



U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Foundation



TPM Job Quality Resource Guide

Resource 1: TPM Partner Orientation to Employers

This resource is intended to help TPM practitioners, public agencies, community-based organizations, education partners, and worker advocacy organizations understand common employer language, perspectives, priorities, challenges, and language related to job quality. With a better understanding of how employers approach this topic, TPM practitioners and partners can more effectively introduce, collaborate, and support employers and employer collaboratives through job design efforts that improve job quality and address employer pain points.

Resource 1: Table of Contents

1.1 Orienting TPM Practitioners and Partners to Employers for Job Quality Efforts	10
1.2 Employers Are in Both the Public and Private Sectors.....	11
1.3 Employers Are Typically Classified by Industry, Size, and Location(s).....	12
1.4 Employers Can Have Both Unionized and Non-Unionized Employees.....	14
1.5 Employers Vary in How They Organize Work and Define Their Critical Jobs ...	15
1.6 Employers Utilize Professionals in Multiple Roles That Can Impact How a Job Is Designed	17
1.7 The Role of Human Resources (HR) Differs Dramatically Across Companies ...	19
1.8 Employer Perspectives, Opportunities, Challenges, and Priorities Related to Job Quality Are Impacted by All of These Factors	20
1.9 Employers Directly Engage in Workforce Initiatives and Partnerships, as Well as with Trusted Intermediaries, Including Business Associations	22
1.10 Employers Often Use Business Language to Talk About Job Quality Efforts and Priorities	24
1.11 Employers Seek a Clear Value Proposition	25
1.12 Recommended Actions for TPM Practitioners and Partners	27

1.1 Orienting TPM Practitioners and Partners to Employers for Job Quality Efforts

This resource is an orientation for TPM practitioners and partners interested in collaborating with employers to address talent pain points through job quality initiatives. It is part of a set of resources that, when combined with the Introduction, make up the **TPM (Talent Pipeline Management®) Job Quality Resource Guide**. Building strategic and successful relationships to support job quality requires employers, TPM practitioners, and partners to develop a mutual understanding of each other's worlds and the roles that different professionals and organizations play in making partnerships work.

The objective of this orientation is to help TPM practitioners and partners clearly connect their value proposition to employer needs, resulting in more effective collaboration. By working directly—and often differently—with the employer community, TPM practitioners and partners can help create conditions that improve job quality while also strengthening talent pipelines. With clearer communication and a shared understanding, the needs and challenges related to training, hiring, retaining, and upskilling workers can be addressed in ways that create value for both employers and employees.

Orienting TPM Practitioners and Partners to Employers for Job Quality Efforts

TPM practitioners and partners seeking to engage employers in job quality initiatives should begin by developing a strong understanding of the employer ecosystem, how employers are structured and operate, where decision-making authority lies, and how to engage effectively with professionals at every level. A compelling and clear value proposition is essential for meaningful employer engagement, especially on sensitive issues related to benefits, compensation, internal culture, safety and security, and other elements of job design that make up job quality. Making job quality investments and changes can often feel overwhelming, impractical, or incompatible with business goals for many employers. It is critical for practitioners to understand the limitations and opportunities employer partners face and focus on what can be done, not what cannot be done.

1.2 Employers Are in Both the Public and Private Sectors

People think of employers as primarily for-profit businesses in the private sector; however, an employer is any person or organization that employs people through a variety of employment relationships ranging from regular full-time employment to contractual employment. Employers are in both the public and private sectors. They can be for-profit businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government organizations, including the military, schools and colleges, as well as community-based organizations. Private sector employers can be registered as U.S. companies or as companies from other countries with locations in the United States.

Key Takeaways

When working on job quality, do not forget about employers in the public and nonprofit sectors. State and local agencies, schools and colleges, and community-based organizations are also employers that face their own job quality priorities, challenges, and opportunities.

1.3 Employers Are Typically Classified by Industry, Size, and Location(s)

In the private for-profit sector, employers vary widely depending on their size and the types of economic activities they carry out (e.g., manufacturing food products), the goods they produce, and the services they provide—across one or more physical locations. These types of economic activities and goods and services produced are called industries (e.g., manufacturing, healthcare). Physical locations that carry out one or more economic activities are called employer establishments (e.g., store, factory). Small employers—which are the largest job producers in the United States—typically carry out one major economic activity (e.g., food service) at one establishment (e.g., restaurant) within one geographic area (e.g., county). However, larger employers in the private for-profit sector, sometimes called business enterprises, carry out multiple economic activities through multiple firms with many different establishments around the world and across states, counties, and cities.

Employers in the private nonprofit sector also can vary widely. Nonprofit employers are in a wide variety of industries including education, healthcare, and social services. They can be large, diverse organizations spanning multiple industries with multiple establishments, or they can be smaller organizations with specialization in one industry and with only a single establishment.

In describing the private sector employer community, many refer to small, mid-size, or large employers based on the amount of sales and/or number of employees. There are no widely accepted definitions for sales or number of employees to be classified in each category for specific industries in the United States.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) generally refers to small businesses as those with fewer than 500 employees. Employer size is frequently reported based on the number of employees at a specific business establishment.

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the coding system used by government statistical agencies in classifying business establishments according to their primary economic activity and goods and services they produce. This system was developed for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy; however, it is used for a range of administrative purposes, including data collection for unemployment insurance and to produce labor market information (LMI) for employment trends and projections at the state and regional levels.

Employers use their own language when describing their industry or industry sector, based on what they consider their primary economic activity. For example, Amazon, the e-commerce giant, could be considered a technology company, a retailer, or a warehousing and logistics company. The firm is involved in many other industries and hires a range of occupations and skillsets. Amazon, and companies like it, often have talent management professionals (e.g., human resources) focusing on different business functions dealing with different issues and talent pain points. At Amazon, for example, the talent pain points and job quality priorities may be very different for management and professional jobs at corporate headquarters compared to warehousing and transportation jobs.

Key Takeaways

The employer community is highly diverse, so it's important to understand who you're engaging and use the language employers themselves use. Knowing an employer's NAICS code, location, and establishment size helps clarify their workforce needs and the scale of potential job quality efforts.

1.4 Employers Can Have Both Unionized and Non-Unionized Employees

Unions are organizations formed by workers to collectively negotiate with employers on issues such as wages, benefits, working conditions, and job security. While some employers operate in unionized environments, others do not. This distinction matters because unions often play a significant role in shaping job quality standards and advocating for the job quality features that matter to their members. They can be valuable partners in efforts to improve job quality, as they bring the voice of workers to the table and have formal structures and organizing capability to ensure any agreed upon changes are sustainable.

For TPM practitioners, understanding whether an employer has unionized employees is essential before engaging in job quality discussions. Unionized workplaces typically have collective bargaining agreements that govern many aspects of employment, including training, career pathways, and compensation. Engaging unions early can foster collaboration, avoid conflicts, and align workforce development strategies with existing agreements. This awareness helps practitioners design solutions that respect negotiated terms while supporting both employer needs and worker advancement.

Key Takeaways

Understanding whether an employer is unionized is essential, because unions influence job quality standards and collective bargaining agreements, making early collaboration critical to designing workforce solutions that align with negotiated terms and support both employer and worker needs.

1.5 Employers Vary in How They Organize Work and Define Their Critical Jobs

Employers, even in the same industry and of the same size, differ in how they organize the work to be performed. These differences show up most often in how they divide this work between different jobs, job titles, and job descriptions, with distinct levels of compensation. As a result, employers in the same industry vary significantly in how many positions (number of people employed and openings) they have for what types of jobs and with what range of compensation, benefits, schedules, and other job quality considerations.

For example, healthcare and social service employers often employ professionals with the job title of “case manager”. For some employers, this position requires a master’s degree, a specific state license (e.g., Licensed Clinical Social Worker), and requires employees to perform clinical responsibilities including diagnosing emotional and behavioral health disorders and developing clinical treatment plans. For other employers in the same sector, case managers are used to provide more general support and navigation and do not require any formal education or licensure. While both employers use the same job title, the roles and needs are very different. Similarly, a manager at a small business may supervise three employees, where the title “manager” at a large corporation may supervise 3,000.

In some cases, employers from different industries may share common business functions and jobs that may be organized similarly or differently. For example, employers in healthcare, manufacturing, and retail may share similar information technology jobs in cybersecurity and network management. They may also choose to work together in addressing their similar workforce needs in these shared jobs.

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is the coding system used by government statistical agencies to classify occupations by their primary work tasks. As with NAICS, this system was developed for

the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data. Although SOC information is useful in understanding some of the common work tasks and skill requirements for job families, it is important to understand both the similarities and the differences in how employers define their own jobs.

Even employers that similarly organize work, define jobs, and determine staffing patterns may still differ in how they define their most critical business functions and jobs. Critical jobs are those that are most important to the competitiveness and performance of employers at the enterprise and establishment levels.

Employers also differ in how they define and prioritize their pain points for these critical jobs. Pain points refer to the different types of talent management challenges and priorities such as unfilled job openings; onboarding, training, and upgrading costs; career advancement, turnover, and retention; and increasing the diversity of a workforce. Some employers may have greater challenges in recruiting qualified talent and filling job openings, whereas others have more trouble retaining employees. Other employers may face greater challenges in recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of their customers and communities where they are located.

For example, two manufacturing businesses may describe their biggest hiring need is for industrial maintenance mechanics. One of the companies may describe a lack of qualified applicants as their biggest pain point, whereas the other is most focused on retaining these professionals. While the occupation is the same, each employer may be approaching the collaborative with a different problem they are hoping to solve.

Employers also may differ in how clearly they are able to define and prioritize their challenges. In some cases, employers have done a comprehensive analysis of their needs and priorities and are ready to discuss them with partners. In other cases, employers need to work with

partners to review their own data and to set priorities. For example, employers may focus initially on filling open positions but then realize that many of these openings are the result of growing retention problems, which should be addressed first.

Key Takeaways

Employers—even within the same industry—organize work and define critical jobs differently, which means their talent needs, job structures, and workforce pain points vary widely. Understanding these differences is essential for effectively identifying true challenges, aligning support, and designing job quality strategies that meet each employer’s unique context.

1.6 Employers Utilize Professionals in Multiple Roles That Can Impact How a Job Is Designed

Employers, especially large employers, utilize a variety of professionals who assume different roles in addressing their workforce needs. These professional roles go by many job titles, but include:

- **Executive Leadership.** Chief executive officers and other upper management professionals provide overall direction and leadership on the strategies and initiatives to recruit, develop, and retain the best talent for their most critical jobs. This executive leadership is critical in gaining the buy-in and resources needed to establish and sustain partnerships carried out by other lower-level professionals in the organization.
- **Government and Community Relations.** These professionals take the lead roles in working with federal, state, and local governments as well as community leaders. They are typically the major points of contact for government and community initiatives, including those in workforce and education.
- **Human Resource (HR) Professionals.** HR professionals are responsible for managing and coordinating core HR functions at the corporate and establishment levels, including recruiting, hiring, and onboarding new employees. They are also responsible for administering compensation and employee benefits, including employee tuition aid programs as well as training and professional development. HR professionals usually work directly with hiring managers to determine the company’s workforce needs.
- **Recruitment and Screening.** These professionals are responsible for supporting HR by marketing career opportunities, working with talent sourcing partners, identifying and recruiting applicants, and managing the application and applicant tracking and screening process for HR professionals and hiring managers. These professionals can work directly for an employer or with a recruiting company that is under contract with an employer.
- **Hiring Managers.** These managers have the responsibility for determining the hiring needs and requirements for critical jobs they manage and supervise. Hiring managers typically make the final decision on hiring and career advancement.
- **Training and Development.** These professionals are involved in the onboarding and development of new hires as well as the upskilling and career advancement of existing employees. This category includes professionals who manage specific training programs, such as apprenticeship programs.
- **Other Subject Matter Experts.** This refers to employees who are considered experts in the performance of critical work tasks and in understanding the knowledge and skills required to perform these tasks at elevated levels of proficiency. These experts are usually the most experienced and highest-performing workers employed in critical jobs and are consulted by hiring managers or HR professionals when setting hiring requirements.
- **Employee Support Professionals.** These professionals—either employed by the company or retained on contract—provide a variety of support services to current employees to improve job performance, career advancement and retention, and employee satisfaction. They are sometimes employed by a third-party partner who works directly with employees on a confidential basis on matters such as housing, financial literacy, transportation, and childcare.

It is important to understand how the size of a business (i.e., small, mid-size, or large) often determines which professional you will likely engage in job quality efforts. Depending on how a company is organized, it could be that numerous teams or divisions should be involved. Professionals in small and mid-size companies have multiple roles. In addition, top executives and managers are likely to be more directly involved in decisions

that involve resources, priorities, and strategies. For larger employers, top executive and HR leadership buy-in is critical, but these individuals may not get directly involved in partnerships. Also, top executive and HR leadership at the local establishment level (e.g., manufacturing plant managers, retail store managers) may have to get higher-level buy-in from their corporate headquarters to establish partnerships.

Key Takeaways

Employers rely on many different professionals—each with unique responsibilities, authority, and influence—to recruit, develop, and support talent. Understanding who plays which role, and how those roles vary by company size and structure, is essential for engaging the right partners and designing effective job quality and workforce initiatives.

1.7 The Role of Human Resources (HR) Differs Dramatically Across Companies

Human Resources (HR) plays a critical role in shaping how organizations attract, develop, and retain talent—but its scope and influence can vary dramatically across companies. In some organizations, HR is a strategic partner involved in workforce planning, employee development, and culture-building. In others, HR may function primarily as an administrative department focused on compliance, payroll, and benefits. These differences impact how decisions about hiring, training, and advancement are made, and how flexible an employer may be in adopting new talent strategies.

employee engagement—all of which are central to building a sustainable talent pipeline. If HR is deeply involved in strategic planning, they can be a powerful ally in aligning external workforce development efforts with internal goals. Conversely, if HR is more transactional, practitioners may need to engage other leaders, such as operations or department heads, to implement job quality improvements. By assessing HR's role early, TPM practitioners can tailor their approach, foster collaboration, and ensure that initiatives complement existing systems rather than conflict with them.

For talent pipeline initiatives, understanding an employer's HR structure and priorities is essential. HR often controls or influences policies related to recruitment, onboarding, career pathways, and

Key Takeaways

HR's structure and level of influence vary widely across employers, shaping how decisions about hiring, training, advancement, and employee engagement are made. Understanding an employer's HR function early helps TPM practitioners tailor their approach, engage the right decision-makers, and ensure job quality and talent pipeline strategies align with internal priorities and capacity.

1.8 Employer Perspectives, Opportunities, Challenges, and Priorities Related to Job Quality Are Impacted by All of These Factors

When engaging with employers on the topic of job quality, it is important to understand their size, sector (i.e., public or private), industry, whether or not their employees are represented by a union, the role of their HR function, and how the employer's leadership and culture approach job quality. All these factors, and more, can influence if and how an employer partner will be

interested or able to engage in job quality discussions and initiatives as part of a TPM collaborative. It is often helpful to understand these factors for each employer in a collaborative prior to engaging in a discussion to get a clear understanding of how each employer may be approaching job quality.

Example: Specific Limitations of Behavioral Health Employers on Wage and Benefits by Settings.

Behavioral health employers often struggle to offer competitive wages because reimbursement rates, especially through Medicaid and other public payers, are typically low and have not kept pace with rising operating costs. Benefits packages are frequently limited as well, since many community-based providers operate with thin margins that constrain their ability to fund comprehensive health coverage or retirement plans. Employers may need to consider creative approaches—such as flexible scheduling, expanded professional development opportunities, supportive workplace cultures, or non-traditional perks—to attract and retain workers when they have limitations on their ability to compete for talent on wages and benefits alone.

The resources, challenges, decision making processes, priorities, and the leverage points to make changes in one or more of the eight job quality features are very different for a multi-national Fortune 500 company and a family-owned regional small business. A public education agency's (e.g., a school district) employee benefits change process and requirements are often very different from a private nonprofit education provider, even though they might both employ teachers or childcare workers.

Two helpful questions many employers are interested in at the outset of a discussion are often:

- How do the job quality offerings our organization provides compare to similar employers in my industry and region? Understanding the context of your employer partners and bringing examples from similar organizations can help TPM initiatives focused on job quality go further, faster.
- How did a similar organization—operating in a similar context—address this job quality issue?

Key Takeaways

Understanding an employer's unique context—its size, sector, union environment, HR structure, and organizational constraints—is essential for effectively engaging in job quality efforts. Tailoring TPM discussions to these differences, and drawing on examples from similar organizations, helps build credibility, accelerate progress, and ensure that job quality strategies are both feasible and meaningful.

1.9 Employers Directly Engage in Workforce Initiatives and Partnerships, as Well as with Trusted Intermediaries, Including Business Associations

Employers directly engage in national, state, and local initiatives and partnerships to address their workforce needs as well as with a variety of industry and professional organizations and other public and private intermediaries. Many of these organizations are based on a membership model in which companies pay dues and expect value; others have employers engaged as one of many partners or in an advisory capacity. Examples include:

- **National, state, regional, and local chambers of commerce.** Chambers are the most widespread business-led associations in the United States and the world, but they are also incredibly diverse. They are independent business entities, but some chambers belong as members to other chambers and form what is commonly referred to as a “federation.” For example, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has a federation of more than 1,500 state, regional, and local chambers as dues-paying members. Chambers are organized in many ways and play many distinct roles. Their primary membership is the business community in their defined geographic footprint, but they can include other community partners and leaders as well (e.g., area schools and colleges). Their missions vary, but most typically focus on growing and improving their community, supporting pro-business policies, serving as the “voice” of the business community on issues of importance to companies, and networking.
- **Industry sector organizations.** These are business associations that represent employers in specific industries or sectors. These associations can be national or regional (e.g., state-based) in scope. Some examples include the National Association of Manufacturers, the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association, and the National Retail Federation.
- **Professional associations and unions.** Many times, employers and employer organizations partner with professional associations and unions to address workforce needs. These associations represent people working in specific trades and professions, such as HR professionals, engineers, real estate agents, and electricians. An example is the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM).
- **Special purpose employer organizations.** These are organizations that employers join for specific purposes, such as veterans-hiring initiatives or opportunity-youth initiatives.
- **State, regional, and local economic development organizations.** These public and quasi-public organizations promote economic development and work with employers to improve their competitiveness and growth, including improving the workforce.
- **Other intermediaries.** Examples include public and private intermediaries, such as workforce boards.

These organizations frequently serve as conveners; they host events related to education and workforce topics (e.g., addressing a skills gap or closing an achievement gap). Their role is primarily to elevate awareness of an issue but not necessarily become the lead organization when it comes to implementing a solution. The convener function is usually executed in ways that drive up business-member interest and engagement in a new partnership or initiative that is led by others.

In addition to convening employer members, intermediaries also engage directly in original research (i.e., publishing reports with new data), or they launch education and workforce initiatives. An example of the latter is when companies coalesce around a tutoring program in a high school; sponsor a mentorship program for those involved in the criminal justice system; or establish a career awareness communications campaign to address misperceptions about or stigmas associated with opportunities in their industry.

It is common for these organizations also to be recruited as members of advisory boards or to play a role in initiatives tasked with engaging employers. Typically, these intermediaries are involved in a similar fashion to how employers are engaged but are presumed to speak on behalf of their membership and to be able to coordinate requests back to them (e.g., an increase in the number of internship offerings). Business associations are often asked to weigh in on industry workforce needs, skills and credentials requirements, labor market forecasting, etc., even if they themselves are not an employer engaged in the primary economic activity and work that is of interest to the advisory board or partnership.

It is important to note that while some business associations have an education or workforce mission and a dedicated staff for education and workforce policy and programming, this is by no means the rule. Business associations vary in terms of their capacity and willingness to engage on these issues.

It is also important to note that employers are repeatedly asked by different state education and workforce agencies, schools and colleges, and nonprofit organizations to participate in major initiatives, sector partnerships, and advisory groups. This results in employers being pulled in many different directions without knowing how these different partners work together to address their needs. Business and industry associations can play a role in organizing and coordinating employer engagement in ways that can provide benefits to both employers and TPM practitioners.

Key Takeaways

Business associations, chambers, industry groups, and other intermediaries play a major role in convening employers, coordinating engagement, and elevating workforce issues—but their capacity, mission, and level of involvement vary widely. Understanding how these organizations operate helps TPM practitioners identify the right partners, streamline employer engagement, and reduce duplication across initiatives.

1.10 Employers Often Use Business Language to Talk About Job Quality Efforts and Priorities

Low job quality can have negative impacts on individual workers, their families, local communities, and regional economics. Many employers recognize this and desire to provide higher quality jobs. While many social service and workforce agencies may use words and phrases like “support job quality,” “creating economic mobility,” and “increasing community impact” as part of a workforce program, these and other phrases may not resonate with employer partners interested in participating in a job quality initiative.

Below are examples of the types of phrases that employers may be more familiar:

- **Job Design:** The process of creating a job that enables the organization to achieve its business goals while motivating and rewarding employees. This includes the work tasks, knowledge, skills and competencies, job qualifications, total rewards, and other job quality features.
- **Total Rewards:** A corporate human resource term that refers to the combination of benefits, compensation, and rewards that employees receive from their organizations. This can include wages and bonuses as well as recognition, workplace flexibility, and career opportunities.

- **Employer of Choice:** A company people really want to work for. It’s highly sought after by job seekers and is also extremely attractive to passive job candidates. Many employers may approach a job quality initiative from the lens of becoming an “employer of choice.”
- **Talent pain points:** An area or issue in an employer’s hiring, internal training, and retention process that is causing challenges for their organization and/or negatively impacting their business goals. This could be high turnover, low productivity, lengthy time-to-hire, or limited internal advancement opportunities.

Using and recognizing this terminology during employer discussions about job quality are likely to make the conversation feel more aligned to how employers discuss job quality topics internally.

Key Takeaways

Using employer-aligned language—such as job design, total rewards, employer of choice, and talent pain points—helps frame job quality discussions in terms that resonate with business leaders, making partnerships more effective and grounded in how employers naturally think about their workforce challenges and goals.

1.11 Employers Seek a Clear Value Proposition

Employers seek a clear and compelling value proposition. Increasingly, businesses recognize that improving job quality—through better work design, supportive management practices, competitive compensation, and stronger career pathways—drives significant advantages, including improved retention, higher productivity, more efficient hiring, greater innovation, stronger customer satisfaction, and enhanced brand reputation. Practitioners working on job quality initiatives should focus their value proposition on outcomes that matter to both

employees and employers. These outcomes should be mutually agreed upon and should reflect benefits for all parties involved. For example, if a measure of success is simply the number of hires made, but those hires leave quickly due to poor working conditions, then the number of hires is not a meaningful measure of partnership success. A strong value proposition aligns job quality improvements with employer pain points and demonstrates how better jobs can solve those challenges.

Figure 1.1: Value Proposition Guidance and Sample Employer-Facing Language

Guidance for TPM Practitioner/Partner	Sample Employer-Facing Language
Speak to the employer pain point first and how solutions may involve job quality strategies.	Employers—like you—in our area continue to express challenges with finding and retaining a qualified workforce for roles that are essential to your company’s growth and competitiveness. We understand the costly issues associated with recruiting, onboarding, turnover, and the need to continually upgrade employee skills and credentials.
Acknowledge what they are doing now; thank them for their efforts.	We know you and other employers have invested considerable time and resources into addressing your talent needs and have participated in many local initiatives. You also serve on several advisory groups. We greatly appreciate the leadership and commitment you continue to demonstrate.
Suggest a new effort or strengthening of an existing initiative.	We aim to work more effectively together to create shared value by improving job quality and addressing common workforce challenges. We want to leverage a systematic, employer-led approach to either (1) launch a new initiative focused on your needs or (2) deepen employer leadership within an existing effort.
Ask what success looks like for them.	When thinking about your current workforce challenges, what does success look like for you? What goals are you hoping to achieve as you address these pain points?

Guidance for TPM Practitioner/Partner	Sample Employer-Facing Language
Explain potential benefits to employers (what's in it for them), using asset-based language that emphasizes positive workforce outcomes associated with job quality.	Based on what you've shared about your talent challenges and what a successful partnership looks like, here are ways improving job quality can help you overcome these obstacles—for example, strengthening retention, reducing hiring costs, improving productivity, enhancing customer satisfaction, boosting innovation, and improving your company's reputation as an employer of choice. Here are also the mutually defined measures we can use to gauge whether we are making progress together.
Get agreement to attend the first meeting.	Would you be willing to attend a meeting with our team to discuss our respective goals and determine how to get started?

Key Takeaways

A compelling value proposition connects job quality improvements directly to employer pain points and business outcomes. By emphasizing shared values—such as stronger retention, better hiring efficiency, greater productivity, and a more engaged workforce—practitioners can more effectively align job quality strategies with employer priorities and inspire deeper partnership and commitment.

1.12 Recommended Actions for TPM Practitioners and Partners



Gather information about the job quality practices, priorities, and efforts of partner employers now. Most employers think about how to design their jobs, offer total rewards to attract and retain talent on a regular basis, share information about job quality on their website's career page, and are open to discussing their challenges related to one or more of the eight job quality features. Reviewing employer partners' public job postings can also be a helpful way to get oriented to the current job design for critical jobs for partner employers.

Questions to consider:

- How do partner employer job quality offerings in their public materials (e.g., job postings, website) stack up to industry benchmarks and/or local competitors?
- Which of the eight job quality features do partner employers say are their strengths?
- Which of the eight job quality features do partner employers say are their challenges or areas of opportunity?

Explore Employer Association Partnerships: Contact employer associations in your state and local area to identify existing employer-led initiatives. Explore their willingness and capacity to establish partnerships with multiple employers that are willing to work together to address shared needs related to job quality.

Questions to consider:

- a. Which employer association (e.g., chambers of commerce, sector associations) have the credibility to organize multiple employers in a workforce partnership?
- b. Which employer associations, if any, have a history of organizing employers successfully or are currently organizing employers that have an interest in working on job quality initiatives.
- c. To what extent are these associations familiar with or making use of the TPM Framework?

Engage the Right Employer Professionals. When engaging employers, ask employer representatives about their role in their organizations and make sure you have the buy-in and support of higher-level executives and the right professionals at the table who have the decision-making responsibility necessary for effective partnerships. Also, establish who would be the major point of contact for partnerships and which professionals should be engaged when addressing specific issues or priorities, including how well-equipped the organization is to support efforts to address talent pain points through job quality. Many employees within an organization may have a desire to make corporate policy or practice changes but simply do not have the authority or influence to drive the needed changes within their organizational structure.

Questions to Consider:

- a. Have I secured the buy-in and support of senior leadership at one or more companies? If so, how do I know?
- b. For those employers where I have gained the buy-in and support of senior leadership, who is my point of contact and what professional role does this person play in the company?
- c. Does my point of contact have the support of a team inside the company, and if so, what are their respective professional roles? Are there any potential gaps that need to be addressed?
- d. Can TPM provide a more streamlined approach for coordinating teams of professionals within multiple companies through a single point of contact at an association?

Get the Facts Straight First: Gather Data Directly from Employers on Their Needs and Priorities.

Supplement government and other available LMI by working directly with employer association partners and the right employer professionals to identify the most critical jobs, pain points, the scale of their needs (e.g., projected job openings), and what prioritization and organization buy-in has been given to addressing talent issues through internal job design changes. Many employers are not ready or willing to make internal job quality changes to address talent points and may be more focused on building sourcing and recruitment partners; that is OK. Others will be ready, willing, and able to begin working with you on job quality issues. Avoid making assumptions and talk with employers directly to identify which organizations are ready.

Questions to Consider:

- a. Am I using data to guide planning and decision making, and what is the source and assumptions underlying that data?
- b. What data, if any, come directly from the companies I plan to partner with (e.g., job projections, current pain points, total rewards, culture strengths and challenges, in-demand competencies and skills), and who is supplying these data within a company?
- c. For the critical jobs that are of most interest to the companies I am partnering with, is there a sufficient and consistent level of need to make investments of time, resources, and money to make job design changes that increase job quality?
- d. If the employers and employer association(s) we are partnering with are not using TPM, can it be a useful framework to get clearer, more granular information about employer needs and priorities?

Key Takeaways

Effective job quality work starts with gathering accurate, employer-specific information, understanding current practices, identifying the right partners, engaging the appropriate decision-makers, and grounding all efforts in primary data. By avoiding assumptions and securing true leadership buy-in, TPM practitioners can target job design changes where they are most needed and most feasible.