.S. employers will face in the coming decade.

In my judgment if we are to succeed with the PSIP program and take advantage of the opportunity it affords us, we need to adopt a radically

different perspective on the role of the PIC and the philosophical basis underpinning its operations.

The philosophical basis I would propose for the operation of PIC's is based upon the following proposition: PIC's that devote their major efforts to marketing CETA will probably fail; whereas, PIC's that devote their major efforts to meeting the overall training and development needs of private employers will, at the same time, succeed in accomplishing CETA Title VII objectives. (For the religiously minded, you might compare this proposition with the advice of Jesus in Matthew Chapter 10: 39.)

It is my contention that if Title VII is to be successful--and last for more than two years in any significant way--the PIC's must break out of the constraints of the CETA system and its narrow view of training. They must become in actual fact, private industry training organizations whose primary objective is to serve the training and development needs of the business organizations in the area served. In the process of accomplishing this objective, they will be able to more effectively serve the needs of the disadvantaged as intended by Title VII.

Is such an approach really feasible or possible or even legitimate according to the regulations? My unequivocal answer is yes to both parts of the question. Toward this end I believe the most important paragraph in the Title VII regulation for PIC's is:

679.2 G(5) "Nothing in this section is intended to limit the functions of the PIC..." (Read Section)

Wouldn't you agree that this is a pretty broad charter?

If you were to adopt this concept and philosophy for your PIC, what might be some of the characteristics of the resulting organization?

First, the PIC would have a Council membership made up of persons whose vision is broad enough to understand the full potential open to the PIC, and who have the interest, time, and perserverance needed to mold the PIC into the kind of organization it is capable of becoming. Their function would be that of an active Board of Directors.

Second, the PIC would have an independetⁿ staff with operational responsibilities. (If the PIC operations will not involve enough work to justify a full-time independent staff, it will only be operating in the first or second mode.) The staff would include some professionally competent HRD specialists who thoroughly understand all facets of training and development. (They should be competent to conduct training needs analysis and evaluations, design training programs, and have a good knowledge of adult learning theory, instructional methodology, the working of internal labor markets, organizational development, job redesign and upward mobility systems.)

Third, the PIC would be incorporated as a legal entity to ensure that it has a life independent of the CETA system. Incorporation would enable the organization to develop and deliver whatever programs of technical assistance and training they may choose to do so.

Fourth, the PIC would identify the broad range of functions it will direct its staff to perform as it sets about to become a bona fide, area-wide Industry Training Service to the private-for-profit sector.

What are some of the functions that an area-wide Training and Development Service could perform for the private-for-profit sector? The following are indicative of the kinds of functions which I believe could and should be included:

- 1) Obtain information on current and future manpower requirements by occupation and specific skill content;

- 2) Develop training standards and training syllabuses relating to the requirements of area firms;
- 3) Provide technical advice and assistance on training matters directly to firms in the area requesting such assistance;
- 4) Provide a basis for the exchange of training experiences and techniques among firms;
- 5) Support experimental and demonstration and other applied research of common value to the area firms' training problems;
- 6) Design, develop and assist in the operation of group and other cooperative inter-firm training ventures. These would be especially valueable to smaller firms;
- 7) Act as a training catalyst to the private employers in the area through a variety of information and communication programs;
- 8) Develop close linkages with appropriate professional training and development groups such as ASTD and universities or colleges having staff with technical expertise in training and HRD and the extension capability to make such expertise available to you;
- 9) Encourage and assist in the development and adoption within business organizations of upgrading, upward mobility, and other models, techniques or programs which will enhance the human resource utilization in those firms;
- 10) Wherever possible and feasible incorporate those functions identified in the CETA regulations as being appropriate for a PIC and the area Industry Training Service to carry out.

What becomes obvious from the forgoing elaboration of functions is that I believe the PIC should be conceptualized on a broad basis. The

CETA funding and objectives should merely serve as the point of departure for the creation of a much more extensive industrial training organization which will function primarily in the interests of and serve the specific needs of the private sector employers located in the area covered. It should be so structured and operated that it could continue to serve these needs even in the absence of CETA. The CETA resources should be looked upon as merely seed money to help create what you as private employers want to create to serve your own needs.

In Summary - -

It is my firm belief that without some creative thinking the PIC will be nothing more than another advisory council or marketing arm for CETA--two roles which will result in a deservedly short life. On the other hand, if those of you who are going to serve on the PIC's catch the vision of how the PIC machinery can be used to create something more substantive and more innovative--which can serve your own interests in a rather more fundamental way--then the PIC's will be, and deserve to be, around after the two-year life of Title VII. I submit that only through such a method, or one equally radical, will the stated objectives of the PSIP program be realized. And should you, the membership of the PIC's choose to focus on the training needs and interests of employers--first and foremost--and create an organization capable of meeting those needs, not only will the objectives of CETA be realized, but we will have forged a missing link in our national employment and training system--a link which will be vital to you individually as businessmen, as well as to our nation's overall economic well being. I challenge you to undertake such a task.