



The Seasonal Talent Exchange (STE) was created by four employers in 2015—Modell’s, UncommonGoods, Swiss Post Solutions, and Wildlife Conservation Society, members of the JobsFirstNYC Employer Leadership Council. These employers have a common interest in seasonal workers (and a sizeable seasonal workforce) in positions related to customer service. They value workers who have transitioned from seasonal to regular part-time, full-time, and even management positions, and have a track-record of hiring such individuals over time. They agreed, philosophically, that while they have a corporate commitment to filling a fixed number of seasonal vacancies per year, they wanted to use their seasonal workforce in a manner that can lead to year-round employment within their own (and ostensibly each other's) companies.

STE Model: The model involves the intentional "exchange" or sharing of common workers across a set of companies and aims to link employees to at least two seasonal work experiences within the same year. Together with the partners and a member of the JobsFirstNYC team, whose role it is to ensure smooth transitions, we devised a protocol for complementary on-boarding and off-boarding processes throughout the year, ensuring a direct hand-off from one employer to the next. For example, workers hired by UncommonGoods (Brooklyn) who are tasked with a temporary assignment through the holiday season effectively transition to spring and summer seasonal employment at Wildlife Conservation Society’s Aquarium (Brooklyn) or to one of the Alliance for Coney Island- six STE employers (Brooklyn). These employers begin seasonal hiring, training and on-boarding as the UncommonGoods account winds down. Customer service associates can transition into roles such as retail associates or hospitality associates, which are more commonly full-time, higher wage positions. Some back office positions like warehouse associates and mail associates can advance into other logistics positions or IT positions over time.

STE Pilot: STE launched a pilot program in 2016. In developing STE, employers considered job titles, roles, and schedules to better understand potential sequencing from one position to the next in a complementary manner. The STE focused on customer service-related positions within four Swiss Post Solutions companies and included jobs that may not be traditionally considered customer service, such as administrative, back-office, food service, and warehouse roles, but leverage many of the same skills sets. The employers created common/shared calendars and common curriculum, "*33 Activities for Achieving Excellent Service*", used in whole or in part among the four employer partners. In the first pilot year of the initiative, STE engaged 35 young adult seasonal employees and all were seasonally employed through the pilot year.

STE Expansion: In late 2017, STE scaled to include six additional employers from the Alliance for Coney Island. Currently, there are 10 employers in the STE network and 210 employees enrolled. After one

year, 69 obtained jobs across the STE network and network partners and 10 obtained full-time jobs with salaries starting at \$45,000 per year through a STE/ NYC Administration for Children’s Services collaboration. The employer partners involved in the exchange have offered their staff ongoing career readiness and professional development trainings so that they are better able to transition to new opportunities and map out a career pathway. As the project moves into its next year, employer partners are meeting quarterly to improve their own best practices through peer learning and open discussions about ways the Exchange and hiring practices in general could be improved.

In a local economy where up to 40 percent of the population describes itself as working part time, and wherein many growth sectors involve seasonal or part-time jobs, the STE represents an opportunity to redefine how employers engage part-time workers—through a collaborative approach designed to both influence employer behavior and hiring practices for these workers, and to improve the conditions of these jobs. Most importantly, this will enable part-time workers to transition to year-round employment, will impact their economic security and enable them to gain broader work experience, build leadership skills, experience, and develop social capital networks across multiple employment sectors.

What’s Next: In 2019, the STE network will recruit new employer partners so that employees enrolled in the Exchange have a larger breadth of seasonal opportunities. We will tackle some of the challenges related to the exchanging of personnel information across employers, benefits and technological solutions to create efficiency in the Exchange.

JobsFirstNYC’s Workforce Partnerships

JobsFirstNYC is a workforce development intermediary focused on improving employment and educational opportunities for out-of- school and out-of-work young adults in New York City. The development and support of collaborative, inter-organizational partnerships, such as Seasonal Talent Network, is a key component of JobsFirstNYC’s strategy to advance practice in the workforce development field. By capitalizing on JobsFirstNYC’s role as a neutral intermediary, fundraiser, and facilitator, these inter-agency partnerships benefit both employers and young job seekers directly, by fostering long-term collaboration and sharing of resources and services.

JobsFirstNYC plays a critical role in supporting workforce partnerships by affording organizations the opportunity to collaborate on common issues challenging their work. As an intermediary, we support these organizations as they design and implement an effective and different way of working with each other. Through an organic process, organizations work together to determine the best strategies to effect change at a programmatic level as well as to define an appropriate outcomes framework. In addition to piloting workforce partnerships and carrying them through their demonstration stages, JobsFirstNYC hopes to ultimately create opportunities for their replication and implementation on a wider scale and at the systems level.

Current Employer Partners



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