

INSIGHTS FROM HUMAN RESOURCE EMPLOYEES

SEATTLE GENERATION WORK

FEBRUARY 2019

PROMOTING YOUNG ADULT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

One of the core values of the Seattle Generation Work Initiative is to ensure that the leadership and voice of young adults drives the work underway and is recognized. All 127 young adults interviewed by Business Government Community Connections (BGCC) for the Seattle Generation Work initiative were invited to cite their role as a consultant for Generation Work on their resumes, and to use the interviewer as a job reference. Their feedback has

been broadly shared and used to design the local young adult career access and career advancement system.

The opportunity to include this experience on their resumes was particularly useful for some young people. Seventeen said it would be the only paid job experience listed on their resumes, and thirty-one said it was the only personal reference that they were going to include on their job applications or during interviews.

To date, 39 human resource persons have called BGCC to follow up on references for 32 different individuals. Some young adults have used BGCC as a reference for more than one job. Second interviews with some young adults reveal that at least fourteen have entered employment at the company requesting the interview.

Feedback from the staff and employers who play a role in supporting the career access and advancement of young adults served by Generation Work partners are also frequently garnered. This report features the comments of human resource staff who are considering hiring young people enrolled in Generation Work. Most of the respondents were representatives of manufacturing companies, and a handful was employed in construction, retail and health care.



It was great to have a job reference. The employer said that he was glad that I cared enough about manufacturing training to share my ideas about the training and my suggestions for how to support other students in the training. He said it showed I cared about teamwork, and he wants people with those kinds of skills in his company.

Young adult enrolled in Generation Work

HUMAN RESOURCES EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE QUESTIONS

The most frequent questions posed by Human Resources staff follow:

1. How do you know the job candidate?
2. If you had an opportunity to hire them would you? Please explain.
3. Why do you feel that this person would be a good fit for our company?
4. What are the candidate's biggest strengths and weaknesses?
5. Do they get along well with others?
6. What kinds of special skills or certificates do they have?
7. Do you have advice about how to best support or manage this person?
8. What else do I need to know about this candidate that you might not have mentioned already?



I love it when applicants say that they are quick learners, and can figure out how to use equipment and technology, and can give examples of how they sped up their production from x to x (on whatever job they previously had).

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON SKILLS REFERENCE-CHECKERS WERE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING?

In order of frequency Human Resource Staff asked questions about the capacities of young adults in the following areas:

- Communication
- Interpersonal
- Personal Leadership
- Teamwork
- Technical Skills
- Attention to detail
- Critical thinking
- Interest and aptitude for technology
- Dependability
- Ability to be cross trained
- Willingness to be cross trained
- Problem solving
- Self-management
- Resiliency



We prefer applicants with some experience, but if they don't have it and can give an example of how they went from doing a certain set of tasks in a previous job –whether it was in food service or retail- to a more complex set of tasks they will capture our interest.



What I really want to hear is that job applicants are willing to work at a fast pace and are flexible, and willing to learn different parts of the shop.

IMPLICATIONS

This information may be useful for career navigators and job coaches who work with young adults. Several Human Resource staff explained that although their questions were intended for following up with the references noted on job applications, they also addressed issues that young adults should be prepared to answer from their own vantage point. Some added that many young adults whom they interviewed needed to hone their self-promotion skills. One said, “They have a lot to offer, but don’t always convey that. When we have to work too hard to dig for what they know, want or are interested in doing, we may choose others for a job.”

Port Jobs is the local lead for the Seattle Generation Work partnership. The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched Generation Work in 2016 to explore new ways of connecting young Americans with the knowledge and experience they need to succeed in the job market. The initiative includes partnerships in Cleveland, Hartford, Indianapolis, Philadelphia and Seattle. All are dedicated to weaving together best practices from the adult education and training field. The particular focus is on demand-driven workforce development strategies which integrate and are driven by positive youth development practices, such as mentoring and work-based learning, to better prepare young people ages 18-29 for work.

Port Jobs regularly convenes Seattle Generation Work partners to share what they are learning and brainstorm ways to align, coordinate and leverage resources. In support of these efforts, SkillUp engaged Business Government Community Connections (BGCC) to interview young adults served by Seattle Generation Work partners, and others engaged in this work. The interviews garner young adult feedback about their experiences prior, during and after receiving services into Generation Work learning community meetings and planning. Results are shared to ensure young adult voice informs the work of all partners.

Port Jobs would like to thank the young adults, providers and employers who shared their experiences and offered their feedback. Your valuable input will help our partnerships and programs more effectively support the career and educational goals of young people living in the King County region.

For more information about Generation Work please visit:

www.aecf.org/resources/generation-work

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