

Finding a suitable business or organization to work with on the Applied/Service Learning Project:

It is up to your group to find a business or organization that will talk with you about their (volunteer) project needs in I/O-related areas such as

- employee/volunteer recruitment
- staffing/selection (including interviewing and/or testing)
- training (knowledge or skills)
- team-building or engagement interventions/training
- satisfaction surveys

(see topics covered in your text for additional ideas)

Please keep in mind that, although you are gaining I/O consulting experience (and can include that in your resume), we must aim to serve relevant needs of the client and keep them satisfied with the process of this project. You are providing a free service, but if you do so professionally, the happy client may be willing to write a nice letter ☺ that you could later share with potential employers during job application. Clear, respectful communications and conscientious, high-quality work within deadlines will be most likely to impress.

Where to Start: You are not allowed to work with a business that you or your family owns or partly owns (has a financial interest). However, you can work with one where you, a friend, or family member is an employee. You could also check with businesses that you frequent as a consumer or volunteer (local coffee shop, favorite charity, etc.)

Be Flexible: You might want to work on a good training program for their food servers, but if a potential client prefers that you develop a customer satisfaction survey, try to consider that opportunity positively.

Cautions: Try to avoid a conflict of interest or risk of personal biases. For example, it would be unwise to survey employees that you supervise about their satisfaction with supervision if you can identify survey participants. If you were performing a job analysis of your own job, it would be best to collect information about it from multiple employees who hold that position (not just you) and avoid weighing your own perspectives more heavily than those of others. Many times, you can avoid these risks by choosing a project in which you are not personally invested.

Thinking Ahead: You will be submitting a Statement of Work as Group Assignment #1. This will require you to report the name and contact information for your client (email and phone, if possible), the nature of the work that you will do for them, and other details as indicated on the assignment. After you have made a tentative agreement with them, I will personally contact them to confirm their agreement to have you provide volunteer services/products and the expected usefulness of the project (to them). Please keep these things in mind when enlisting a business or organization and discussing their needs.

Do your best on the project, but recognize that the client ultimately decides whether your efforts will be used later or not. Try not to get upset if they decide to do something different and will not

implement your suggestions (we can't force them—they are the client after all). This is one of the tough lessons in any type of consulting. I was once a graphic designer/art director and you can't imagine how many designs ended up in the garbage for each one that was used. Stay professional and keep calm.

Letter sample from students to potential client (can also form the basis for a verbal script)

Dear (Contact name):

Good afternoon, my name is (your name), and I am a student at the University of Central Florida, currently taking an Industrial-Organizational Psychology class. I am hoping you can help me or direct me to someone who can.

My class team, comprised of myself and three additional undergraduate students, has been assigned the task of finding a business or non-profit organization in our community that we can partner with to gain insight into real-world workplace needs.

(Organization name) immediately came to mind as a top choice because of (insert why you like them, their mission, or some other reason). All of our team members are psychology majors interested in making a difference, and we see (organization) as being in a unique position to share insights into the business world as well as the challenges that come with providing such an important service (or products).

The project will require very little time and resources from you or your organization -- we would simply need a contact to identify areas of need or interest and to share a bit of relevant information so we can get busy researching and developing support products for you, if applicable. The scope of the project is only about 5 weeks long, there is no cost to you, no expectation of continued partnership beyond this term, and you are under no obligation to use any information or product we share with you, although we do hope that you find value in what we offer.

A few possible areas we are able assist with are listed below, but please do not feel limited by these, as our aim is to help with your needs and interests:

- *Volunteer or employee recruitment
- *Volunteer retention/return for future seasons (i.e.: exit surveys, volunteer feedback, incentives)
- *Teamwork /Morale
- *Job Analysis
- *Training (this could include volunteer positions if there is a need)
- *Structured Interviews

Would you be interested in having us provide evidence-based information or products related to any of these areas? If not these, are there other areas that might be more relevant to your current needs?

We would be truly honored for the opportunity to work with (organization's name) on this project. I can be available to discuss this further and answer any questions you might have at a convenient time for you via email, phone or in person.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,