Hidden Talent

TONIA PETERSON, MA, LPC, CRC, OTR/L
Occupational Therapist/Rehabilitation Counselor
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

ANTHONY KAYLIN
Vice President
ASE

SETTING THE TABLE

There is a talent shortage, not a worker shortage

There are several jobs available which worker availability is low

7.1 million

The number of job openings was little changed at 7.1 million in August

5.2 million

Hires changed little at 5.2 million

5.1 million

While total separations were unchanged at 5.1 million

Applicant brand and employment brand

Employer of Choice

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DISABLED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Persons with a Disability								
Labor Force Statistic	**Sep. 2026**	**Sep. 2026**	**2026**	**2025**	**12 month moving average**	**12m MA**	**12 month moving average**	**12m MA**
	age 16 to 6416-64	**age 16 and older16+**	**age 16 to 6416-64**	**age 16 and older16+**	**age 16 to 6416-64**	**age 16 and older16+**	**males age 16 to 64M 16-64**	**females age 16 to 64F 16-64**
Labor Force Participation Rate	**43.8.%**	24.7%	41.8%	24.8%	42.3%	24.5%	43.1%	41.6%
Employment-Population Ratio	**40.3%**	22.8%	38.1%	22.8%	38.7%	22.5%	39.2%	38.2%
Unemployment Rate	**7.8%**	7.5%	8.8%	8.3%	8.5%	7.9%	8.9%	8

Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics; note that the calendar year and 12-month moving averages do not include October 2025 (see 2025 federal government shutdown impact on the Current Population Survey : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)"; note also that January 2026 estimates were revised to incorporate updated population controls (see www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop)

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NON-DISABLED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Persons without a Disability								
Labor Force Statistic	**Sep. 2026**	**Sep. 2026**	**2025**	**2025**	**12 month moving average**		**12 month moving average**	
	age 16 to 641	**age 16 and older16+**	**age 16 to 64**	**age 16 and older16+**	**age 16 to 6416-64**	**age 16 and older16+**	**males age 16 to 64M 16-64**	**females age 16 to 64F 16-64**
Labor Force Participation Rate	78.1%	67.5%	78.0%	68.0%	78.0%	67.6%	83.0%	73.2%
Employment-Population Ratio	75.0%	64.9%	74.8%	65.2%	74.8%	64.8%	79.5%	70.2%
Unemployment Rate	3.9%	3.8%	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%	4.1%	4.3%	4.1%

Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics; note that the calendar year and 12-month moving averages do not include October 2025 (see 2025 federal government shutdown impact on the Current Population Survey : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)"; note also that January 2026 estimates were revised to incorporate updated population controls (see www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop)

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OVERVIEW OF RECRUITING



Recruiting is…

- The systematic process of identifying, attracting, interviewing, selecting, hiring and onboarding employees.
- Critical aspect of Human Resource Management that ensures organizations have the right talent in the right positions at the right time.
- Closely aligns with organizational goals, workforce planning, and future growth strategies.
- Described as both art and science (SHRM)

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RECRUITING STAKEHOLDERS



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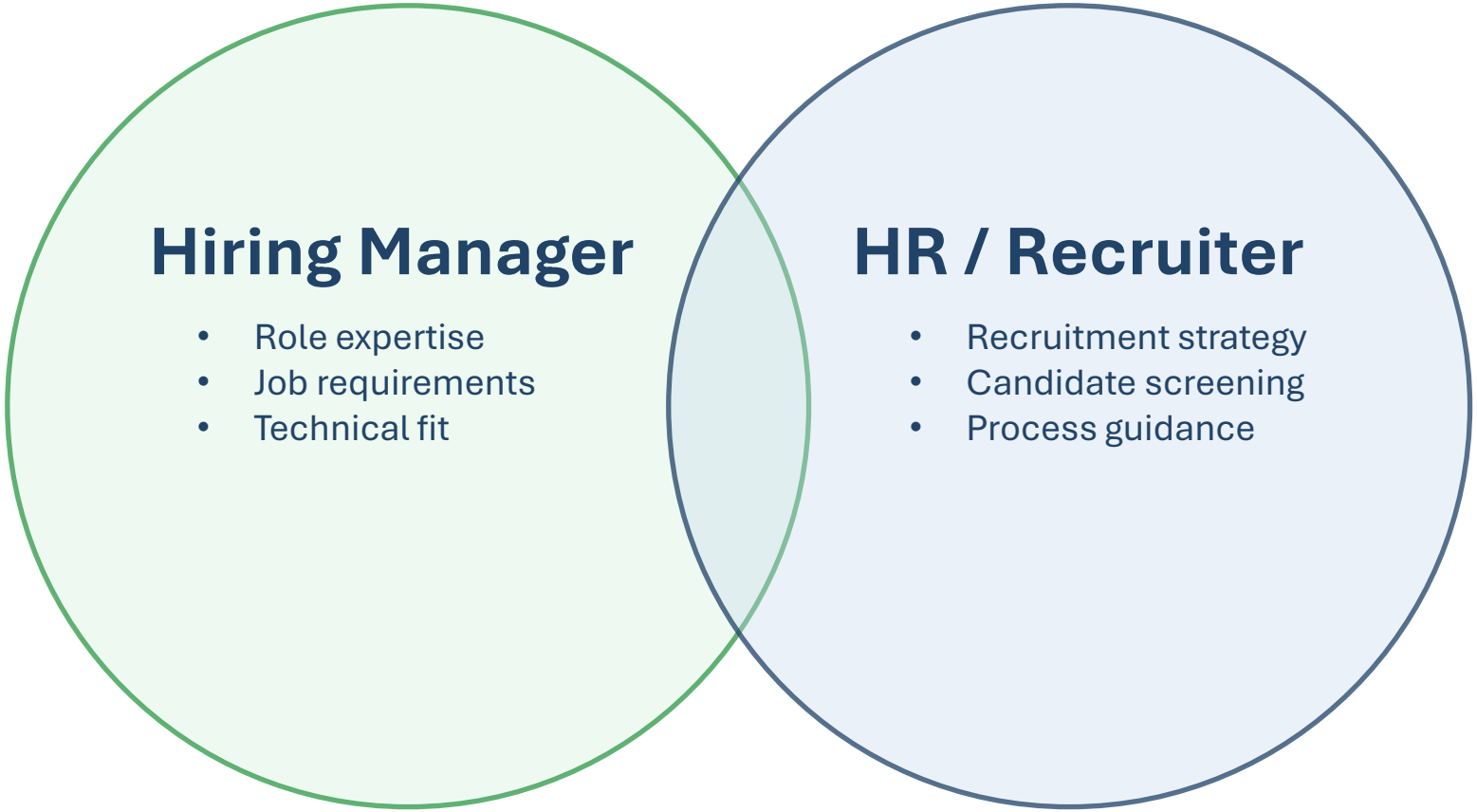
PLACEMENT PARTNERSHIP



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OVERVIEW - MAJOR STEPS IN HIRING PROCESS

1. Approval to Hire / Recruiter Engaged
2. Candidate Identification (posting & sourcing)
3. Candidate Screening (by Recruiter)
4. Present Candidates to Hiring Manager
5. Hiring Manager provides feedback
6. Candidate screening (by Hiring Manager)
7. Candidate is Hired / On-boarded

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Where you bring the **MOST VALUE**

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CONDUCTING THE INTAKE MEETING

1) Ask questions about the job/department

- Background - why open?
- Overview – how does it fit in?
- Geography – work location/travel?
- Duties?
- Supervisory responsibilities?
- Chain of command?
- Environment?
- Compensation range?
- Departmental culture?



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CONDUCTING THE INTAKE MEETING

2) What qualities must candidates have (or KSAO's)?

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
- Other Characteristics



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KSAO'S

Knowledge



Theoretical or practical understanding.

Example:
Knowledge of software development.

Skills



Proficiencies developed through training or experience.

Example:
Can create spreadsheets in MS Excel.

Abilities



Innate potential to do something.

Example:
Ability to perform under pressure.

Other Characteristics



Other qualities or experience, such as education, certifications, licenses, personality characteristics.

Example:
Must hold an associate's degree.

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SET HIRING MANAGER EXPECTATIONS

- What are the expectations of someone performing in the job?
- Are there any limitations that can be obviously identified?
- Are there any physical and/or mental qualifications that need to be considered?
  - Standing
  - Lifting
  - Stress
  - Typing etc.
- Are there any reasonable accommodations that could be provided if someone so asks?
- Although difficult, try to ensure all have open mind when it comes to the “right” candidate-may get surprised.



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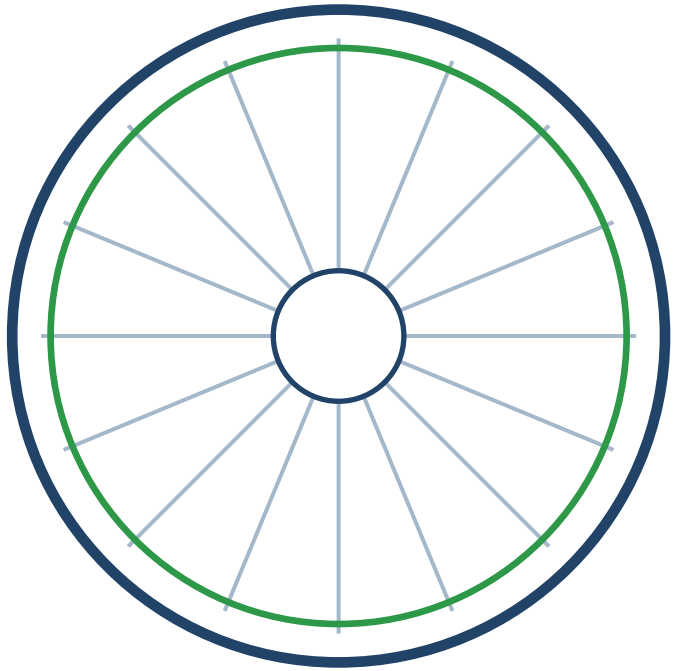
“SOURCING”?



Don't reinvent the wheel.

A source list helps recruiters identify where to find qualified candidates and build on strategies that have worked before.

- Identify proven recruiting sources
- Keep your source list current
- Track which sources produce results

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WHAT IS “SOURCING”?

1. Proactively seeking out talent
2. Operates on the premise that you must go where the talent resides
3. Utilizes search tools, people, and groups to identify potential candidates of interest
4. Relies on creativity

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SOURCE LIST

- Is a living document – meant to be added to and updated with places to advertise and look for candidates
- Excellent way to save time, and be proactive (great place to capture discovery of new sources)



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CANDIDATE SOURCE LIST

- Your company (e.g. website, newsletter, Internal Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
- Schools/Universities (e.g. Handshake); Professors
- Fee-based sites (e.g. ZipRecruiter, LinkedIn; ZoomInfo)
- Free sites (e.g. Michigan Talent Connect, AI Tools, Craigslist)
- Referrals
- Social Media (e.g. TikTok, Facebook)

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SOURCE LIST

SAMPLE SOURCING LIST

Skill Area: Human Resources

Sources	URL	Resume Database	Posting	Cost	Log-in	Contact	Notes
Associations/Groups							
Detroit SHRM	detroitshrm.org	N	Y	y		Joe Smith	
Ann Arbor SHRM	aashrm.org	N	y	y		Ann Jones	
"In Between Opportunities" Group	n/a	N	Y	N		Gail Sims	post thru Gail
Websites/Databases							
ZipRecruiter.com	careerbuilder.com	Y	Y	y		n/a	
TheLadders.com	ladders.com	Y	Y	Y		n/a	good for $40K job seekers
Indeed.com	indeed.com	Y	Y	Y		n/a	
Michigan Talent Connect	mitalentconnect.org	Y	Y	N		n/a	
Post to our company website							
Our company ATS/HRIS							
Schools/Programs							
Oakland University HRD Program	oakland.edu	N	Y	N			
Grand Valley State University	gvsu.edu	N	Y	N			
Wayne State	wayne.edu	N	Y	N			
Michigan State BA/MLIR	msu.edu	N	Y	N			
Networking Sources							
Anna Jones - VP of HR	ajones@abc.com						
Bill Smith - HR Manager	bsmith@abc.com						
Sue Williams - former HR Manager	swill@hrm.com						
LinkedIn "Detroit HR" Group	linkedin/detroithr						
Third Party Recruiting Resources							
XYZ Search Firm	www.xyz.com			25% fee		Doug Orr	(248) 555-1234

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THE DISABLED ADVANTAGE



Working with Michigan Rehabilitation Services

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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IN MICHIGAN

- **Michigan – VR – 2 separate agencies**
  - Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) General Services Agency
  - Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) Blind Services Agency

- **Outcomes**: Careers for qualified individuals with disabilities **AND** services to support business



bsbp Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION'S CUSTOMERS

Individual With a Disability (IWD)

- Provided vocational counseling, job placement and retention services to nearly **35,000+ people yearly**

Business Customer

- MRS served **over 5,930** businesses in 2025to match and retain qualified workers as well as provide information and consultation



bsbp Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

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Business Solutions for Every Budget

If your business is looking for cost effective solutions to workplace concerns, contact our Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Business Network Unit to find out how we can help your business succeed.

Our Business Relations Consultants Can Help

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

- No-Cost Recruitment
- Extended Recruitment Beyond the Local Area
- Out of State Recruitment, Talent Acquisition Portal©
- Collecting and Screening Resumes
- Pre-employment Assessment Tools
- Job Ready Talent Pool
- Customized Training Needs and Supports
- Paid Internships or Apprenticeships
- Vocational Counseling



CONNECTIONS TO PARTNER ASSETS AND SERVICES

- Cost Effective Solutions
- Company Funding Assistance
- Connections to Michigan Works! and other business solutions providers

ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

- Job Analysis for performance elements and requirements
- Job Restructuring and/or Work Site Adjustment
- Reasonable Accommodations/Ergonomic Intervention
- Assistive Technology and Services
- Strategies for Workers with Physical, Cognitive and/or Behavioral Disabilities

RISK MANAGEMENT/STAFF RETENTION

- Return to Work Strategies
- Job Maintenance Approaches
- Injury Prevention and Wellness Programming

ADA (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT) SERVICES

- ADA Consultation, Guidance, and Education
- Windmills© Disability Awareness Training
- ADA Architectural Guidelines Site Assessment

BUSINESS NETWORK DIVISION

Business Services

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HOW WE MAKE IT HAPPEN

- We work directly with individuals and businesses to create opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Occupational Therapists (MRS) and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (BSBP) assist in modifying the workplaces and identifying accommodations to ensure success
- Business Relations Consultants (MRS)
- Recognized resource for ADA, Ergonomics, Work Injury Prevention, Hard of Hearing Assessments, Assistive Technology, Disability Advocacy and Inclusion

bsbp Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

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TOP 5 REQUESTED SERVICES BY BUSINESS

- Disability awareness training
- Recruitment
- Hiring event support
- Retention
- Hiring process consultation



bsbp Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

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3 PRACTICAL, REAL-WORLD STRATEGIES



Attracting Talent of All Abilities



Hiring Strategies



Retaining Employees

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ATTRACTING TALENT OF ALL ABILITIES

Create Inclusive Job Descriptions

- Use plain, jargon-free language and focus on essential functions.
- Avoid unnecessary physical requirements (e.g., “must lift 30 lbs” if not essential).
- Highlight your organization’s commitment to accessibility and accommodations



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BARON INDUSTRIES



MiWorks Annual Conference 2019 - YouTube

HIRING STRATEGIES

Implement Accessible and Alternative Interview Processes

1. Provide interview questions in advance when appropriate.
2. Offer extended time or alternative formats (written responses, working interviews, job trials).
3. Ensure interview locations and online platforms are accessible.

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RETAINING EMPLOYEES OF ALL ABILITIES

1

Offer Clear and Supportive Accommodation Processes

- Implement a simple, non-stigmatizing request process.
- Provide accommodations quickly (ergonomic equipment, software, schedule adjustments).
- Reassess needs periodically.

2

Promote Inclusive Work Culture

- Implement disability awareness training for all staff.
- Support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and mentorship programs.
- Encourage leaders to model inclusive communication and behavior.

3

Measure and Celebrate Inclusion

- Track hiring, retention, and promotion data for employees with disabilities.
- Celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month with events and storytelling.
- Recognize inclusive managers.

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Connor Sports & Michigan Rehab Services/BND



CONNOR SPORTS
Where Champions Play™

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY

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CONNOR SPORTS

Background

- Connor Sports HR reached out to MRS/BND to develop a stretching program
- BRC connected with local MRS counselor
- On-site tour to observe high risk stations and to seek businesses exact needs



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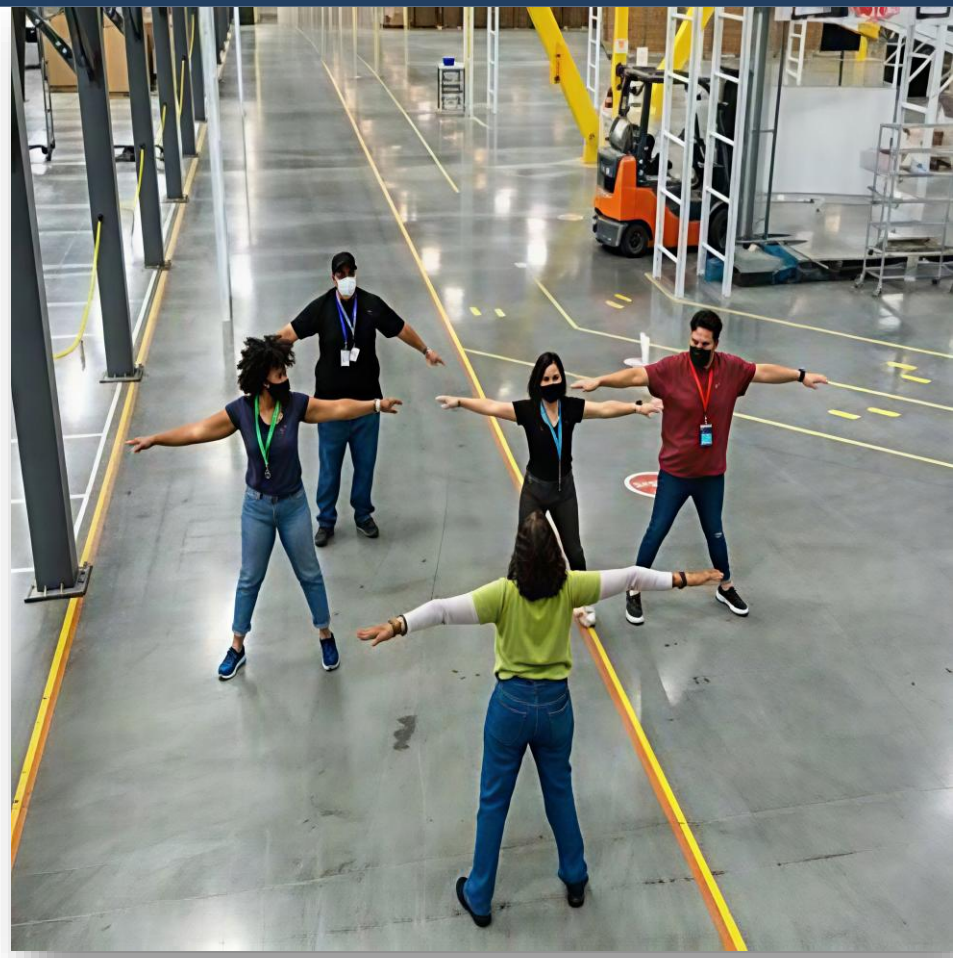
CASE STUDY 1

The Dual-Customer Lens & Aligning Business Success with Individual Opportunity

- Tasks at Connor Sports are typically repetitive, require a lot of reaching, pulling, lifting, twisting, handling, and pushing pieces of flooring
- Employees spend 8-10 hours a day on their feet
- BND wrote proposal for services to include stretching program with training, stretching handouts and training video



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SCOPE OF PROJECT

- Anticipated result of these services will include an increase in awareness of the positive effects of stretching & a reduction of reported injuries on the job
- Review injury data before and after the implementation of an official stretching program at Connor Sports
- Look at data 6 months and 1 year after implementation



CONNOR SPORTS 150 YEARS
WHERE CHAMPIONS PLAY™

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KEY OUTCOMES/IMPACT

- **147hrs** of business services received
- Repetitive motion injuries reduced from **36** (2022) **to 4** (as of Oct 2024)
- Absenteeism rate dropped from **7% to 0.7%**
- Turnover rate decreased from **58% to 19%**
- Stretching program implemented for all staff
- **Live testimonial** shared by Connor Sports during co-presentation with MRS at the 2024 MiWorks Conference
- Clear evidence that investing in employees delivers measurable results





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Who is your Business Relations Consultant?

Region 1~ Upper Peninsula (Vacant)
- Contact: Craig Saunders

Region 2/3~ Northern Michigan
- Contact: Craig Saunders

Region 4a &4b~ Montcalm/Muskegon/Ottawa/Allegan
- Contact: Monica Robbins

Region 4b~ Kent/Ionia/Barry
- Contact: Sharlene Organ

Region 5: Mid-Michigan
- Contact: Gary Holik

Region 6: Eastern (Vacant)
- Contact: Justin Skibin & Gary Holik

Region 7: Lansing
- Contact: Justin Skibin

Region 8: Southwest
- Contact: Lisa Stanley

Region 9: Ann Arbor
- Contact Christine Roberts

Region 10: Oakland-Jackie Smith
Wayne – Keisha Hall Dilligard
Detroit- Nacsha Ealy
Macomb (Vacant)



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QUESTIONS



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