CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN

WIOA INNOVATION IN ACTION

ROUND 3
2017
**CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN**

**CCD** is a generative process that starts with people and ends with surprising answers tailor-made to put our customers’ needs at the center.

We can use it to directly learn from the communities we serve and to rapidly come up with innovative new concepts, quickly prototype them, and then make our ideas come to life with results for our customers.

### Round 3 Event Timeline

- **January 2017**: Launch Webinar
- **February – March 2017**: 7-Week Free Online Human Centered Design Course
- **April – May 2017**: 5-Week Prototype Phase
- **October 2017**: Learning Exchange and Symposium
- **Fall 2017**: Ongoing Peer Mentoring Effort

### Key Questions and Challenges

- **How might we design services and programs for out-of-school youth that will engage them and produce great outcomes?**
- **How might we improve the customer experience and outcomes for our shared One-Stop Customers?**
- **How might we put employers in the center of sector strategies and career pathway work?**

### 17 Teams from 6 Regions Participated in Round 3

- **Region 1**: 3 (18%)
- **Region 2**: 1 (6%)
- **Region 3**: 2 (12%)
- **Region 4**: 3 (18%)
- **Region 5**: 2 (12%)
- **Region 6**: 6 (35%)
THE OPPORTUNITY

THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) gives us the opportunity to rethink the way we deliver services to our job seekers and business customers. The change starts with the questions we’re asking ourselves.

WHAT IF INSTEAD OF ASKING:
How can we engage customers?

WE ASKED:
What do our customers really need and want?

Putting our customers at the center of our design process changes the questions we ask and the outcomes we achieve. WIOA asks us for transformational change, which requires thinking about issues in a new way.

What is Human Centered Design?
A collaborative, discovery-based journey.

- **Research**: Get inspired by the people you’re serving. Start by listening to people to get new ideas about how to design for them.
- **Synthesize**: Identify patterns and surprising insights to inspire new opportunities for design.
- **Ideate**: Brainstorm new ways to serve your customers.
- **Prototype**: Try out your ideas and get feedback from customers – so you can revise your prototypes and get more feedback.
- **Test**: Try out a pilot program and experiment with ways to implement your new ideas.
CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN (CCD) is a concept used by both private industry and non-profits to improve user experiences and outcomes. It was introduced to the U.S. Department of Labor through regional work in the Employment and Training Administration’s (ETA) Region 6 to design more effective services for the long-term unemployed. Being a customer centered designer is about believing that as long as you stay grounded in what you’ve learned from people, your team can arrive at new solutions that will bring innovation to our workforce system.

As part of technical assistance offered as the public workforce system implements WIOA, a National Challenge was launched which encouraged states, regions, and local workforce boards to form teams who immersed themselves in their customers’ environments and re-designed services based on observations of this research. The Challenge provided access to a free seven-week online customer centered design course, and coaches from High Impact Partners were assigned to provide support throughout the Round 3 Challenge. An estimated 17 teams from 11 states signed up to take on the Round 3 Challenge and progress through the five phases of the project.

Each round of the Challenge kicked off with a launch webinar and included five phases which provided teams with support along the way. After the launch webinar, teams completed a seven-week online course, followed by five weeks of implementing their design prototypes. The Round 3 Challenge culminated in a Learning Exchange & Symposium at the U.S. Department of Labor in October 2017, where top teams shared their project learnings and design impacts with key Department leaders and federal staff.
Customer Centered Design Challenge Requirements

**STEP 1: BUILD A TEAM**
Customer Centered Design is a team-based initiative. Teams comprise four to ten people who represent a broad range of stakeholders and partners. Teams may include Workforce Development Council staff, American Job Center staff, and staff from partner agencies including Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, Organized Labor, and Community-Based Organizations.

**STEP 2: SELECT A CHALLENGE QUESTION**
The Customer Centered Design Challenge Question is rooted in partnership and innovation, leading with a “how might we” mindset.

1. How might we improve the customer experience and outcomes for our shared One-Stop Customers?
2. How might we put employers in the center of our Sector Strategies and Career Pathways work?
3. How might we design services and programs for out-of-school youth that will engage them and produce great outcomes?
4. How might we design and accelerate cross-sector leadership training for the workforce system?

**STEP 3: COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION GROUP SPACE**
Teams collaborate on four major assignments required for course completion.

- Week 1: Form Your Design Team
- Week 2: Plan Your Research
- Week 3: Opportunities for Design
- Week 4: Share Your Solution
- Week 5: Design Kit: The Course for Human Centered Design Pre-Course Survey

The Workforce Innovation Group Space is a virtual platform open to all team members to share ideas and questions. Peers and coaches offer feedback and additional resources such as tools and templates.

**STEP 4: CONDUCT PROTOTYPING AND TESTING**
Teams spend five weeks in the prototype and testing phase, where they implement their learnings and document their process.

**STEP 5: APPLY TO THE LEARNING EXCHANGE AND SYMPOSIUM**
Teams who have completed the course and prototype phase are welcome to submit an application to the Learning Exchange and Symposium. If approved, the team is invited to present their project to their peers and Department of Labor leaders.
Challenge Top 3 Key Takeaways

1. **LISTENING TO THE CUSTOMER IS CRITICAL TO INNOVATION.**
   By listening to and empathizing with their customers – whether out-of-school youth, employers, or individual jobseekers in an American Job Center – teams identify needs and unmet expectations they had not realized were there.

2. **IT TAKES COMMITMENT TO BUILD A TEAM, AND IT TAKES TIME.**
   Teams often struggle, especially early on, to find the time to meet as a group and work through the course work and prototyping process. Competing priorities and schedules make coming together challenging, but the outcomes are worth the effort.

3. **CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN IS A GAME CHANGER FOR THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM.**
   Putting the customer at the center of service design dramatically changes the service delivery paradigm. It is a new way of thinking that has the potential to transform our entire system and our mindset.
LEARNING EXCHANGE AND SYMPOSIUM: SELECTED TEAMS AND PROJECTS

Of the 17 teams who participated in the course, five applied to present at the Learning Exchange and Symposium. A group of Department of Labor officials reviewed the team proposals and approved all five teams. In their own words, the following Customer Centered Design teams offered personal accounts of their participation in the challenge.

CUSTOMER-FOCUSED TEAM PROJECTS — Team Voices —

Focus: CAREER EDUCATION & TRAINING CERTIFICATIONS

GROW YOUR FUTURE – Edwardsville, Illinois
Team members represented the Building Illinois’ Bioeconomy (BIB) Consortium, the county employment and training and One-Stop agency, an adult and experiential learning nonprofit, and a university.

THE CHALLENGE
HOW MIGHT WE – Provide more coordinated workforce education and career opportunities regionally?

PROJECT OVERVIEW
The challenge we undertook was to integrate One-Stop services beyond the agencies of one county. Through research, our team discovered the need for pooling resources and providing clear training to employment pathways, showing where education leads and where jobs are. The project focused on awareness and preparedness for high-skill bioeconomic industry careers at multiple levels. Our holistic approach sought to harness the collective strengths and resources of the postsecondary institutions that are part of the BIB Consortium, the county-based agencies where these schools are situated and those in additional neighboring counties in Southern Illinois and Eastern Missouri, as well as additional employer and industry, community-based and nonprofit, and governmental stakeholders.

Our Vision
- Develop a well-trained, high-quality workforce by merging the collective strengths and resources of each partner school with a network of regional employers.
- Prepare residents of Illinois and neighboring states for in-demand, high-wage jobs in the bioeconomy.

A major barrier is that those seeking workforce education and training differ significantly in terms of their needs and learning stages. Groups served by the BIB Consortium have included Trade Adjustment
Assistance (TAA) eligible workers, veterans, displaced workers, and ethnic minorities. They may be traditional college students, adult learners, transfer students seeking hands-on experience or articulating community college certifications into four year degrees. For each of these categories, lack of awareness about existing opportunities and resources is a common deterrent to access.

**PROCESS**

The Grow Your Future project was pursued in accordance with the model developed through a TAACCCT grant to the BIB. We intended to apply our collective approach to the task of providing customized information and flexible programs to the three target audiences conceptualized by the BIB Consortium’s technical assistance provider, namely the traditional student audience, the betterment audience, and the immediate need audience.

**Inspiration & Research**

In our research phase, we assessed the interests and opportunities each partner had to offer, looking for input in a variety of ways. We had both structured and informal conversations with employers, industry groups, and community organizations. Further information gathering included stakeholder dialogue sessions, a workforce development summit organized by the BIB Consortium, and follow-up stakeholder webinars. We also learned from experts with established projects, functional models, and best practices to share, such as the Employ Florida Banner Centers, Tennessee Reconnect, and the Pacific Northwestern Regional Centers of Excellence.

**Key Insights – We saw the need for:**

- **Collaboration** – Creating joint approaches among partners in higher education, employers, community groups, and economic development.
- **Aspiration** – Providing our populations with a clear vision of career pathways, showing them where education leads and where the jobs are.
- **Engagement** – Engaging with those in need of education and training in pursuit of a living wage and family-sustaining employment.

To address the challenges presented, we reached in two directions: toward our stakeholders, with the idea of a database of these various groups and a mechanism for their ongoing engagement; and toward our population, with the idea of targeted information packages and mapped career pathways for each category of job seekers.
Implementation would involve strengthening and growing our network of partners through ongoing meetings and vigorously disseminating the employment information packages to our audiences through that network. We planned to assess our practices by soliciting feedback from partners and students and by consulting with regional and national assistance providers and model providers.

PROTOTYPE
Our research and insights inspired us to prototype a Workforce Education and Career One-Stop that would connect high school students and their families with education and training opportunities leading to employment in high-pay sectors. Supported by all our partners, it would use a case-management approach with the case managers providing the connection between partners.

The project has two main components:

- **Awareness** of high-skills industry careers raised through targeted activities at multiple levels: K-12 classroom modules and field trips; employer visits and information sessions for adults.
- **Preparedness** for these careers fostered by connecting populations, especially the underserved, to BIB Consortium education/training programs and providing opportunities for rolling enrollment, online learning, experiential learning, and stackable credentialing.

MOVING FORWARD
While low awareness of workforce education options continues to pose a challenge, we now have an enhanced ability to address it utilizing our newly strengthened network of committed partners and their collective resources. We will continue to test, readjust, and confirm the viability of our practices in doing so. We hope to remain sustainable with continued TAACCCT grant support and WIB resources, supplemented by additional grant writing and the institutionalization of approaches.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES
The BIB Consortium and its additional collaborators from employment and training agencies, employers and industry, and community-based and nonprofit organizations have been better able to pool resources and work together since the project started. With input from its additional collaborators and labor market data, the BIB Consortium has devised a set of career ladders which clearly showcase titles of living wage jobs in the bioeconomy, and education and training programs leading to these jobs. These career ladders and additional BIB outreach materials are now being utilized to inform the emerging and incumbent workforce, as well as laid off workers in various settings regionally.

Case managers of employment and training agencies and Headstart programs have been trained in regards to educational outreach by the BIB Consortium technical assistance provider. The case manager of the consortium has completed a tour of the Southern Illinois and Eastern Missouri WIOA employment and training agencies to ensure BIB educational offerings are closely connected with these agencies. Additionally, our team has participated with information booths in tens of regional fairs and community-based events this past year.
LONG-TERM IMPACT
The program is extending its scope to populations in Illinois and Missouri, who are being encouraged to join BIB Consortium education programs and bioeconomy careers. Specifically, the project has reached the following groups with information about BIB programs and bioeconomy careers:

- Hundreds of employment and training agency customers.
- Tens of TAA eligible workers, such as those laid off from the Granite City, IL, steel mill.
- Tens of Headstart parents in East St. Louis, IL, and other communities.
- Hundreds of 8-12 grades students in regional schools.

An increasing number of regional employers hire BIB Consortium program graduates, including: Phillips 66, Green Plains, Illinois American Water, and Missouri American Water, among others, and have strongly expressed their interest in hiring additional graduates, particularly women and ethnic minorities.

Due to the collaborations fostered by the project, last year and this year, the vocational education program in drinking water and waste water management at the Environmental Resources Training Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, which is part of BIB Consortium programming, has grown both in numbers and in diversity of students. Many TAA eligible workers and several Headstart parents have enrolled in this program, or in the Process Operation Technology program at Lewis and Clark Community College, upon attending information sessions and visiting facilities as part of the Grow Your Future project.

The Grow Your Future project has been recognized with a prestigious “Focus St. Louis What’s Right with the Region” award in the Emerging Initiatives category, which is testimony to the quality of the project and its sustainable development potential.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY – Norristown, Pennsylvania
This two-team duo comprised representatives from the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board, the Pennsylvania state One-Stop, a workforce development consultant and contracted One-Stop, and the local community college. Our audience was the staffs and customers of the team organizations and those of local workforce development agencies, organizations, and training providers.

THE CHALLENGE
HOW MIGHT WE – Connect industry-recognized credentials to PA-approved training programs for Montgomery County?

PROJECT OVERVIEW
We focused our How Might We question on connecting certifications to training programs. Our research indicated that customers needed support in navigating their way through the training system. Available materials were not specific enough to be helpful to staff or their customers. We reached out to representatives from the WIB, CareerLink, county community college and the One-Stop operator to participate in the initial training prototype. Using lists of high-priority occupations and approved training programs, the team prototyped information to increase both career coaches’ and customers’ understanding of credentials, identification of specific credentials that can be earned, their impact on earnings and relevance to career pathways.
PROCESS
We used the PA high-priority occupations and PA-approved training programs lists as the starting point for our research. We found that the website offered only general designations (diploma, recognized industry credential) when displaying expected training outcomes. Interviews with customers and staff revealed a need for more specific information. Looking at two themes – credentials and career coaching – from the point of view of both our One-Stop customers and our career coaches, we learned that:

Customers need:
- Support in navigating through the entire training system, from assessment to program enrollment, and perhaps additional services to overcome barriers they may encounter.
- Awareness of the high-priority occupations in the area, so they can choose the appropriate training program and acquire the necessary credentials.

Career coaches need:
- Routes for connecting assessment results to local high-priority occupations to help each customer develop a viable career plan and get the training and credentials they need.

Customers and career coaches need:
- More comprehensive information about credentials, their distinctions, their impact on earnings, and their connection to career pathways.
- Easily digested materials offering all the information that will help them make informed decisions.

We researched several sources to determine the credentials, certificates, or certifications needed for the occupations connected to existing training programs. With this information in hand, we drafted a spreadsheet as a quick reference for staff. It listed training providers, courses/programs, and specific credentials.

While this resource would be useful internally, we felt that something more was required. We decided that the customer and coach needs we discovered would be further satisfied by a training vehicle that outlined all the requirements for and avenues to customer employment goals. We sought to fulfill this by creating prototype presentations to test with staff and customers. We developed pre- and post-test evaluations to solicit feedback with which we could adjust our models.

PROTOTYPE
To provide a clear and succinct explanation of the paths to high-priority occupations, we developed a training system in the form of two PowerPoint presentations – one for staff and coaches and one for customers – to be used in workshops on credentials and career pathways. Each would describe:
**Credentials** – The specific types, the differences between them, their value overall, their connection to earnings potential, and their relevance to career pathways.

**PA High-Priority Occupations** – What they are, the training and credentials they require, and how they determine the approved training program providers.

**Career Pathways** – Explanation of the three major career clusters for Montgomery County (healthcare, information technology, advanced manufacturing) and their requirements.

The staff version would additionally provide an overview of the Customer Centered Design project to offer insight into our development process.

The prototype would be incorporated into all areas of our workforce service system. It would be shown to new hires as part of orientation and would become a part of the regular workshop schedule for CareerLink customers. Staff would be guided by it in their outreach to training providers to ensure that their programs lead to industry-recognized certifications or licenses.

The goal is that all groups – CareerLink customers, EARN customers, veterans, people with disabilities, and youth – be made aware of career pathways and the need to attain credentials to achieve sustainable employment.

**MOVING FORWARD**

Since the PA Department of Workforce Information and Analysis changes the list of High Priority Occupations (HPO) each year, the list of approved courses also changes. We have since updated our chart on HPOs to match the 2017 state list. We continue to become aware of credentialing agencies and credentials needed for employment through information supplied by employers.

**SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES**

Prior to the conversations that took place during the CCD process, staff was not aware of some of the credentials and the awarding agencies. They now have a better grasp of career pathways and credentials and a more robust knowledge base with which to assist customers in making informed career decisions. Likewise, training providers were not always cognizant of career pathways and their role in the customer’s career ladder. They are now better equipped to offer programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials, while coaches more fully understand the expected outcomes of the training programs provided.

**LONG-TERM IMPACT**

Responses to evaluations, which we have summarized, along with comments from staff and anecdotal evidence shared by career coaches, have demonstrated the impact of our work on staff, coaches, customers, and partners. Career coaches are using the results of our team’s research to inform customers about the courses and credentials needed for employment. Staff is using the information on credentials and HPOs in counseling customers. They are also using the employment data to illustrate the benefits of acquiring post-secondary credentials.
Our partners have asked our team to present the results of our project to them. We have completed or have planned presentations to Goodwill Industries, the staff of a local high school, and the counselors and workforce department of the Community College.

We will be able to see the long-term impact when we calculate the number of people who have gone to training and the programs that were funded through WIOA. We may use the CCD process in the future to effect other changes at the One-Stop.

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**Focus: EMPLOYERS**

**ARIZONA H.E.A.T (HELPING EMPLOYERS ACQUIRE TALENT) – Phoenix, Arizona**

The Arizona H.E.A.T. team members include workforce partners that support the state's employers and jobseekers in different ways – those having direct interface with constituents as well as those supporting policy and tools used by all workforce partners.

**THE CHALLENGE**

**HOW MIGHT WE** – Put employers in the center of sector strategies and career pathways work?

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The team identified that sector conveners and participating employers needed reliable sector-specific information to support data-driven decision making. The team prototyped a standardized sector-specific data tool box to support each of the state's sector partnerships.

Our initial approach to the challenge question began with what we knew:

- Sector initiatives struggle to keep momentum and engagement.
- Workforce agencies' role is to support sector partnerships that develop from industry initiatives.
- Employer engagement wanes when a company has staffing changes.

Our implicit assumption was that employer engagement could be supported with online tools, since we believed that the time commitment of in-person meetings would be a discouraging factor for that option. What we found was the opposite, along with the fact that businesses lack the data needed to give the sector, as a whole, a competitive edge.

**PROCESS**

The challenge of the process was establishing a shared knowledge of what sector data is actually available and aligning that reality with the data needs of the sector partnership. Our research plan to uncover engagement factors included a three-pronged approach:

- Surveys of employers to learn what factors would support their participation in sector partnerships.
- Interviews with sector partnership champions, sector conveners, and educators.
- Observations we made attending a Health Sector Partnership meeting.
Three themes emerged out of our research. All sector partners need to listen to each other to gain a common understanding. Data is needed on a regular basis and would benefit from being standardized for all sector partnerships rather than being furnished on an ad hoc basis. And finally, there must be consistency throughout all aspects of sector partnerships – from meeting times to defining employee skill sets. We transformed an insight associated with each of these three themes into its own “how might we” statement.

**Insight** – Sector strategies are unique to each area and industry. Strategies should be based on an understanding of the specific needs of each sector.

**How Might We** – Support sector members in defining the sector’s needs?

**Insight** – Detailed data on industries that define each of the sectors is only compiled on an ad hoc basis.

**How Might We** – Develop a data-gathering tool box?

**Insight** – A lack of follow-through and sporadic meetings leads to a lack of employer involvement in sector initiatives.

**How Might We** – Support regular communication that would enhance employer involvement in sector initiatives?

Our investigations also disproved our assumption that online engagement would be a useful tool for connecting with sector partners. On the contrary, we found that value was placed on sector partnerships sustained by in-person meetings, and that successful sector partnerships have dedicated conveners. They also showed that such meetings are venues for collaboratively addressing common goals and challenges. In general, our initial ideas for supporting businesses involved in sector strategies differed from what the sector conveners (our customers) wanted.

We reviewed each of our How Might We questions and voted on possible solutions using innovation and potential for success as our criteria.

**PROTOTYPE**

Our choice was to prototype a sector-specific “Data Tool Box” designed to support each of Arizona’s sector partnerships. The proposal made sense in view of the fact that our survey uncovered the need for sector-specific labor market information (LMI) and talent pipeline data. It also aligned with the workforce agency role of supporting sector partnerships that develop from industry initiatives.

We progressed through three iterations of our Data Tool Box incorporating feedback from subject matter experts and sector conveners at each stage. The first was based on initial research and demonstrated the type of labor market information that could be provided at regular intervals to inform sector partners.

The next two were based on reactions to each preceding version. We continue to seek feedback and incorporate viable suggestions into the tool.
MOVING FORWARD
As we continue to use and refine our prototype, we expect to design macros that will enable regular updates to the sector-specific tool boxes. OEO may move toward custom programming using QCEW data, which lends itself to increased accuracy and customization. In addition, we intend to develop training materials to explain how the information in the Data Tool Box is compiled and how the data sources are used. For continued focus on sector strategies using CCD, we may ask How Might We –

- Connect industry sector partners with training providers and bridge the gap between the skills employers need and the skills providers are teaching?
- Connect training providers with job seekers who need to increase their marketability and advance within a particular occupation or industry?

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES
Implementation of the Data Tool Box is expected to expand the potential number of data users beyond the sector conveners and businesses who are currently members of sector partnerships. Our team and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) anticipate that the communication and collaboration needed to develop this tool will result in a greater understanding of the data available. The Tool Box will help minimize ad hoc requests since the data needed to drive objective decision making will be supplied regularly.

Ultimately, we foresee that sector partnerships, having participated in this process, will view OEO as a committed partner providing support and information that is both up-to-date and relevant to their sectors.

LONG-TERM IMPACT
Our project has had a positive impact on our customers, as it has resulted in sector conveners (Phoenix Chamber of Commerce) developing greater data analysis ability based on the tools provided by OEO staff. The Chamber was appreciative of the assistance received to develop data to support their health care sector partnership initiative.

Our staff has also benefited. The economists in OEO, who have become responsible for the content of the Arizona H.E.A.T. data tool box, developed collaborative working relationships with sector conveners. This has allowed OEO staff to move from only providing data (as was originally envisioned) to supporting Chamber staff in developing their own data sets based on the tools and support provided by OEO.

Overall, our work together provided long-lasting and useful connections and a heightened understanding of the ‘big picture’ that we will be able to apply to our day-to-day processes and link to our next steps in workforce development. In leveraging such a diverse set of perspectives, we learned that we all have common goals despite our distinct vantage points, and we were able to recognize needs that were not initially apparent.
Going forward, Arizona is heavily involved in implementing the LEAN methodology statewide. Where the CCD philosophy coincides, it is becoming part of the statewide culture, specifically the focus on the customer.

**TULARE COUNTY CHALLENGERS – Visalia, California**

*The project team was a partnership of workforce development, community college, adult education and literacy experts, and local business.*

**THE CHALLENGE**

**HOW MIGHT WE – Put businesses at the center of career pathways and sector strategies?**

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Our team responded to local managers’ concerns about identifying future leaders and providing adequate training to lower level staff that would prepare them for a supervisory role. The i3 (Internal Immersive Internship) prototype is a leadership exercise providing lower level employees the opportunity to develop and demonstrate leadership ability.

When we began, many of us expected to arrive at a program that helped employers recruit and on-board entry level and middle-skilled employees with an emphasis on skills gaps. Our interviews, however, revealed that employers do not consider the on-boarding of new talent their top concern. Instead, they attribute a large portion of entry-level turnover to not having adequate supervisory support. It became clear that focusing on a solution that was not recruitment-centered would have greater impact on retention and labor exchange than developing additional recruitment strategies.

**PROCESS**

In view of our region’s lack of engagement in internship programs, we reimagined the initial challenge question as:

**HOW MIGHT WE – Put businesses at the center of industrial internship programs?**

In the course of the process, we experimented with a variety of creative ways for brainstorming and collaborating: capturing rough ideas on post-its or large paper to view and re-arrange; creating sketches; and rotating leadership roles.

**Research**

After listing what we knew, what we didn’t know, and what we assumed to be true, we set about testing these assertions through interviews, research, and immersion. Using an interview guide and questions we developed for the purpose, we spoke with job seekers, education and business partners, and experts in career development and related areas. We reviewed our findings as a team to consider solutions to the shared needs of industry partners.
Ideation
In this phase, we shared inspiring stories and lessons, and we used our research results to assemble thematic clusters and find insight statements. One significant insight was that managers in local distribution centers expressed difficulty identifying future leaders. This prompted us to pose two additional questions:

HOW MIGHT WE –
 Help businesses identify and train supervisors?
 Help businesses communicate value and appreciation to employees?

We considered how to provide training that would prepare lower level staff for supervisory roles. A short-term, on-the job leadership learning program that employers could implement became our prototype. The model would be introduced to staff in the first phase of implementation, the second phase requiring the employer to execute the program. The final phase would include surveys with participants, interviews with the employer, and a closing meeting as a team to refine the prototype's process and make improvements.

PROTOTYPE
Our i3 (Internal Immersive Internship) Program is a “fail-forward” learning opportunity to develop leadership skills and improve team performance. The Immersion Team of four volunteers will work together to complete regular work duties with one simple twist – each participant will be asked to temporarily rotate into a leadership role and test their abilities as a supervisor.

The project is completed inside of the workplace, in conjunction with regular duties, and it uses existing supervisory structures, therefore having a minimal negative impact on productivity and staffing. In addition to regular work assignments, the Immersion Team will be asked to complete a “supervisor’s challenge,” which can be anything from improving a particular process, developing stronger methods of communication, or improving staff morale.

After each rotation, leaders evaluate each team member and vice versa. Assessments focus on communication, team work, and other leadership qualities, not on performance. The process concludes with a final evaluation and review, allowing team members to share and learn from each other’s experiences.

The objective is not flawless leadership, but rather creating dynamic learning environments where participants work together and learn from each other how to be a better leader. The program will allow an employer to observe the team process and hopefully identify emerging leaders within their organization with clear and measurable indicators. Each iteration of the program can be customized to meet the employer/department needs and provide maximum outcomes.
MOVING FORWARD
We intend to document the outcomes of the prototype. We also plan to develop a resource kit that helps employers conduct their own i3 programs, establishing a new approach to workforce development in our region. Since the resource kit can be developed electronically, this project will not require special funding or program staff.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES
Implementation of i3 has identified leadership skills in employees, improved employee morale, and increased their understanding of the supervisory role. Among our team, we found a benefit in the fact that our objective fell outside all our areas of expertise. This required us to access a shared pool of resources to identify solutions. In doing so, we invested more energy into cooperation and support than we had previously experienced in regional projects.

LONG-TERM IMPACT
From survey results we have confirmed the positive impact of our project.

Our Team – Our project gave us an opportunity to strengthen bonds as we blended our team members’ innovative skills and talents to develop and reiterate stages of our project.

Our Customers – Jo-Ann Distribution Center, a long-term business services partner, tried out the i3 Internal Immersive Internship Program prototype with a group of supervisors and their team and identified long-term benefits for employee supervisory skill development.

As a result, the i3 Training Model will be officially implemented at Jo-Ann’s in February 2018.

Our Partners – The CCD Project was an opportunity to develop stronger partnerships through identifying solutions and sharing resources.

Supervisors were surveyed after the i3 internship prototype phase, and they confirmed the following:

“As our team members became a part of the daily planning and leadership process, they were getting more involved and caring more about their jobs and the work they were producing as a team. They got a real-world look into what it takes to be a leader and whether they were ready or not, they were put through the ultimate test.”
Supervisors also indicated that employee morale was noticeably more positive. Team members expressed satisfaction with the training program and indicated “they would consider a supervisory role following the experience.” They gained “a better understanding of what it is like to be in a supervisory role, became more aware of skills they need to improve, learned how to resolve issues, and the importance of taking responsibility for their actions.”

As a result of this project, our organization views Customer Centered Design as an opportunity to improve our services and encourages every new team member to join a new cohort.

Focus: SHARED ONE-STOP CUSTOMERS

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY – San Bernardino, California

Our team included various employees from the county’s three America’s Job Centers of California and included other team members who could provide feedback on ideas to enhance the customer service experience.

THE CHALLENGE

HOW MIGHT WE – Improve the customer experience and outcomes for our shared customers?

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Our project goal was to streamline points of entry through technology-based systems (e.g., tablets at job centers), provide cross-sector leadership training, utilize welcome teams to provide efficient tech support, and share a complete list of job center services via streamlined tablet interface with the public. We agreed that utilizing technology to its maximum potential would be one way to enhance our intake service and upgrade our customers’ experience and ultimate outcomes.

PROCESS

We gathered input from all levels of staff at each of our four offices – our Administration office and our three AJCC’s. We spoke to front desk staff, workforce development specialists, supervisors, managers, and deputy directors about some of the challenges they had noticed among the offices and ways we could improve our customer service. Our interview topics included:

- **Streamlining** the customer process.
- **Ensuring** orientation is all-inclusive and customer centered.
- **Maintaining** customer engagement.
- **Refining** registration cards.
THEMES

- Remember who you work for
- Build relationships
- Provide seamless service

We performed additional research by taking field trips to some of our counterparts in the surrounding area. At the One-Stop in Orange County, a location that had been using electronic tablets, we asked for a tour and feedback on the devices. An Orange County staff member later visited our office for a more detailed discussion of what had made their implementation a success and how to avoid some of the initial challenges.

The themes that emerged from these efforts informed the rest of our work, sparking some ideas and insights to consider as we continued to brainstorm and build our roadmap.

Our findings confirmed that our idea of using technology would be worth implementing if we could surmount the budgetary concerns. We also understood that staff training would be necessary. In keeping with the principles of the CCD process, we included the management teams from each of the centers to provide guidance in developing training methods.

PROTOTYPE

The original prototype consisted of using the feedback from clients and staff to conceptualize a handheld or desk-anchored electronic tablet to facilitate a fast and easy check-in for our job center customers. The information contained would show the full scope of services available at each center, as well as partners that might assist with other customer issues. All would be easily navigable using key terms that would link to more detailed information.

After considering the long-term goals of our initiative, we changed our idea somewhat. Instead of a tablet, we decided to invest in the more durable and cost-effective option of kiosks anchored to stands, which will be customized to link directly to a workforce development specialist. We are working with Konica Minolta on a potential order for two kiosks at each of our locations.

Additionally, with input from our center management teams, we developed a system of cross-sector leadership training on the devices and their usage, and enlisted management to create welcome teams trained to share details on Workforce Development Department (WDD) and Employment Development Department (EDD) services.
MOVING FORWARD
One of the features of our kiosks will be entry to our department website to show all the available services we can help our clients access. Moving forward, we would like to include other County department informational links to provide a referral space for these varied services. We anticipate a greater collaboration with our partners through the utilization of the kiosks, as we will be including their information on our site. We have also reached out to CCD partners from the breakout sessions that were held at the DC Learning Exchange to further enhance services.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES
Our team was able to work with the Round 1 Challenge team on their vision. We collaborated with them, along with partner agencies, to formulate our plan and collaborated to achieve our shared goals. Additional all-staff meetings have been implemented to keep personnel abreast of updates and any new roles they may have. The meetings are encouraging more cohesiveness among staff and partners.

LONG-TERM IMPACT
Team members have grown into leader roles as a result of their participation in this. The commitment and follow-through of our project leaders is proving to be an inspiration to our staff as well.

From conversations among staff, it is clear that the project has had positive impact. More of them are engaging in conversations and presenting ideas they think would benefit our shared customers. As we get closer to implementation, morale is higher and enthusiasm is increasing. Customer Centered Design has sparked discussion among the current team, past teams and partners, as well as staff. Staff members are openly discussing CCD, presenting ideas, and asking when the next CCD teams will be formed.
“As organizations across the country use CCD as their preferred way of doing business, we are seeing amazing anecdotal evidence that when you improve customer experience, you improve customer outcomes.”

**Virginia Hamilton**, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region 6

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2017 CCD Learning Exchange Symposium Photos
INTERNAL IMMERSIVE INTERNSHIP

- How might we help businesses identify and train supervisors?
- i3 Prototype
  - Employees Volunteer
  - Leadership Role Rotation
  - Supervisory Candidate Development
- Key Concepts
  - Complete Buying
  - Intense Giving

CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN  WIOA Innovation in Action
CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN
DESIGN WORKFORCE RESOURCES

WEBINARS

**The Customer Centered Design Challenge Launch (Round 3)**
https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2017/01/09/11/00/
Customer-Centered-Design-Challenge-Launch-Round-3

**Customer Centered Design Prototype Phase**
https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2015/12/08/15/07/
Customer_Centered_Design-_The_Prototype_Phase

PODCASTS

**Customer Centered Design – Part 1**
**Customer Centered Design – Part 2**
Both podcasts can be accessed here:
https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2015/09/02/17/11/
Customer-Centered_Service_Design_Initiative

VIDEOS

**Voices of Experience on Customer Centered Design**
https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/04/11/11/58/
Customer_Centered_Service_Design

OTHER RESOURCES

https://www.ideo.com/work/human-centered-design-toolkit

**Design Mind Blog – (Blog)**
http://designmind.frogdesign.com

**The Open Book of Social Innovation – (Book)**

**Prototyping Framework – (Resource/PDF)**
http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/prototyping-framework

**The Bootcamp Bootleg (Book/Guide)**
https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/the-bootcamp-bootleg

High Impact Partners completed this project with federal funds under the contract numbers 1630DC-17-D-0001, from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.