

January 30th - FCR Team update

Tell us about the progress of your plan for prototyping. What had you intended to do, and what were you able to accomplish?

Plan was followed smoothly, with an extra iteration tested!

Progress report:

- 1) Determine domains of responsibility for each Core Team member
- 2) Determine approach to FCR (define current needs vis a vis newcomer job seekers)
- 3) Design prototype 1 iteration 1 and test with newcomer job seekers
- 4) (bonus iteration) test prototype 1 iteration 2 with newcomer job seekers
- 5) determine next steps for research of relevant competency descriptors, definitions, cross referencing of each
- 6) determine next steps for digitizing our prototype
- 7) engage contractors for steps 5 and 6 before end Feb fiscal period

What have you learned this month?

A great deal!

In summary:

1) Newcomer job seekers expressed interest in being able to better explain/break down their experience to give employers a clearer picture of their abilities. Their greatest concern was that there be significant uptake of any job matching tool; otherwise all the training they do is for naught

2a) The Province of NB is engaging Magnet to customize their platform in development to the needs of the NB job market. WorkingNB (formerly PETL) has committed to Magnet's Skills-based Matching system, but is not currently exploring alternative or innovative methods outside this scope (ie micro-competencies, fit-based matching, etc.).

2b) Magnet is developing a Fit-Based Matching tool called ALiGN (currently piloting in Saint John NB) which may be of interest to our cause. It is far more developed and field tested than our resources could accomplish in such a short time. They have indicated that we could retain them for testing and collaboration over adaptation of their tool in development to NB job market. WorkingNB is not prepared to test new tools outside the current scope of their project, however they see the value, and have shown interest in having our committee steer the early stages of this prototypical approach, with the goal of including any successful outcome into their province-wide offering.

3) The Province of NB WorkingNB is also restructuring to provide significant support to employers regarding access to their job-matching system. They do not, however, have plans to guide job seekers to the same degree, thus it makes sense for us to focus on this gap in service.

4) Even though our end-user remains the job seeker, we must engage employers to better understand their experience and obstacles in hiring talent: be it understanding international credentials, connecting with the right candidate(s), etc.

5) Through this new direction we have the ability to influence the development of a tool prototype that could easily and quickly scale to province-wide adoption.

What are your plans for the next month? Describe prototyping that you intend to do. What do you hope to learn from this process?

1) Employer engagement: we have determined to conduct ethnocultural interviews with an array of employers (SME, large, NPO, etc.) with the goal of understanding their experience, obstacles, and any existing best practices with regards to screening candidates and recognizing talent (especially internationally-gained experience).

2) We will conduct a focus group with a cohort of WorkingNB job seeker clients, using the Magnet ALiGN tool prototype. We will observe and report on the findings, with the goal of further adapting their prototypical tool for the NB market.

What plans do you have to engage with your team this month? How will you communicate?

We have already had 3 meetings in January, with several planned in February.

- 1) Sub-committee members meet to discuss employers to engage and ethnocultural interview approach
- 2) Sub-committee members meet to discuss terms of engagement with Magnet for ALiGN focus group, including overarching goals we seek from this prototype
- 3) Conduct employer ethnocultural interviews
- 4) Conduct ALiGN focus group

The road to success can have many challenges. Please tell us about any challenges you are having. What steps and progress have taken to address the challenges so far?

We just decided to pivot significantly from the creation of a tool to seeking the adaptation of an existing tool in prototype phase. This pivot was uncomfortable for a number of Group members, but after detailed discussion we have agreed to proceed.

A challenge we may have is to remain in control of our project goals, since we are so closely working with the GNB WorkingNB department - a machine much larger than ours. We do not foresee issues, however, since they require us to operate and report independently (they aren't prepared to take on this prototype development and testing).

Another challenge we may face is in the event that the Magnet + ALiGN approach does not turn out to meet the needs of this group. We would need to significantly pivot again toward fresh innovation. The focus group will be illuminating...