

CASE STUDY: WELFARE TO WORK – A SOLUTIONS FOCUSED APPROACH INVESTIGATING “BARRIERS TO WORK”

REPORT PURPOSE

Ixion Holdings Ltd has taken a hard look at methods of getting people back into work in the UK. Benefiting from access to Anglia Ruskin’s world class Psychology and Social Policy research departments, an evidenced-based, scientific approach to uncovering “what works” has been applied.

There is increasing evidence that a traditional “problem focused” approach (by intensely analysing, reacting and talking about problems) is not the best way to solve them. Instead - by focusing on what works, what resources you have in hand and what your aims are – individuals may have greater success in reaching their goals and being improving their well-being. This is particularly relevant for groups perhaps lacking motivation, such as unemployed, ex-offenders and young people.

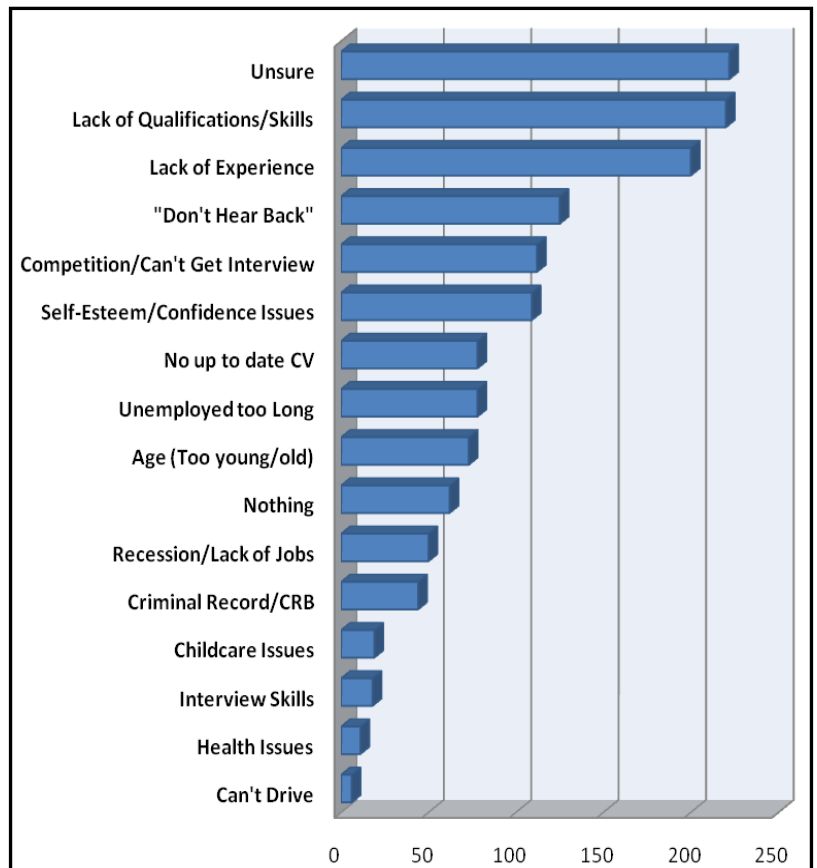
Nevertheless, it can remain very useful to investigate what these groups consider as barriers to their getting a job. It can provide clues to the general “psyche” of unemployed groups, and can inform the most effective interventions to break down the barriers to finding work.

KEY FINDINGS

Many of the responses are expected, but there are some intriguing trends. The highest stated barrier to getting a job was a lack of skills. Of the 220 respondents who stated this as the greatest barrier, 52% specifically identified IT skills as the ones they lacked (3% stated English skills).

Interestingly, only 3.5% (50) stated that the recession was responsible for them not finding another job. This implies that individuals actually seem to be taking responsibility for their failure to find employment.

A further core trend is the 8% (109) that identified self-esteem and confidence issues as their main barrier. Whilst employability professionals often cite this as a key issue, hard evidence that individuals recognise this in themselves has been previously hard to come by.



REPORT FINDINGS

Ixion research: July 2010 on 1427 unemployed respondents to “What’s preventing you from getting a job.” Respondents reside in Boroughs of Redbridge, Newham, Havering, Kingston & Croydon.

AN EVIDENCE-BASED, SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED APPROACH

Ixion will deliver a unique and innovative Welfare to Work programme:

- **Difference for Ixion** - a flagship approach with better outcomes than competitors
- **Difference for advisors** - executive standard training with a Certificate of Competence
- **Difference for unemployed** - a more motivating and pragmatic solutions-focused approach in dealings with Ixion advisors, coached to their own agenda. A better and more impactful experience.

This Programme delivers to key unemployed groups (long-term unemployed/depressed/ stressed/ de-motivated/young people/ex-offenders) the outcomes that a Solutions Focus (SF) delivers within many blue chip organisations worldwide.

OASIS PROGRAMME PRINCIPLES

Identify what works and do more of it. Stop doing what doesn't work, and do something different.

PROBLEM FOCUS	SOLUTION FOCUS
What's wrong	What's wanted
What needs fixing	What's working
Blame	Progress
Complaints & Definitions	Actions
Deficits & weaknesses	Resources & Strengths




Ixion advisors will be specially trained and will possess a 'black box' of simple, straight-forward methods to help ignite a sense of *purpose* in a de-motivated, confused, low confidence person. Ixion's approach combines executive coaching, mental health, NLP, psychological and common sense technique. It is pragmatic, individualised, FAST, effective and non-evangelical. **It uses techniques that psychologists have developed over decades...but one does not have to be a psychologist to implement these techniques!**

Unemployed clients, when first engaged, will undertake four sessions from OASIS-trained Ixion advisors:

1. One-to-One Session
2. Group Session
3. Group Session
4. One-to-One Session

LEARNING POINTS FROM SOLUTIONS FOCUS WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAMMES ACROSS EUROPE

Swedish, Belgian and Swiss Government welfare to work programmes has outcome-based payment systems similar to the UK's – providers are paid more when clients get and remain in jobs. (Holland is moving away from this model.)

The University of Nijmegen, Holland, is researching SF employability initiatives that recognise that getting a job may not be the most important objective for the client. Unemployed people usually are motivated by things other than employment...but trained advisors can show how a job can help realise their other aims and aspirations. The client's "unique goal" needs to be uncovered by the advisor – and ongoing activities need to be related to that goal - to enable much improved outcomes for employability initiatives.

SWEDISH STUDY: *Of 70 unemployed clients that became employed, only 1 did so through the traditional route of advertised jobs. The others achieved their jobs through a relative; volunteering/work experience; taking temporary or part-time work etc. Employers rarely hired people who hadn't worked in the last year.*

It takes a fair degree of self-esteem and a sense of working towards your own personal goals before unemployed clients are motivated enough to pursue the above approaches, which resulted in 98% of into work outcomes on this Swedish project.

150 Swedish employability coaches surveyed in the study all said that they use an OASIS/SF approach "always or often" to enable them to mobilise unemployed clients to take the above routes into work.