Workbook Exercises

### Building a Strong Workforce Program:

### Mapping Partnerships & Leveraging Core Strengths Workbook

#### **Exercise 1: Identifying Your Core Strengths**

**Exercise Summary:**

This workbook exercise helps organizations define and evaluate their core competencies to build a competitive advantage. By assessing **value**, **rarity**, and **sustainability**, teams can refine their strengths for long-term success. For each subsection (People & Teams, Technology, and Business Operations), identify individuals, initiatives, and intellectual property that can be considered core competencies for your organization.

**Example Entry:**

| **Core Competencies** | **Value:**  Does this competency provide unique value? | **Rarity:**  Is it a distinguishing factor from other organisations? | **Sustainability:**  Can it be maintained and scaled over time? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Marketing Team:** Strong brand storytelling and digital marketing expertise | Yes – Helps attract and retain customers | Yes – Few competitors can match our brand voice and engagement strategy | Yes – Can be scaled with automation and data-driven improvements |

**People & Teams**

What individual people or teams give your organization an edge over the competition. An example of this could be having industry leading experts creating curriculum.

| **Core Competencies** | **Value:**  Does this competency provide unique value? | **Rarity:**  Is it a distinguishing factor from other organisations? | **Sustainability:**  Can it be maintained and scaled over time? |
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**Technology**

What technology have you created or what technology do you use to give your organization a strategic advantage above your competitors? An example of this could be automating employer feedback collection for accelerated growth and development of program members.

| **Core Competencies** | **Value:**  Does this competency provide unique value? | **Rarity:**  Is it a distinguishing factor from other organisations? | **Sustainability:**  Can it be maintained and scaled over time? |
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**Business Operations**

What internal processes do you have that enable you to move faster or more impactfully than your competitors? An example of this could be how you support onboarding new employees with employer sponsors so that they’re able to be effective earlier in their role.

| **Core Competencies** | **Value:**  Does this competency provide unique value? | **Rarity:**  Is it a distinguishing factor from other organisations? | **Sustainability:**  Can it be maintained and scaled over time? |
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#### **Exercise 2: Evaluating Partnership Channels**

### **Exercise Summary:**

This table helps organizations assess their partnership channels by identifying strengths and areas for improvement. In the **Strengths** column, list measurable achievements like the number of partnerships, contract renewals, or growth trends. In the **Gaps/Opportunities** column, highlight challenges such as supply-demand imbalances or expansion needs.

**Example Entry:**

|  | **STRENGTHS** | **GAPS/OPPORTUNITIES** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Corporate Hiring Partnerships:** Collaborate with large companies to create direct employment pathways for program graduates. | Our organization maintains 5 active partnerships for hiring workforce employees, with 70% of our corporate partners renewing their contracts. Additionally, we have achieved continuous growth in our corporate hiring pool year over year. | Our organization faces an upside-down ratio, where the number of applicants surpasses the available corporate hiring spots. For instance, we often receive 100 applicants for every 10 corporate hiring positions available. This presents a significant opportunity for growth and expansion in our corporate partnerships. |

**Partnership Channels for ESE Operations**

|  | **STRENGTHS** | **GAPS/OPPORTUNITIES** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Corporate Hiring Partnerships:** Collaborate with large companies to create direct employment pathways for program graduates. |  |  |
| **Workforce Development Agency Partnerships:** Work with government-funded programs to provide job training and placement services. |  |  |
| **Social Services & Wraparound Support Partnerships:** Team up with nonprofits that offer housing, childcare, and mental health support to improve job retention. |  |  |
| **Community College & Vocational Training Partnerships:** Collaborate with educational institutions to provide certifications and upskilling programs. |  |  |
| **Financial Institution Partnerships:** Partner with banks and credit unions to provide financial literacy training and access to credit-building opportunities. |  |  |
| **Tech & Digital Literacy Partnerships:** Work with tech companies to provide access to digital tools, IT training, and employment opportunities. |  |  |
| **Impact Investing & Philanthropic Partnerships:** Engage with social impact investors and grantmakers to secure funding for employment programs. |  |  |
| **Government & Policy Advocacy Partnerships:** Align with government agencies and advocacy groups to influence workforce policies that benefit ESEs. |  |  |
| **Employer-Sponsored Apprenticeships & Internships:** Work with businesses to develop paid apprenticeship programs that lead to full-time employment. |  |  |
| **Supply Chain & Social Procurement Partnerships:** Collaborate with businesses that prioritize purchasing goods/services from ESEs. |  |  |

#### **Exercise 3: Framework for Crafting a Value Proposition**

**Exercise Summary:**

Using the prompt below, create value propositions for the partner channels listed in Exercise 2 that are based on your organization’s core competencies identified in Exercise 1.

**Prompt:**

*“Our organization helps [****partner type****] achieve [****key outcome****] by providing [****unique capability****] that results in [****specific benefit****].”*

**Example Entry using Cara Collective Case Study:**

As displayed in the slide, Cara Collective successfully leveraged its value proposition to build strong partnerships with employers. Below is an example of how their approach aligns with the value proposition framework:

| **Partner Type** | **Key Outcome** | **Unique Capability** | **Specific Benefit** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Employers (e.g., JLL, Mercy Housing, Hilton Hotels) | Reduce hiring challenges and improve employee retention | Pre-screened, job-ready talent with workforce training and post-hire support | Lower turnover, reduced hiring costs, improved diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) hiring outcomes |

**Value Propositions for Your Organization**

| **Partner Type** | **Key Outcome** | **Unique Capability** | **Specific Benefit** |
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