The Training Connection Series for Employment Specialists

A Collection of Articles on Supported Employment and Self Employment from The Job Training & Placement Report

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Career Planning - Building Solid Employment

By Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

When you decided on a college major, did you check the latest market surveys for the top jobs? Probably not. Most Americans, not all but most, chose majors that fit their personalities, their dreams, and the subjects they got the best grades in in high school. However, traditional job development for people with disabilities has been based on the market demand principle. That approach is fading because, after over 50 years of trying to fit people with disabilities into jobs that an interest inventory or vocational assessment pinpointed, or that a labor demand survey emphasized, job retention remains extremely low. People have dreams, talents, and personal interests that are revealed daily if job developers and employment specialists care to observe. These bits of personal genius are what drive us to success in our chosen careers.

It may seem presumptuous to speak of careers for many individuals without a work history, but by prospecting to reveal a life-work theme, the opportunity for job retention and satisfaction increases. In the long run, this means satisfying the customers (the job seeker, funders, and the employer) and reducing costs by doing things right the first time and by garnering a reputation for quality employment services. Now certainly career planning is not indicated for the individual walking into the office who needs a paycheck tomorrow and does not really care about where they work due to more pressing matters like making a rent payment or feeding their children. But for many people with significant disabilities who will get only one or two chances to retain employment before the system suggests they are unemployable, career planning can mean the difference between freedom and life-long clienthood.

Studies indicate that the average person served in a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) receives less than two hours of career planning annually. Career planning is a loosely defined approach to job acquisition and growth that is highly interactive, self-determined, person-centered, community-referenced, outcome-focused, and unique for each job seeker.

Career planning is a flexible and action-oriented process that leads to multiple jobs across a lifetime for individuals with significant disabilities. The disability is unimportant in that it is the series of employment contacts, supports, and actions taken that determine the ultimate success of the individual. Disability is too often used as an excuse for why a person cannot work. All people can work to some degree when provided the necessary supports. People are not unemployed because they have disabilities; people are unemployed because they do not have jobs.

The career planning process is based upon various components of Person-Centered Planning. The individual job seeker is the center of attention and direction. This job seeker requests the presence of those close to him or her in an initial meeting to review past accomplishments and future aspirations. Having a facilitator who understands best employment practice also serves to move the team forward in its work. The next step involves developing a plan of action for starting or re-directing travels down the career path.

> The job seeker may take the role of team leader to better self-direct and guide the process. Many individuals have been excluded from society and may need assistance in getting connected to the job market. A rehabilitation professional such as a job developer, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or case manager may be engaged as co-team leader. Family members also often serve effectively in this role and offer typical supports that most of us utilized in creating our careers

and a vision for the future. An employer member (or brief "consultant") who knows the individual or family, and who can utilize their peer network and business influence, may be recruited to connect the job seeker with other employers. Whoever takes on the leadership role is responsible for pulling together a preliminary career support team to help devise career opportunities.

The planning team meets initially to review employment history to date, discover the vocational preferences of the individual, and to offer personal and professional relationships to enhance job search or advancement. An analysis of each members' community connections and employment history creates potential contacts and insights that will help clarify the employment action steps.

Too often, traditional rehabilitation processes create barriers to career development by relegating people to menial jobs or ineffective training and evaluation. The career planning approach views jobs as stepping stones to a career that, like most workers, is created through experiential refinement of what we enjoy vocationally. Remembering that all of us have great latitude in how we select and/or change our careers is important when supporting someone else. In career planning we look beyond typical modes of support because these have proven largely unsuccessful or unsatisfactory to people with disabilities. We facilitate community and job site relationships that advance careers, utilize technology that increases competence, and access resources such as Plans for Achieving Self Support (PASS) that can be directed by the consumer.

Various person-centered planning tactics are merged to create a process that exhibits and utilizes the talents of the job seeker and the planning team. Typically, a Background Map helps discover the family, life, and work history used by the team to build a resume and to reveal connections to employers (e.g., the job seeker's brother works for Intel and can advocate internally). A Relationships Map allows us to identify key connections to the job market, references for the Resume or Portfolio, and possible employers (family friends who run businesses, for example). A Preferences Map is also completed that narrows the type of work desired. A Dreams Map is also initiated to set the desired direction. Throughout the process the individual's needs and desires are given center-stage. Job creation or carving are often the methods required to address the specific support needs and aspirations of the individual.

One mantra to remember as life patterns and career dreams reveal themselves in the process is to keep asking: "Where does the dream make sense?" Asking this question leads the job seeker and the job developer (or family member, employment specialist, or friend who is helping with the job search) to identify environments where others do work similar to the dream. For instance, ace behaviorist for the State of Colorado, and Community Circle, Joe Schiappacasse, recalls an individual with the career dream of becoming a NASCAR driver. The problem was that "Mike" lived in rural area with no race track where he might start his career. And, oh yes, Mike was legally blind.

Joe arranged a meeting for Mike with some folks who worked "where the dream made sense." The guys at the local Auto Parts store were taken by surprise when they saw Mike was blind, but they all, to some degree, secretly or openly shared his dream of being in the racing business. The dream made sense to them, so, despite the initial shock of Mike's disability, the group did not disregard his passion. The short meeting led to a connection at the local fairgrounds where a

Demolition Derby was held monthly, with cash prizes (pay!) for the winners. Mike got a cheap car and began his “career” as a race car driver! Will he pursue the dream to NASCAR? Who knows. The point is that he is around others who share his dream and may help him naturally find work locally that meets his needs. Having connections to the world of work is the way most of us advance our careers.

So remember to go to where the dream makes sense. If someone likes airplanes, get a tour of the airport and ask the manager to lunch with the job seeker; if they want to work around animals, head out to the farm and talk to people who with animals about all the many possible jobs in agriculture. Simply going to a related company and getting an application to fill out will not improve the odds of satisfactory employment. Job development and career planning means building relationships, asking advice, and using connections.

As noted, a series of maps are used to develop a Career Profile that guides the team in identifying possible employers or work environments. The team continues meeting until a job is secured and until the person is satisfied that their career is on track. Training on Person-Centered Planning is widely available.

Revitalizing your Business Advisory Council

By Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

Business Advisory Councils have been used in community based rehabilitation programs for over twenty years now. In some urban areas they are conceived as a masterful mix of local movers and shakers who offer their advice on employment approaches and programs, and lend credibility to program legitimacy and, sometimes, fund raising efforts. In many rural communities, BACs offer the business community a glimpse into the challenges of job development and career exploration for neighbors with disabilities. In far too many cases however, Business Advisory Councils become monthly social gatherings that are long on agendas of despair over the state of hiring, wither away from unchallenging expectations for the members, and are maintained solely to meet an accreditation standard.

The following approaches have been used by the authors to revitalize BACs into what we now call Active Employment Councils. Dave Hammis' work with one such council in Colorado became the impetus for the national Business Leadership Network promoted by the late Rick Douglas, former Director of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

1. Recruit a solid core of local business leaders. This is a critical first step. These members should represent the wide spectrum of large and small businesses found in most communities and can range from Insurance Agents, to Car Dealers, to Corporate managers and local restauranteurs. Members bring both community connections and influence within the business community. It is this influence that will be used by the community rehabilitation program (CRP) to gain access to good jobs. Be careful to stay away from "Board sitters" who are fulfilling their corporate duty but plan to do little work. BACs need working members, not resume builders who look good at a meeting. Preferably, the Active Employment Council wants members who make hiring decisions where they work, because they are expected to hire people with disabilities and then speak from experience to other potential employers.

2. Recruit a solid core of self-advocates. It is important that people with disabilities have a presence in this effort and that they are fully engaged as members. These members are not necessarily consumers of the agency's services, but should be local citizens involved in a variety of civic and employment situations. The number of members with disabilities should not be greater than the number of employers.

3. Have CRP employment staff significantly engaged as members of the Active Employment Council. They support the Council, attend meetings religiously, and make certain prescribed actions, such as following up on suggestions and referrals happens immediately following a meeting. A representative sample of staff should be on the Council, not all staff. Community employment staff should be invited to attend the meetings, however.

4. Set a standard meeting time in a community setting. Employment is a community issue and not a rehabilitation issue. The symbolism of having a public meeting with a prominent Council membership is important. Approach the CRP's bank, for instance, and reserve their conference room. Perhaps ask them to sponsor refreshments for each meeting. City Hall and County Governments, One-Stops, and other public facilities are also good choices. Limit the meeting to one hour with a highly structured meeting agenda. Busy people do not want their time wasted; model the efficiency most employment services say they provide.

5. Develop the meeting agenda for the next meeting before leaving the current meeting. The meeting flow should follow a format that allows a few minutes for introductions; a report back on achievements since the last meeting; new jobs created; new leads being explored; new business and adjournment.

6. Get referrals. At the beginning of each meeting, Council members bring names and phone numbers of possible employers to the CRP staff. These referrals are used to explore possible leads and to expand the relationship network. Each member is required to bring at least one referral monthly. If possible and/or necessary, the Council member can arrange a face-to-face meeting or lunch with the prospective employer. (Make certain the Council has a budget to cover such lunches; these are, after all, job development expenses and certainly a legitimate expense).

7. Get to know the job seekers. At each meeting, one or two individuals seeking employment are introduced to the Active Employment Council. (Of course, these folks are not the only people seeking employment, but the Council will be overwhelmed if 20 people present their resumes in one day)! Staff prepare them for a short 5 minute or so presentation on their job(s) of choice and distribute a nicely prepared resume. Discussion of possible approaches and potential employers follows and a Council member agrees to work with the CRP staff and the job seeker in developing employment. The details are worked out a follow-up meeting in order to comply with the agenda and to keep the rest of the Council engaged. Because the Council member is likely quite busy, CRP staff should be prepared to follow up on referrals and suggestions quickly. Council members typically use their social and work network to find job openings, to get appointments with decision makers in their supply and customer chains, or they make a few contacts to open up opportunities.

8. The Council must set up a driving mission or purpose. This mission is hopeful and challenging, and is established after a preliminary meeting where a general orientation of members to community employment and the various issues of rehabilitation are presented. One example of a successful Council was the statement that they existed to: "Equalize the employment rates of people with disabilities and people without disabilities" in their community. Now they have a solid, driving target.

9. CRP staff receive training in best practices in community employment. This is necessary to fulfill the mission of the Council and in order for Council members to speak truthfully and supportively of the CRP's capabilities. Training and on-going technical assistance in employment is crucial. Topics including job development, natural supports, systematic instruction, the ADA, Social Security Work Incentives, Resource Ownership, Small Business Ownership options, job analysis and job match, job carving and creation, sales and marketing, interest-based negotiation, positive behavioral supports, and assistive technology are just a few essential competency concerns. Council members may be able to provide some of the training, especially related to sales, marketing, and small business options.

10. Make the Council visible. Marketing the Council through the local Chamber newsletter, by attending local events, by buying advertising, running Public Service Announcements, and other means keeps the Council alert, and in the community's mind. Offer occasional pres releases naming the members and their companies, along with how they have changed lives and promoted local economic development by actively engaging people with disabilities in the workforce.

There are numerous other options for Active Business Councils, but these core activities will keep most organizations busy for many months to come.

DETERMINING BUSINESS FEASIBILITY: TAKING THE FEAR OUT OF PREDICTING THE FUTURE

BY CARY GRIFFIN AND DAVE HAMMIS

Self employment is a growing vocational option for people with all types of disabilities. The Rehabilitation Services Administration, the U.S. Department of Labor, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, and other federal policy and funding agencies are all investing time and money into this career service. Finally, the folkloric fear of small business failure is being dispelled by the 80% success rate of microenterprises in the United States. Still, all of us engaged in small business development know we are guardians of public money, and we must scrutinize expenditures to assure that waste is minimized and that people succeed.

There is, unfortunately, no crystal ball available for predicting business success. There are, however, a few commonsense approaches to minimizing risk and increasing success. Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Tribal Business Information Centers (TBICs), and other enterprise developers use a host of information gathering approaches to design products and services, to target specific niches, and to refine customer demographics. These tactics can be quite expensive and extensive for new product launches by companies such as Microsoft or DuPont, but for the other 90% of business ventures, surveys of potential customers, internet searches of similar businesses, distribution of fliers, and other simple tests are usually adequate.

When counseling someone interested in self employment, a good place to begin is with a simple interview about the person and their ideas. The following questions help streamline concepts and possible directions. Good counseling technique (conversing, not questioning) is recommended:

Does this business address a visible need in the marketplace?

Can this product or service make money?

Can this business compete with other related businesses?

Does this business match your dreams, talents, and goals?

Can you invest the time required in operating this business?

How much money do you have available to invest in this business?

Do you have, or can you afford, the necessary business and personal supports required to operate this business?

Do you have, or can you acquire, the skills necessary to perform the parts of the operation you want to do?
How will this business affect your family?

How will this business affect your SSA and related Benefits?

These are questions all of us should consider when starting a business. Because most small business owners rely on a series of paid and unpaid supports (e.g., accounting, sales, marketing), determining how to provide support is essential. For individuals with significant disabilities, access to appropriate supports, such as a bookkeeper or business partner who performs certain functions, is critical to successfully designing a profitable venture. The following matrix identifies key supports and points out needed resources:

Business Activity	**I Can Do This**	**I will need these supports**	**Who Can help? (name a specific person you know or a professional to be hired such as an accountant)**
Bookkeeping			
Managing Inventory/Ordering Supplies			
Producing the Product/Service			
Customer Service/Managing Complaints			
Record Keeping			
Sales			
Marketing/Promotion			
Following the Work Schedule			
Managing Receipts			
Supervising Personnel			
Other:			

One commonsense and low-cost technique for testing business ideas comes from Rosalie Sheehy-Cates, Executive Director of the Montana Community Development Corporation.

Rosalie recommends simply: "Sell a few. Tell us how you did and what you learned. What did buyers think of the product; did they want more; would they pay more for it; should it be a different color or size; can you deliver it; is wholesale pricing available; is it as good as other similar products or services?" Simply selling a few items or services and having a short discussion with the customer can yield vital information. If no one buys, it suggests there is no market for the product/service, it is overpriced, it is considered of low quality, it was being sold to the wrong people in the wrong place, or it simply does not address a need. Some serious thought goes into the analysis, but the concept of selling an item before building an entire company around it is commonsense.

The Internet provides one of the best, cheapest, and easiest ways of comparing business ideas, seeing what others with similar ideas and businesses are doing, and linking up with business owners across the globe. Not only are other existing businesses easy to find through a search engine (e.g. www.yahoo.com), but their pricing, product line, terms of purchase and shipping, seasons of operation, advertising strategies, and other key business components are offered for the Internet researcher to see. For instance, searching the Internet for examples of treats for horses (gourmet biscuits) reveals over 84,000 horse goodie related sites, or hits. Exploring these sites reveals a variety of locations, speciality items for sale to horse owners, prices and options, and a good sample of business models a potential business owner can consider. Any and every business idea can be explored to reveal unique market niches, equipment and training opportunities, wholesale supply sources, technical expertise, and industry associations or trade groups that may offer valuable advice. Most web sites contact information. Call or write the owners and ask for their advice.

Another way of testing an idea is simply asking potential customers what they think. Telemarketers call every night to ask questions about buying products and services. A short survey asking a person's opinion, with no sales pitch, is an effective and inexpensive way to get advice on a business idea. A phone survey for a mobile dog grooming service might go as follows:

"Good evening. I am developing a new business and I am calling to get some advice from you. I only need about 3 minutes of your time."
Wait for acknowledgment. If the person is unfriendly or busy, thank them and say goodbye. Otherwise, continue:
"I am starting a mobile dog grooming business. Customers will make appointments for their dog and I will drive to their home and groom their dog using my customized van. My van is equipped with a washing tub, hair dryers, pedicure equipment, and a full line of dog grooming products. I graduated from the Detroit School of Dog Grooming this year and am licensed by the state. Do you think you would use this business? Do you have friends or family who might use it?"
Record response and follow up on questions they might have.
"How often do you suppose you (or your friends) might use this service?"
Record response.
"Do you think you would use the basic washing service, or would you prefer the full-service grooming?"
Record responses and pursue questions and comments in a friendly manner.

“I am planning to charge $12.00 for the basic grooming. Is that a reasonable price to you?”
Record Responses. Collect the information and make decisions later.
At this point more questions may be appropriate, but the 3 minutes is up. Move on and say goodnight, unless the person continues to be enthusiastic.

There is no one correct way to approach a survey or testing a business idea. Keep it simple and focused on matching the customer, the product, and the owner. There is no way to predict the future success of a business (remember the Pet Rock?), but exploring what other business owners and customers think and know is hard to beat.

FACT SHEETS:
HIGH TOUCH/LOW COST LEAVE BEHINDS

CARY GRIFFIN AND DAVE HAMMIS

Job developers, from a variety of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), often have little in the way of sales or marketing support. Marketing materials are an important part of any sales program, but contrary to popular practice, expensive, slick brochures and video tapes may not be the only tools available to rehabilitation agencies. In fact, program brochures are generally costly, take a long time to develop and print, and tend to be comprehensive of an agency's programs, not simply the community employment components. While there may be times when such broadly targeted brochures are useful, paragraphs on Pre-School, Case Management, and Residential Services clutter a sales approach aimed at bringing a specific job seeker together with a particular employer. Video tape, too, is expensive (about $2,000.00 per minute for TV quality work), and not always as timely as necessary.

A Fact Sheet (such as the one shown here) might help job development efforts while freeing up often limited capital. A Fact Sheet is prepared with word processing software, utilizing large, eye catching type (Times Roman is good), and printed on one side, using a laser printer or professional print shop. Good quality, light colored, stationery is recommended. Print only as many as needed for the next few sales calls. Without a great deal in inventory, changing the Fact Sheet in response to consumer demand is practically painless. Keeping the Fact Sheet neat, easy to read, and professional looking increases the possibility that it will be read following your departure from a sales call, or when it is included in a letter of introduction.

The Fact Sheet should contain a few brief statements regarding your service and approach to satisfying employer needs. It makes sense to produce Fact Sheets for specific industries (electronics assembly; fast foods; gasoline stations) if, and only if, consumer interest runs high in these vocational areas. The low cost of producing a Fact Sheet makes updates and target marketing possible.

The next section should list local businesses with which you work. Be sure to have their permission first. When targeting a particular industry, list related businesses here. The more narrow the focus, in some cases, the more relevance an employer will see to his or her operation. For instance, if the agency has successfully supported individuals in a number of grocery stores, a Fact Sheet with a section listing half a dozen of those stores will impress a potential employer in the grocery business. Furthermore, the Fact Sheet can cross the line into Resume realm by listing a specific job seeker’s talents and experience, thereby making the Fact Sheet much more direct and personally focused. A personalized Fact Sheet is a perfect accompaniment to a graphic resume or portfolio that uses pictures to represent a job seeker’s experience and talents.

A few employer testimonials in the next section will help sell your service. Sales research indicates that employers want to hear what others think of a product or service. Their endorsement gives you credibility in the marketplace, and it provides prospective employers comfort in knowing that their competitors trust your service and also practice hiring people with disabilities.

Finally, list the name of a contact person on the Fact Sheet, preferably the same person making the sales call. The addition of a home phone number signals your commitment to working with the employer and may be just the reassurance a business owner needs when weighing their hiring options.

Do not take up space with incidental information regarding an explanation of service delivery. Employers do not generally understand the variety of employment strategies utilized today, and, ***no employer hires a program, they hire individuals***. Employers probably do not care that you have a Supported Employment Program. Giving such information only serves to muddy the waters. And, while utilizing Tax Credits and other incentives may be helpful, no mention of them here is warranted. These incentives might "sweeten the deal" later, but bringing them up in the initial stages of job development devalues individuals with disabilities by suggesting to employers that you provide rebates upon hiring.

Try putting together a Fact Sheet. Mail it along with your introduction letter to prospective employers, or leave a copy behind after your first sales call.

Fast Facts From TEX

✔ **Tulsa Employment eXchange** (TEX) is a locally based organization that matches qualified job seekers to positions in local businesses.

✔ Our **specialty** is improving recruitment, training, productivity, and customer service in consultation with Tulsa employers.

✔ We support you in teaching **your new employee** their job and use **your methods** to guarantee high performance.

✔ TEX utilizes trained, professional staff who can analyze **your** personnel needs and fill positions with capable applicants.

LOCAL BUSINESS PATRONS

Media Publishing USA Beef Producers Datacom Computers
Jones Construction Company Valley View Health Clinic
The Tulsa Morning Star Tulsa State University UpTown Courier Services

"TEX provided us with a competent employee and high class customer service".
Jim Barnes, Personnel Director
Datacom Computers

"A great resource for small business".
Nancy Mason, Owner
Media Publishing

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Handling Objections During Job Development: Feel, Felt, Found

Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

My friend Terri, from Texas, attended a community business fair the other day. While there, she spied a local print shop owner. Since Terri was representing a young man with autism who gravitated towards printing types of work, she decided to ask a few questions of the business owner. Terri was immediately confronted with the objections that the work was too dangerous and that employing someone with a significant disability would lead to increased liability and Worker's Compensation insurance costs. Terri is quite experienced and knows when and where to pursue objections. She also knows that there are many more employers than there is time, so she moved on to more promising leads. And, a public place, in this case, was neither the time nor place to continue the conversation, so she politely excused herself. In another, more private and structured setting however, a job developer would have to deal with the objections.

All sales people experience rejection. And, no matter how thick our skins get, none of us really ever enjoys the experience of being told no. Therefore, avoiding disappointment and negativity is a prime motivator for many of us who develop jobs.

Perhaps the most important lesson many of us have learned over the years is that job development is not exactly sales. It is more a melding of customer needs: the customers in this case being the job seeker, the funder of the job development activity (e.g. Vocational Rehabilitation, Work Force Development, Mental Health, et al.), and the employer. Satisfying all three customer segments is the ultimate in success and begins with understanding the needs of the individual job seeker. This approach is less sales intensive than it is needs-directed. The process involves satisfying multiple customers by recognizing their common needs and potential gains. Sales meets negotiation, meets relationship building, meets broad-based support to all parties in this multi-layered reality. Anytime complex circumstances are present though, objections and the need to manage them are inevitable.

As mentioned in previous articles appearing in this column, person-centered planning and written vocational profiles are critical in determining career choices, support needs, and natural support opportunities. Once a thorough profile is completed, the job search can begin in earnest. Having a good, consumer-driven job development plan helps minimize objections from the job seeker and the funder, but the employer, that major link in the chain, still awaits.

The "prospecting" phase draws upon the job developer's and the job seeker's personal and professional networks first. Approaching individuals already familiar with the job seeker or the job developer "warms" up a potentially cold call. Since family members and business associates (i.e. suppliers of goods and services to the job development agency), are typical resources for

many applicants, with and without disabilities, this is always a good and potentially fruitful starting place.
If, however, such leads are not abundant, making appointments, conducting informational interviews with business people, and serious prospecting begins. The anxiety builds as the suggestion of hiring is placed firmly on the table. And, it is at this juncture that the skillful handling of objections becomes critical.

One tried and true technique for handling such hiring objections is the **Feel, Felt, Found** formula. For instance, let's say an employer complains, as happens all too often, that Worker's Compensation or liability insurance will increase if an employee with a disability is hired. One response might be:

"I understand how you *feel*. No one would want harm to come to anyone and we would not recommend Beth for the job if we *felt* there were major safety concerns. Still, when I started working with companies, helping solve their recruitment and training problems, I *felt* these concerns needed investigation and serious consideration. What I, and our many customers, *found* is that Worker's Comp rates and liability insurance premiums do not increase. In fact, safety records for people with disabilities, according to several studies conducted by companies such as the DuPont Corporation, are actually as good or better than those for people without disabilities."

Consider another all-too-typical job development scenario. The employer raises a concern during the interview that their entire operation will now have to be made wheelchair accessible or that outrageous expense will be incurred due to accommodations. The response might unfold in a conversational tone that iterates:

"I understand how you *feel* about the potential costs of accessibility. In fact, some smaller companies, and those not open to the buying public are not actually required to be fully accessible. Many retailers I have worked with, for instance, *felt* that with the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act, their profits would suffer. But, what they have *found* is that with minor expense, some of which can be off-set with tax credits that I can help you with, revenues increased. This is because of the number of new customers now able to access their stores. Let's face it, most of us are going to live long enough to require a walker or a wheelchair, and that means that millions of other folks, potential customers or star employees are waiting to benefit your business. And, actually, the cost of most accessibility measures or job accommodations is relatively small compared to the benefits. Why don't we investigate what it would take to make these changes possible?"

Certainly, no approach fits all circumstances. But, having a few rational negotiation devices at the ready helps the job developer organize their thoughts, remain calm, and present a cogent and logical counter to common objections. Job development does not need to be a brutal series of rejections. Instead, finding the common interests of all parties, and logically addressing concerns with honesty and the facts gets consistently good results.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS:
BUILDING THE EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST'S DATABASE

BY CARY GRIFFIN AND DAVE HAMMIS

What's an employment specialist or job developer to do on one of those rare occasions when time is in good supply? Informational interviewing is a great way to build the job placement network, to discover new kinds of jobs, to introduce yourself and your service to new employers, and to build the mental database that all of us rely on for employment ideas when beginning a job search with someone.

Getting an appointment for an informational interview is usually much easier than setting up a job development meeting. A casual conversation with a prospective employer at the monthly Chamber of Commerce "Business Afer Hours" social or at a service club meeting (e.g. Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, et al.) can lead to a probe such as, "I've never seen your operation before, would you mind if I called you to set up a time for a tour and a bit of a chat?" Most folks love to talk about their business and since you are not pressing them, setting up a phone call is pretty low risk. Make sure to follow-up soon, before the conversation is forgotten, and to illustrate commitment.

Generally a request for fifteen minutes works well because it signals respect for the person's time, and it indicates that you are busy as well. In our experience, fifteen minutes always becomes thirty to sixty minutes once the discussion and tour begin.

On-site, the job development or employment specialist is seeking information about the company, its hiring practices, what opportunities exist to create or carve jobs, and getting insights into the company culture. The general format of an informational interview is:

1. Brief Discussion prompted by the employment specialist asking something to effect of: "Before we tour, can you tell me a bit about the history of the business, the products and services, and how the business is evolving?" And, "Tell me how you got into this line of work." People want to know that you care, so give them a chance to talk about themselves.

2. Tour, with questions asked at appropriate times and of various people performing the many tasks along the way.

3. Wrap-up by thanking the person for their time, indicating that you may have someone interested in working there now or later. Make your exit and promise to stay in touch.

Throughout the process, opportunities to ask questions conversationally exist. Since this is not a job development visit, do not press someone for a job. That comes later in the relationship. For now, the tour is answering questions about the varying tasks and duties people perform, the values and culture of the company, and needs the business has that your organization or workers can address.

The tour provides an opportunity to witness, for instance, the level of natural support that may be available to someone with a disability. Keen observation reveals whether co-workers and supervisors help each other out during a typical day; it reveals who does the training and how an employment specialist might structure the initiation period so that the employer takes significant responsibility for supervision and training right from the start; it reveals what is valued on the worksite, such as muscle, brains, humor, attendance, speed, quality or other worker traits. These are important considerations, of course, when designing a job match that minimizes on-site training and consultation.

The interviewing process, as well, reveals opportunities, or red flags if the place of employment does not provide a good working environment. Some standard questions for an informational interview, again, asked in a conversational and not an interrogative tone, include:

1. Where do you find or recruit employees? (This is asked in case you now need to refer to Job Service if they do all the hiring searches for this particular employer; to identify your competition; and to create an opportunity to discuss the service you provide).

2. How are people trained in their jobs? (This gives information about natural training means and methods that can be sculpted into a job match and training plan, especially one that recognizes that in most cases business already trains its employees and that the support you offer is customizing their training, not replacing it).

3. What are the prerequisites for working here? (This points out the various qualifications, certifications, etc., that might be needed).

4. How or where do your employees gain the experience required to work here? (Another question that gets at qualifications and that seeks the advice of the “expert.” This also gives the job developer a list of other similar companies).

5. What personal characteristics do you look for in employees? (This gives insight into the kind of candidate the employer seeks; provides information on what to highlight in a resume or interview; and gives a glimpse inside the culture of the company regarding the most valued skills and attributes).

6. When employees leave, what other industries or businesses do they go to? (This starts getting at issues of staff turnover, which might be an indicator of a great place to work in the case where no one leaves, to an indication of poor management in the case where there is high turnover. It also provides the job developer with information on related industries and possible opportunities for someone interested in similar work).

7. What are the pay and benefit rates?

8. What are the work hours? Is there shift work? Does the company allow for flex time or other job accommodations? (This gives the employment specialist insight into the flexibility of management and the company's policies on work hours and expected work effort).

9. What impact is technology having on the industry? (This is a common concern for most businesses today and provides an opportunity for the job developer to propose a job for someone who can use or bring with them a piece of essential technology that can be purchased through a Social Security PASS Plan or through Vocational Rehabilitation).

10. What are the current forces for change in this industry? (This question often leads to a lively discussion of how the market is changing, how personnel preparation and training is evolving, and how the competitive market is adapting).

All these questions and their answers breed add-on questions and discussion points that provide opportunities to solve labor problems or to innovate in the face of emerging trends in hiring. Informational interviews are a low-tech, high-touch option that provide insight into the inner workings of business. Knowing what goes on in a given company gives the employment specialist or job developer an added advantage when creating employment or responding to an employer need.

JOB CARVING: FINDING GOODNESS OF FIT

BY CARY GRIFFIN AND DAVE HAMMIS

Job carving involves the melding of job seeker and employer needs through systematic workplace analysis and person-centered career planning. Contrary to popular belief, job carving does not begin with the employer or the worksite. Instead, carving is based on the concept of using a person's unique contributions and matching those to an employment setting.

Contribution is a concept firmly established in person-centered career planning (Griffin & Hammis, 1996; Griffin & Hammis, 2002, in preparation; Callahan & Garner, 1997). Contribution relates to the specific sets of skills (present and potential), personality traits, and potential assets an applicant offers as "exploitable resources" for the employer. Exploitable resources can be skills, tools, personality, or other valued attributes that create profit, increase efficiency, and/or offer psychological or cultural enrichment in the workplace environment. For instance, consider someone with a welding certificate from a local vocational school. For many employers, this person's contribution includes potential sales to customers based on having qualified staff. Assume also that this welder has a good personality and fits in well with the other workers. Further, this welder publicly displays her commitment to the employer by personally calling each customer after a job is completed to check satisfaction with the end product. This welder contributes traditional welding skills; contributes to building a strong corporate culture by blending well with other workers; and shows dedication and commitment by following up with customers. This applicant is rich in contributions, beyond just the welding skill set.

Sometimes it is difficult to discover and display the contributions of individuals with significant disabilities. Getting to know the person well, and then using their gifts and talents (contributions) to guide a job search is the first step to employment. For many individuals, person-centered planning techniques create a list of likes and dislikes, talents and desires that guide the Employment Specialist in developing an overall vocational profile of the job seeker. The inventory of desirable jobs or situations from the person-centered career plan provides a foundation for transition aged students that leads to in-school, after-school, and summer jobs that help to build a complete resume. Adults too benefit from multiple paid jobs that refine the career focus, and leads to lasting job retention and personal satisfaction..

Only after a good "picture" of the job seeker is realized should job carving proceed. And, remember that job carving is generally reserved for individuals who are not likely to succeed, even with support, when going through a typical competitive employment application and interview process. In other words, if the hiring process is likely to focus attention predominately on the individual's shortcomings, then job carving is used to accentuate their unique assets or contributions. Job carving should not be used to pull undesirable tasks from other workers' duties. This simply creates a job description fashioned from the refuse of others, and devalues

the worker with a disability. Job carving should always highlight an employee's gifts, not the tedious tasks of others (Griffin, 1996).
The process of job carving will be unique for each individual and each employer. But, the process generally involves these steps:

✔ Reveal the contributions, potential, and dreams of the individual

✔ Seek out employment opportunities that utilize, exploit, or highlight the contributions

✔ Perform a formal (i.e. written) job analysis in order to determine task sequencing, natural supports, operations that may require additional instruction, modification, alternative production methods, or that may need to be performed in partnership with or by another worker

✔ Engage in interest-based negotiation that highlights the individual's contribution to the workplace; that offers a reasonable and understandable re-arrangement of work tasks in order to employ the individual(interest-based negotiation in this instance assumes that the applicant and the employer both have common desires: one person wants to work and the other needs someone to work).

✔Provide quality consultation to the employer and co-workers so that they can teach the individual the job

✔Provide on-going support to the employer and the worker

While employers may not recognize the term "job carving," they constantly create new job descriptions or rearrange duties based on new customer orders, new equipment purchases, or changes in product or service specifications (Bissonnette, 1994). Examples of job carving are numerous. In one instance, a young man really enjoyed visiting a local department store. Even with support, because of his health and limits on the hours he could work, he was unable to fulfill the duties of the typical warehousing job description. A 4 hour-a-day, 6 days-a-week, job was carved for him unloading trucks using a dolly. No such position had existed before, but his loyalty to the company and his hard work while he was there was obvious to the store manager and the co-workers. He loved his job and this seemed to mean more to the manager and co-workers than his actual job performance, which was just fine, by the way.

In another scenario, a young lady with a significant disability revealed a deep passion for the medical field. The local clinic needed a medical records clerk and a job was negotiated and adapted that centered on filing patient charts. Unfortunately, the young woman really wanted to be close to the action, working alongside doctors and nurses. A new job was carved from the nurses's duties. This involved sprucing up each exam room following use; refilling the tongue depressors, band-aids, and other supply containers in each room; and changing the paper cover on the exam table. This re-engineering relieved the nurses of a duty they felt detracted from their real purpose of assisting patients and increased efficiency; it increased staff morale (and probably increased patient satisfaction as well) which possibly decreased turnover; and it highlighted the new employee's contribution while taking attention away from her disability.

Of course, job carving can sometimes go wrong. The lead author, for instance once created a job in an auto parts store for a full-time delivery person. The job was a perfect match for the new worker, but the corporate culture had not been sufficiently analyzed before negotiating the job. Typically, the men and women working the customer counter took turns throughout the day driving the company truck and delivering parts across town. Driving the truck was an unofficial break, a chance to get off one's feet, and an opportunity to visit with other friends in the automotive industry. By focusing solely on the job duties and the efficiency of the workplace, this job developer misread the corporate culture and put an unsuspecting individual into what became a hostile work environment.

In conclusion, always begin with the person. Find their talents, contributions, and desires; perform an analysis of the work routines and corporate culture; and negotiate employment that is mutually satisfying to the employer and the worker.

Job Analysis: Key to Job Retention

by Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

The importance of Job Analysis for individuals with significant disabilities cannot be overstated. Job analysis is a critical element in the overall Job Match. Job matching melds personal aspirations, talents, and attributes to specific jobs or careers. Job loss is closely tied to the absence of or the improper development of a job match. Job matches are often viewed as expensive and time consuming, but the savings resulting from lasting job stability and the cultivation of a quality reputation with employers, families, and funders substantially offsets the initial investment of time and effort. Writing the job analysis down is critical to learning the technique and to improving future efforts. In our office the saying "where is an idea if it is not written down?" refers specifically to the commitment we make when performing a job analysis.

Best employment practice today relies on various person-centered approaches (e.g., MAPS, Personal Futures Planning) to discovering the vocational attributes and aspirations of an individual. The planning process is the first half of a job match. Once these clues are revealed, finding good employment can begin.

The Job Analysis process follows approval from a consumer and employer to develop a specific job. Sometimes the job analysis process is also used to set-up the training regimen for a work tryout or work experience, although we are finding that simply developing some "first" jobs with pay is preferable. After all, most of us did not have work experiences, we simply went to work and our employers paid us and trained us. Most of us discovered our career paths by securing jobs that we liked, and by leaving those we disliked. Taking our cue from natural supports philosophy, the process should be much the same for individuals with disabilities. Most of us serve individuals who have little or no work experience, so first jobs are an important resume builder which refine career choices and lead to job satisfaction, which means retention, which means happy customers.

Once a hiring commitment is secured from the employer it is time to perform the Job Analysis. The Job Analysis is the first step in devising a training plan. One of the best ways to approach Job Analysis is to spend at least one work-shift observing the targeted job. Make sure that it is a typical day so that the analysis reflects what the employee will experience.

Steps of the Job Analysis include:

1. Observe the job as performed by a typical employee and note any special operations, tools, or techniques.
2. Observe environmental factors: noise, temperature, speed requirements, coworker interaction, unwritten rules of the work place.
3. Ask for explanations of the steps of the tasks, if necessary.

4.Have whoever typically trains new employees train you in the task.
5.Perform the task yourself for a shift or until you understand it and the rhythms of the work day.
6. Record all the expectations of the tasks on a Job Analysis form.
7. Confirm with the employer that these actually are the expectations of the job. Do not rely on the Job Description.
8. Ask about atypical work expectations, such as the frequency of rush orders or if the introduction of new techniques or production equipment is forthcoming (so you can anticipate assisting with re-training).

The Employment Specialist analyzes the job and the work environment and compiles a list of job tasks the worker will need to learn to perform the job. Some of these tasks will occur with repetition and will be therefore be easier to learn because of the many opportunities to practice during each shift. These tasks are called **Core Routines** and are typically the primary task(s) in a job. Other parts of the job may be required on an irregular basis or, maybe just once or twice a day. Such tasks are referred to as **Episodic Routines.** The job analysis tells the trainer when these duties are performed and provides the foundation for on-site training design.

The new employee also will need to understand the dress code, times for talking and times for being busy, what clothes to wear, and other **Corporate Culture** concerns. Since job loss is almost always caused by problematic personal interactions with others on the job, the understanding of Corporate Culture is key to job retention, and therefore must be studied closely. Further, the Employment Specialist and new employee need to understand the supports necessary to get to work on time, to pack a lunch or bring money for the employee cafeteria, how to manage medications, which bus to take, and all the other **Work Related Routines** that help minimize differences, enhance credibility of the new worker, and that guarantee the employee gets to work and keeps the job.

Example of a Core Routine: pumping gas at a filling station.
Example of an Episodic Routine: refilling the toner in a Xerox machine
Example of a Work Related Routine: packing a lunch before work
Example of Culture of the Company: bringing donuts for co-workers when its your turn

Understanding and identifying work routines is critical because it determines the training plan design. Routines that occur repeatedly throughout the day give the worker many opportunities to learn the task. Routines that occur only once or twice a day (or week) may require significant instructional assistance to gain mastery and this impacts the training and support design. Knowing the most difficult aspects of learning going into the job makes the employment specialist's task easier and more predictable. Depending on the worker, the employment specialist may need to teach these routines differently. Sometimes to assist an employee in performing an episodic, or job related routine, the employment specialist will adapt the task or the method in which the task is performed. For example, a worker may need a checklist which he follows to remember to punch in and out for his shift. Before creating an adaptation or changing a piece of the job, though, have the employee attempt to perform it just as any other employee does. Adaptations can make the employee appear different and thus be a barrier to "fitting in." When in doubt, ask a co-worker or supervisor how they mastered the routines and if they use any special adaptations to remember tasks. Most workers carry checklists like Day Timers, have computer prompts when entering data, use various gauges or specialized tools, or have supervisors who remind them of their duties. Always, however, start with the most typical performance approach and add support from co-workers and typical supervisors before increasing employment specialist assistance.

One other suggestion. When working with someone who is particularly challenging due to severity of disability, getting help with a job analysis can be critical. Team meetings are a terrific resource where employment specialists can swap ideas and ask for assistance. Another favorite technique is video taping a typical employee performing tasks and then viewing the tape with the consumer, other employment specialists, family members and friends who know the person and who can offer ideas on training techniques or job modifications that will minimize errors and increase job retention. And, always remember to use natural supervision and instruction first. Reposition the role of employment specialist as the supporter of the co-worker and supervisor. Business is used to training their employees; help them do that.

There are a variety of Job Analysis forms available. The best, in our opinion, is located in the book Keys to the Workplace by Callahan and Garner (www.amazon.com) which is highly recommended reading for all employment staff. Similar forms and information can be found in the manual, Supported Employment & Systematic Instruction: A Guide for Employment Consultants, by Condon, Hammis, and Griffin and is available for $6.00 (including shipping and handling) by sending a check to The Rural Institute, c/o Nancy Maxson, 634 Eddy St., University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.

Managing Negotiations in Job Development

By Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

As job developers and employment specialists, many of us approach employers about hiring someone with a disability only to hear, “We don’t have jobs for people like that.” Most of us have been around long enough to shake of the insensitivity of such statements and resist our flare of anger. This is an opportunity to educate, and after all, it is our rehabilitation system which has taken people with disabilities and sequestered them away from typical community and associational life. Businesses have no point of reference for hiring people with disabilities, but once introduced, we find that employers are welcoming, accommodating, and excited about the prospect of hiring. The point is that all three parties involved have common ground that, once revealed, allows us to reason together as adults.

The common ground involved in hiring is:

1. People want to work;

2. Employers need people to do their work;

3.As employment specialists, we want to bring the 2 parties together and get out of the way.

Managing the process that gets us all to this common ground is the employment specialist’s challenge. Understanding what an employer is hearing and feeling when approached, helping them dispel the stereotypes our rehabilitation systems promotes (the isolation thing again, as in “we have a special program for people”), and guiding them through the change process is critical to everyone’s success. The approach we advocate involves a basic change cycle, recognizing the emotional state of the employer new to hiring, and offering support at the critical stages of change in opinion and action.

This change cycle involves the following components: Contentment, Denial, Anger, Depression, Confusion, Renewal, Excitement, and back to Contentment. Knowing where the employer is in the change cycle offers the employment specialist opportunities to provide information, anticipate fears before they become unresolvable, and gives insight into the core resistence or concerns. Employers hire people everyday; they train people everyday; they accommodate various skill levels, personality quirks and temperaments everyday. Employers need support in accommodating new ideas, just like the rest of us.

The employer inexperienced at hiring and training individuals with significant disabilities is Content in their understanding of their world until introduced to the idea that a certain individual could or should work for them. The natural transition is into Denial. Employment specialists and applicants with disabilities hear, at this stage, such responses as the aforementioned “we don’t have jobs for people like that,” or “someone with a disability can’t do all the tasks we expect of our workers here.” These are denial statements. The practiced employment specialist offers examples of other employers and workers with disabilities who succeeded together to create good jobs. Such examples, if not offered with proper timing and relevance can lead to a quick flare of Anger from the employer, who probably believes the employment specialist actually now considers him a bigot or someone who discriminates in hiring. Most people believe they are fair and open to change, so challenging their basic understanding of people with disabilities causes a reaction. After all, again, our system asks for donations that employers regularly give on Labor Day, they pay taxes that support “programs” that “take care” of people with disabilities, they participate in Pledge Drives for various diseases, and many have payroll giving plans that support local charities. They believe themselves to be good corporate citizens and the idea that they have not honored their social contract by hiring people with disabilities is surprising, intimidating, and angering.

At this juncture, it is time to back off, acknowledge their importance in the community and that they have done nothing improper. The process cannot stop in the Anger stage however. If it does, the employer will stew over the matter and may never hire. The employment specialist, or the applicant, should explain how someone with a disability is easily integrated into the workforce, and that only good job matches will be considered. The anger may also be infused with unstated fears of suits filed under the ADA, public relations concerns, and/or the reaction of Unions or employees to a person with a disability joining worker ranks. And of course, there are always the fears of costly and cumbersome job accommodations and accessibility. Calmly explain how these are handled; that accommodations tend to be inexpensive; that typical training and supervision methods usually work best; that there is no quota system under the ADA. Support the employer in getting past her anger and into the Depression stage.

Here, the employer is wrestling with personal and professional self image. Assure them that there are many approaches to hiring. Let them know too that people with significant disabilities face a 75% unemployment rate, not because of skills, but because of a lack of opportunity. In a short time (a few minutes to a few days), most employers rise into the Confusion stage. Here the human brain is conflicted between the new information-that people with disabilities can and do work successfully in other businesses, and that this business has yet to hire someone. The Confusion stage is where change happens, for good or bad. The human brain does not accommodate confusion well and works feverishly to find a direction. The employer may stand his ground for whatever psychological or economic reasons. If so, come back later. Many employers, however, will “change forward” and accept the invitation to try something new. This is the Renewal stage.

Of course, now is when the individual and the employment specialist have to fulfill their promises of a proper job match, of providing support to the natural trainers in the company, and of offering on-going support to the employer, enabling the retention and promotion of the new employee. Technical employment support skills are critical to maintaining the reputations at stake here. Remember, the employer is risking her reputation for being competent and fiscally responsible in front of her company, the individual with a disability is risking rejection and frustration, and the employment specialist is risking his reputation as a professional.

Some employers get jazzed about their success in hiring people with disabilities. They may join your Business Advisory Council or influence other employers to hire. They have entered the Excitement stage. Many employers will glide back into the Contentment stage, where they recognize that a diverse workforce is part of their everyday world, and that is how it should be.

Picture Books: A High Touch, Low Tech Leave Behind for Job Developers

Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

Job developers often struggle with what materials to take along when making a sales call. Brochures are so commonplace and cliché, and most end up in the trash. Videotapes are boring and expensive. One effective and eye-grabbing tool is the picture book. We have used these in several iterations over the years, always with good results.

The basic premise of job development is that a job seeker is matched to a particular job, career track, industry, or employer. The activities of the job developer are, in other words, person-directed in that the individual has identified a vocational interest area that the job developer (or Employment Specialist) seeks out. During the prospecting phase, meetings with employers involve introducing the candidate face-to-face, which is usually the preferred method, or "warming up" the call by introducing the job seeker through a picture book.

Making a picture book is pretty straightforward. Typically, people have some work history, or have work experiences, or, in the case of transition-aged youth, have had in-school/after-school jobs. A picture book is made up of a series of pictures of the individual at work. The pictures show the individual interacting with co-workers, running equipment or using tools, and otherwise looking as competent as anyone else. Sometimes pictures of the prospective person using a job modification or assistive device is a good way of answering the employer's unanswered questions about how they might have to accommodate a worker with significant disabilities.

The photos should be reviewed by the job seeker, and of course, all confidentiality issues discussed and documented prior to public disclosure. The picture book becomes, in essence, a visual resume that highlights the individual's strengths. Pictures help employers visualize supervising and training an individual with disabilities, and provide concrete evidence of productivity and competence.

If the job seeker has had only one or two jobs or work experiences, use five or six pictures from each location. Each photo should be specific, clear, and deliberate. In other words, anyone viewing the book will be able to identify the basic task or situation pictured, and the action or competence of the employee should be obvious. For instance, if the job seeker ran a band saw as part of their last job, then a picture of the individual running such equipment should be featured, instead of a picture of the individual standing next to a band saw. Showcasing action and skill mastery is extremely important.

Also included on the back of each series of photos should be a letter from the previous employer or work experience site manager. The letter should be on original letterhead (do not Xerox marketing materials!). Job developers might offer assistance to the employer in writing the letter.

Inadvertently, employers sometimes make well-intentioned statements that reinforce stereotypes about disability. For instance, a letter that states, “John is always on time for work, always happy, and a joy to be around,” is less believable than the statement, “John worked hard, learned new tasks, and contributed to our bottom line.” The second statement is more believable than the first. After all, few of us are always happy, on time, or a joy to be around.

The prospective employee with a rich job history, may want to showcase a few of their best experiences, or the ones that best fit with their current career goals. In this case, two or three representative pictures from a few settings, also accompanied by employer letters of recommendation, make a nice visual resume. If no pictures exist from previous jobs, stage some shots but make certain to point out during the job development call that these are recreated. Further, make certain the recreated photos reinforce the content of the employer’s accompanying letter.

The pictures in the book should be of high quality. Someone with photographic talent can develop high contrast black and white shots that are visually impressive, but generally good color shots are fine. Put the photos in a high quality portfolio, along with contact information and a nicely designed resume.

Digital photos can be displayed on a laptop computer and make resume revisions easy. Hard copy photo albums, though, do have some advantages. For one, the book is a high touch item. The employer can see and touch this marketing tool; it’s real and hard to argue with. A good picture book anticipates employer fears and questions; it silently answers those unspoken questions about safety, communication, and supervision that too often go un-addressed and result in job seeker rejection. The picture book can also be left behind. The employer then peruses it at their leisure, allowing the selling to continue even in the absence of the job developer and job seeker. Perhaps this allows the employer new to disability time to grow comfortable with hiring. And, of course, someone has to go back a get the book. So a second job development call is almost assured!

Finally, one nice feature of the picture book is that the job seeker can use it to personally guide the employer through their resume. This creates a unique circumstance that is impressive in content and circumstance, and it allows the individual to detail and exhibit their competence. If the job seeker needs support, the job developer might be along to assist. Regardless, the picture book is a low-tech, low-cost, unique, person-centered, and high-touch tool for job seekers and job developers alike.

Time (Self) Management Tips for Employment Specialists: Increasing Productivity and Decreasing Stress

by Cary Griffin & Dave Hammis

No one, it seems, has enough time to address all the things that need to be done these days. A few helpful hints are presented here to assist Employment Specialists in organizing themselves and their environment to become more efficient and productive. These strategies are written with work in mind, but easily generalize to personal lives as well. Remember that "Time Management" is a misnomer. No one can manage time: it moves ahead regardless of our needs, desires, tactics, or protestations. To become more effective at work and home, we must, instead, learn to manage ourselves and our use of time.

Performing a Personal Audit. This is the preliminary research phase determining where you spend your time and MUST be done to establish FACTS about where your time goes. To streamline your day, time management actions can no longer be based upon OPINIONS of where time is spent. To do a self-audit, simply write down where you are and what you are doing every 15 minutes for the next typical 8 work days. Be honest; if you are talking to a friend, returning a phone call, writing a report, taking a break, write it down. Once the audit is complete, look for patterns of waste, repetition, fixing problems that would not have occurred if done properly the first time, etc. Knowing where your time goes is critical to controlling your work day.

Controlling Interruptions. The average manager is interrupted 6 times every hour. All workers are generally interrupted more often than necessary. This is usually because others have failed to manage their time or perform tasks correctly the first time. To manage interruptions, close your office door if possible; let co-workers know you do not wish to be disturbed; schedule work-time at a set period of each day so that co-workers understand that this is your sacred time. Above all, raise the expectation that others should not disturb you when your door is closed or when you have publicly scheduled your activities.

Managing Interruptions. Interruptions occur no matter how clever or powerful you are. If interrupted, state nicely but forcefully that you are working under a deadline. Emphasize that you have another project waiting, another meeting to go to, or personal business to take care of and you cannot work late tonight. If the person does not leave, glance at your watch. If that cue does not work, shuffle papers on the desk and look away from the interrupter. Finally, excuse yourself and leave. This obviously takes some practice and caution. It is probably not smart to walk out on your boss, but if you must, explain that you are performing a task they assigned. Also, remember that there are legitimate emergencies. Plan slack time into your schedule for such occurrences.

Managing Meetings. Meetings have a tendency of raising more issues than they solve, and of running on and on. Whenever possible, advocate for ad hoc task forces, with limited life spans to solve particular problems or to address specific concerns. Advocate for the use of agendas with prompt start and end times. Schedule something right after meetings so you have an excuse to leave should the meeting run over time or flounder. Evaluate meetings, keep minutes, and make assignments to better streamline the process. When having a meeting with one or two other people who chronically linger in your office, move the location to their office or other space next time, so you do not end up having to throw them out of your work area. When the meeting is over, simply walk out.

Managing Telephone Calls and E-mail. When possible, establish a set time every day when you make and take phone calls, and when you answer e-mail. This is certainly not possible all the time, but even doing this on one day a week can save valuable time and allow you to free up blocks of time for complex or detailed work assignments.

Scheduling. Write down everything that needs to be done in a day planner or PDA that you keep with you at all times. Notes to yourself on errant pieces of paper mean nothing if they are not recorded and assigned a time for completion. When scheduling for large projects, such as writing grants or quarterly reports, schedule blocks of time no less than four hours in duration. Schedule as many of these as possible. You may end up only getting two hours on one or two of those days, but without scheduling blocks, the time will disappear in the face of phone calls and emergencies. Always schedule more time than you think will be necessary and try to work for extended periods. Grabbing half an hour here and there to write a plan or perform a job analysis will lead to a fragmented and incomplete project or document.

Handling Mail. Many of us receive a great deal of mail and e-mail that requires formal responses. Schedule time every day to review mail. File what needs to be filed; read critical mail and respond before going on to the next task, if you can. This tactic gives you a feeling of accomplishment and gets another task off your desk. Prompt replies are also great for customer service. Create a reading file that you actively manage. Schedule, in your daily planner, time to do this reading and stick to it. Often, reading is not looked upon in offices as valuable activity, but this is our link to a world of new ideas and gives us information which improves our performance. Put your reading to action and use it to solve problems. Co-workers and managers will quickly begin to see the value of learning and of creating new relationships via e-mail.

Managing Appointments & Activities. Review your schedule for the next day before ending the current work day. Make sure you are prepared for that morning appointment, that job analysis, or that employer meeting. Do not come in in the morning only to realize that today is the day you must entertain guests from another company. Be prepared. This will reduce stress, make your work more efficient and performance based, and will increase customer satisfaction. If you need reports copied or transportation arranged, schedule these activities in your daily planner well in advance of the project date. This assures that there will be fewer last minute complications and gives support staff control over their time as well.

Communication. This simple concept appears quite difficult for some people. Use a sign-out board to let co-workers know where you are and when you will return. A cell phone number is always nice to head off trouble that could become a crisis later. Share work schedules, share information on projects, share concerns in order to build consensus and support. If others know that you are working on a critical job, they will be less likely to interrupt you. You, of course, must respect them and not interrupt either. Usually, simply sharing information, in person, on paper, or via e-mail decreases confusion about schedules, due dates, and timely activities.

Planning Ahead. Most time management issues are caused by the reaction to immediate crises that were predictable and manageable if only someone had taken the time to foresee necessary activities. Spend a little time up-front anticipating time requirements and possible project complications, build in time to do the job right the first time, and let others model your behavior. A little time spent in planning will pay off with less stress, better job accomplishment, lower costs, higher quality and greater customer satisfaction.

Self (Time) management can be tricky because so many other people and events influence our daily lives. By practicing the above strategies, and modeling good self-management behavior for those around you, positive results will show instantly. Try thinking of time as if it were money. Budget it, and put a little away for the next rainy day.

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Understanding Challenging Behaviors: A Primer for Employment Specialists Part 1

By Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

Anecdotally, the most commonly cited reason by professionals for the unemployment of individuals with significant disabilities is behavior. There are few aspects of life in rehabilitation more difficult than understanding challenging, puzzling, excess, or "maladaptive" behavior. Of course, the maladaption is in the eye of the beholder. As friend, colleague, and behaviorist Joe Schiappacasse argued, all behavior is "adaptive." That is, people are significantly influenced by their environment and life circumstances, so their behavior adapts to meet their personal needs. This is why we can behave politely at church Sunday morning, and are raucous at the football game later in the day. More seriously, when any of us has a significant problem at home, it is predictable that our work, and other elements of our life, suffers. Our mood often carries over from one setting to another until we resolve the conflict. When we get mad we are adapting; when we are happy, we are also adapting. People with the most significant disabilities often have no means of resolving life's conflicts or challenges, therefore, behaviors become ingrained, stronger, and more challenging as the struggle for understanding and resolution wears on. The behavior generally addresses a need. Throwing things, yelling, and running away are means of adapting; of taking some control in a life controlled by others.

Quality of life is the single biggest contributor to our psychological state. For the majority of individuals with significant disabilities who have little or no money, little recognition in the community, few friends of their choosing, and little hope for a typical life, quality of life is an empty measure on an accreditation checklist. Supporting behavior change starts by recognizing that everyone is conscious of the fact that their life is less full than others, and that much of what passes for "services" is actually a waste of time for them. Employment Specialists must believe that everyone can and should work, and that deep inside everyone is an intrinsic desire to feel purposeful. Employment Specialists have an enviable role to play in transforming human lives. A job that satisfies and pays real wages is perhaps the most important key to achieving normalcy. Without money, people remain clients, dependent upon a system. Employment Specialists capable of seeing beyond the surface behavior into the core of the motivation can change lives.

It is often said that behavior must improve prior to the job search, when in reality the cause of the behavior is the lack of meaningful work and relationships. In the United States, most of our personal wealth and recognition comes from working, while our friendships are most apt to blossom from job connections. Waiting for someone's behavior to improve before helping them find meaningful employment is akin to waiting for a flower to bloom before watering it.

Often, behaviors in daily life have very course topographies. That is, taken out of context, these behaviors would seem ill-advised, challenging, or excessive. However, these same behaviors are tempered and rendered acceptable by the individual's status, competence, and reputation. For instance, the "boss" can return late from lunch and no one complains. Why? Because the boss has power; the boss controls the paychecks; the boss has a history of hard dedicated work. All the same, the behavior is non-conforming, and if the boss was being served in a day program, the infraction would likely receive some form of negative attention. Context is everything; all of us have excess or challenging behaviors, but we are not under the rehabilitation microscope. Most of us, on occasion, gossip, drink too much, eat too much, drive too fast, stay up too late, pay our bills late, etc. Were we in a dependent circumstance someone would likely be assigned to us to remediate our "behavior."

Working with someone with challenging behaviors starts first at understanding the purpose of the behavior; agreeing that all behavior is communication; offering up replacement behaviors that more acceptably meet the person's needs; and recognizing that people respond better to reward than to punishment. The next time someone at work, or in your home life, acts out in a negative way, instead of challenging them ("stop that right now!") or threatening them (" if you don't clean your plate, no television tonight!") or coercing them with extrinsic rewards ("if you do your homework we can have ice cream") try offering additional support. Their behavior is symbolic; they may not have the words to communicate that they dislike dinner or that they don't understand their schoolwork. Instead, we often get into tugs-of-war over such minor issues. By giving up some control, we gain trust, and trust leads to a bond of respect. Once someone knows I care more about them than their behavior, we can reason together about getting a job.

Most confusing to people new to this field is the subtle difference between Behavior Management and Positive Behavioral Support. The former is based on the professional as controller; arbiter of what is right and wrong. The fact is that many so-called "target" behaviors are perfectly acceptable in many workplaces, but since our scope of experience is often quite limited or tainted by middle class experience, we force an "acceptable" but wholly unrealistic behavior regimen upon people we serve. Using the vocational profile approach, or simply a good on-site job analysis, the Employment Specialist reveals a range a suitable behaviors in a given workplace and seeks to match the person to the environment with as little disparity as possible. Therefore, look for jobs that meet the needs of the individual, or look for jobs where their behavior is likely to be seen as an asset. Remember that our job is to support, not to control. The following comparison will help guide your approach:

Comparative Differences Between Behavior Management & Positive Behavioral Support

Behavior Management	***Positive Behavior Support***
Focus is on Changing the Individual	Focus is on Changing the Environment
Focus is on Coercion	Focus is on Adaptation
Focus is on Readiness	Focus is on Ecological Validity
Focus is on Control	Focus is on Choice

Focus is on Services	Focus is on Community, Natural, Intuitive Supports
Reacts to the Behavior	Responds to the Person
Identifies the Person as the Problem	Identifies Quality of Life & the Environment as the Problem
Identifies the Person as their Behavior	Identifies the Person as Thinking & Feeling
Emphasizes Cost-Response Punishment & Consequences (If you do this, then this will happen)	Emphasizes Additional Support and Skills to Communicate Needs
Quick Fix/Crisis Orientation	Acknowledges Immediacy and seeks Long-Term Solutions
Often excludes Community	Recognizes that Community may be what's Missing
Views Community as the Last Step	Views Community as a First Step
Used when System is Stagnant	Used when Systems are Adaptive & Healthy

Special thanks to our colleagues Ruth Ryan, Roger Shelley, Mike Flaherty and Marsha Katz for this comparison.

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Understanding Challenging Behaviors: A Primer for Employment Specialists Part 2

By Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

In our previous article on behavior, we discussed the differences between Behavior Management and Positive Behavior Support, as well as the issue of waiting for someone's behavior to improve versus understanding that behavior tells a story often rooted in the pain of inactivity, ineffective communication, and generalized boredom. This column is focused on understanding specific individuals' behavior. Functional Analysis (FA), as it is often called, does not offer the solution to a behavior. Rather, FA begins the investigation into the meaning and purpose of a behavior. By identifying key causes, consequences, locales, people, and times of day, scenarios are designed that shed light on to the possible motivators for the behavior. Once known, or suspected, supports and environmental changes are introduced to support positive behavioral change.

The form provided below is not big enough to adequately report all the information generally collected when performing a functional analysis. This form is simply a guide for constructing and asking questions getting to the root cause of the behavior. Generally a team of people, especially those close to the individual, along with the person, are included in a small group that examines all the environments accessed throughout a typical day. No clue is too big or too small. Often, this tool helps debunk negative opinions and gets to the facts. A favorite result of this process is attacking the idea that a certain person "always does this." Always is an emotionally charged word that threatens people's right to be understood and supported in the most optimistic ways, such as getting a job or finding a home. If a person "always" does something, then the team begins by looking for places or times when the behavior does not occur. It might be commonsense, but many behaviors do not happen at home the same way they happen at work, or vice versa. The process begins by comparing the variables in those two locations. Chances are if good behavior happens in one place and not the other, the good behavior is a reflection of good support and understanding, or is perhaps the result of the absence of negative influences. Knowing which situation exists gives clues regarding the type of circumstance best suited to the individual.

Employment Specialists benefit from Functional Analysis when the process identifies key needs in a person's life. For instance, someone who does not behave badly when busy is an obvious candidate for employment. Someone who avoids production work in the day program but loves working in the local community garden may be a likely candidate for farm work or as the owner of a greenhouse. This is detective work.

The Behavior Hypothesis Matrix (BHM) is a fluid tool, used adaptively when performing a Functional Analysis. The team begins by identifying the key or most critical behavior, the one that is preventing the person from accessing the community or the one that reinforces a negative reputation. Guided by the left hand column, the team considers all the locations that this behavior is observed; the times of day it occurs, who is nearby when the behavior happens, what specifically is happening when the behavior occurs that could be seen as an antecedent or reinforcer, and what happens after the behavior that may reinforce or strengthen the behavior, remembering that negative attention is often as reinforcing as positive attention.

Across the top of the matrix are the IS, IS NOT, and HYPOTHESIS column headings. For every Where, When, Who, What, and Consequence answer, the team members also record their observations of what Is happening, what Is Not happening, and what they think or Hypothesize, is going on, how this behavior can be increased or replaced, etc. The team collects data over a suitable period of time and then brainstorms positive supports from the hypotheses they create. If behavior is learned, then it can unlearned. If behavior is taught, then it can be untaught. The BHM helps develop the action plan for creating environmental and personal supports that make the old behavior less efficient or less necessary for the individual. Any plan includes the teaching of new behaviors, minimizing the influence of negative environments, maximizing time in environments where the behavior does not occur, and introduces the promise of new circumstances through work and community living. The BHM is another tool for the Employment Specialist, and is critical to a good job match in many cases.

GRIFFIN-HAMMIS ASSOCIATES
BEHAVIOR HYPOTHESIS MATRIX

Name:___________________________________ Rater:____________________________ Date:______________________

Describe Specific
Behavior:____
____

Instructions: The Behavior Hypothesis Matrix (BHM) is a tool useful in identifying specific behaviors, occurring in specific environments, under specific circumstances. Raters should be those most closely associated with the individual (parents, employment specialist, teacher, clinician) and the individual, whenever possible. Raters should insert key words and phrases in the blank cells below according to the descriptions in each row and column. This evaluation of behavior should be approached from personal experience and the answers of the team compared to begin the systematic analysis of the function of a particular behavior.

WHERE The physical location(s) where the behavior occurs.			
WHEN The hour, time of day, day of week, month, time of year when the behavior occurs. Is there a relationship to other events occurring at this time?			
WHO Who is nearby when this behavior occurs? What relationships are represented? To whom; near whom; etc., does the behavior occur?			
WHAT Describe specifically what is occurring in the environment when the behavior is noticed.			
CONSEQUENCE What attention is typically given to the person when behaviors occur? What attention is given to others near the event? What is the long-term consequence of the behavior?			

Gateways to Personal Wealth Part I: Small business ownership while receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid

A view of Self-Employment as potentially the best employment and "personal-wealth-creation" option there is within SSI and Medicaid policies

Small business ownership while receiving SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and Medicaid - is the first of a multi-part series on self-employment interactions with SSI and SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) and related health care programs for small business owners with disabilities.

By Dave Hammis and Cary Griffin

Small business ownership while receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) poses an unparalleled opportunity as a potential gateway to personal wealth through a unique self-employment option to accumulate unlimited cash resources in a small business owner's business account. This wealth accumulation opportunity is not available for an SSI recipient working as an employee in a regular wage job, which only allows a single, unmarried employee to accumulate up to $2,000 in liquid cash resources, and a married SSI employee, receiving SSI, to accumulate up to $3,000.

The difference in self-employment versus wage employment wealth accumulation is so substantial it's beyond any rational mathematical comparison. As an example, a single - unmarried SSI beneficiary working in a wage job as an employee is subject to not exceeding $2,000 in total liquid cash resources - yet the same SSI recipient as a small business owner has no upper limit on cash resources in a small business account and could have up to $100,000,000 or any amount in cash, business related capital equipment and facilities and still be eligible for SSI and Medicaid.

Across the country approximately 5,300,000 (Social Security, Annual Statistical Report, 2000) people with, what Social Security broadly categorizes as, "severe disabilities" receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income) cash living assistance checks each month along with Medicaid health care coverage. SSI checks are "needs based" minimal assistance checks with a maximum Federal Benefit Rate of $545 paid to each person each month in 2002 (some states also supplement SSI checks with additional state amounts but many states do not add any additional state supplement to the SSI Federal Benefit Rate).

Five million people with disabilities living on $545 per month SSI checks results in millions of people living in poverty (SSA Commissioner on Disability, 2001). To compound the issue of living in poverty due to minimal monthly cash assistance, SSI has also set "resource limits" that must be met in order to qualify for SSI and to continue to retain SSI eligibility. As noted above, someone on SSI that is either unemployed or working as an employee cannot exceed $2,000 in liquid cash resources each month if she/he is single. Married couples both receiving SSI cannot exceed $3,000 total as a couple in cash resources. Examples of liquid cash resources that count toward the $2,000/$3000 resource limits include the cumulative total amounts in checking, savings, stocks, bonds, discretionary trusts, and face values of whole life insurance policies.

The critical "resource limit" difference between wage employment and self employment is that Self-employment SSI policies exclude unlimited resources set aside in a small business account (cash in a business account does not count toward the $2,000 maximum resource limit) and create the opportunity to enhance business equity and personal wealth through an SSI policy titled "PESS – Property Essential for Self Support." The PESS policy is so crucial to the opportunities it creates that select sections of the policy are quoted from the current SSA policy web site and are included below:

"SI 01130.501 (A) (2) Property essential to self-support used in a trade or business is excluded from resources regardless of value or rate of return effective May 1, 1990: (C) (5) Effective May 1, 1990, all liquid resources used in the operation of a trade or business are excluded as property essential to self-support."

More information on PESS can be located on Social Security's Web site at the following address: http://policy.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0501130501

SSI also uses a uniform approach, similar to the IRS for small businesses, to calculate SSI cash benefit payments for self-employment due to the way net self-employment income is treated by SSI. SSI averages every month equally, based on yearly net self-employment income reports, and therefore levels the SSI check amount for each month for net self-employment income, versus the up-and-down-month-to-month, exact SSI check adjustments resulting from wage income. Careful attention needs to be paid to SSI's yearly averaging of self-employment income, but with some attention it's a much more consistent system for SSI check payments than wage employment.

Another powerful opportunity for someone on SSI and Medicaid while operating small business is an SSI policy titled "1619(b) Medicaid". This SSI policy is referred to as a work incentive and allows individuals receiving SSI and Medicaid to earn past the point that an SSI check is reduced to $0.00 (due to the $1.00 reduction in SSI for every $2.00 of gross wages or net self-employment earnings) but still be SSI eligible and still be Medicaid eligible up to a state threshold of earnings that varies by state, roughly between $13,000 and $35,000 net income per year, depending on the state the business is located in. Exact State 1619(b) Medicaid threshold amounts can be found on SSI's policy web site at:

http://policy.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0502302200

As an example, a single person, SSI eligible, living on her/his own, perhaps in an apartment, in Massachusetts - could earn up to $26,817.36 in yearly net self-employment income and still be considered SSI and Medicaid eligible. Gross earnings from the business could be any amount with no upper threshold and the business bank account could contain any amount of cash resources, again with no upper limit on resources in the business account. This same person in Massachusetts working as an employee in a wage job, could earn up to the same amount in yearly gross wages of $26,817.36 and still be Medicaid and SSI eligible, but would be subject to a maximum of $2,000 in cash resources. Small Business ownership creates the unique personal wealth accumulation opportunity to have unlimited resources in a business account – versus the $2,000 cash limit applied in wage employment.

In conclusion, self-employment is an outstanding wealth creation option for someone receiving SSI and Medicaid. Wage employment pales in comparison to self-employment SSI policies, opportunities and flexibility. Small business ownership while receiving SSI and Medicaid offers more flexibility and substantial opportunities for unlimited cash resources in a small business account, unlimited capital business resources, land, buildings, and equipment, high net earnings potentials and yearly net income leveling of SSI check amounts.

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Gateways to Personal Wealth Part 2:
Job Development & Creating
"Jobs in a No-Jobs Setting"
through Small Business Ownership Options

A view of Self-Employment as an additional and powerful employment development tool in the job developer's tool box

Job Development & Creating "Jobs in a No-Jobs Setting" through Small Business Ownership options is the second of a multi-part series on job development and self-employment options including interactions with SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) and related health care programs for small business owners with disabilities.

By Dave Hammis and Cary Griffin

Sooner or later job developers run into the situation of discovering the perfect job and job match, the right employer, excellent networking, the right job seeker with very marketable contributions to offer as an employee, an outstanding cultural and social employment setting, and all the best natural supports conceivable - yet cannot develop the job – perhaps due to reasons such as: a declining local economy or impoverished rural community; the employer just does not have the available cash resources to hire someone new (the employer even shows the job developer the company finances and personnel layoffs sort of proving the lack of funds and bad timing to hire someone new); or the potential employer expectations have diminished due to a history of prior volunteer positions where the employer was taught to expect "free" volunteer employees with disabilities; or for whatever reason there are "no jobs" in the perfect job match setting. Pretty frustrating!

Often this type of situation, presuming a job developer that has high quality job development skills is involved, does open the door to the process of putting together long term marketing follow up and long term "win-win-win" strategies that can lead to employment for someone in a future that develops and maintains slowly over time. Certainly investing in long-term relationships is a quality job development skill and approach.

We are all faced with what we can actually do "today" and also what we believe we can develop for "tomorrow." However, what about the job seeker the employment setting would have been perfect for? She pretty much needs a job now, still needs a "today" employment option, and walking away from such a perfect setting to perhaps compromise on another less perfect job and job match seems like a tough price to pay for the job seeker.

Are there other possible “today” options for the job developer and job seeker in this situation? If self-eployment, as the title of this article implies, could be one of those “today” options, and could somehow secure the perfect job setting noted above, even in a “no-jobs” setting, how would it work? Why would it even be considered? How could a small business possibly be developed or created in the above perfect wage job setting? Self-employment and job development seems to be a bit absurd as a combination and probably way too complicated. After all, isn’t small business ownership something that requires years of classes on how to own and operate a small business, including a highly educated and multi-talented owner with accounting, marketing, service and/or manufacturing skills that can at least fully understand small business operations and probably will also need to do everything required to own and operate a small business?

To explore and address the questions above, the following two examples of using self employment to develop and create small business employment outcomes - in the perfect settings with the perfect job matches (that were also “no jobs” settings) - for two individuals with substantial developmental disabilities are included below from the authors experiences, quoted from a prior writing:

“Recently in a small rural town in Montana, a “challenging” person who was identified as having multiple and significant disabilities, shared with us his work dreams. The place he identified for his work dreams, was a local “Nature Center.” He took us on a tour and clearly demonstrated the interest and relationships he had already developed there. In attempting to job develop here, multiple objections were offered from the manager, including the lack of funding for new employees. The manager would agree to any volunteer help, but “had no money” for employees.

Acting on the belief that it is possible to job develop and create employment for anyone, anywhere, anytime, a business plan for a sole proprietorship for retail sales of items related to the Nature Center, was developed and given to the manager as a proposal to operate a retail sales business at the Nature Center in return for 10% of the profits. The manager reviewed and assisted in refining the business plan and then submitted it to the Board of Directors for approval. The business is owned by the person, and we were able to clearly “create” a work outcome following our beliefs of employment for anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Another example involves a young man in another Montana rural town, where an employer was approached to develop a position as an entry-level mechanic assistant. The employer did not have an adequate cash flow to hire him. A limited partnership proposal was written to utilize some funds from a Social Security Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS), and to become a part owner of a small segment of the business. The wealth of knowledge of the business world came into play again, as the owner advised, amended, and assisted with creating an entirely new proposal for a sole proprietorship for the young man, that would work based on a $28.00 per *hour contracted rate for the individual's new small business, with a 25% consignment fee for the use of space at the principle owner's building, and a clear method for sharing of customers and work loads. The Business Plan and PASS have been approved, and an absolute "no" from a potential employer was turned into a mutually profitable sole proprietorship and partnership. Once more the business world teaches us that it is possible to achieve employment for anyone, anywhere, anytime." (Griffin-Hammis, 2000)*

In both of the examples above each job seeker and employment situation was an excellent match. In each situation the employers had "no today jobs" and certainly could have (and by the way were and still are) been included in long-term marketing and networking strategies for "tomorrow jobs". Yet, because the job development process included the option to consider creating small businesses inside of the existing business "today-solutions" of operating businesses inside of the existing businesses were created to take advantage of the perfect job matches and employment locations without waiting for the longer term job development and networking to create jobs "tomorrow" for the two individuals that were seeking employment today. Both small businesses look and perform almost identically to the intended jobs at each location, but job development was altered in one critical and significant way.

The significant job development alteration occurred when the proposition to the employers, who indicated they had no money to pay employees, was turned around from asking if the employer had money to pay the job seeker to the proposition of "What if the job seeker developed a small business inside your business and the job seeker's small business paid you for business rent, commissions, and/or percentages of profits for business space, support, shared work and shared customers?" The reverse marketing approach summary to the employer became "Instead of you paying the job seeker money via wages – the job seeker will run a small business that compliments your business and will pay you money in the form of a percentage of profits?" Or simpler yet, "Instead of you (the employer) paying the job seeker – the job seeker will pay you."

What's in it for the job seeker? Certainly employment is an outcome! As a small business owner or as an employee – either way the job seeker is employed. The job seeker can take advantage of a perfect job match and employment setting today and does not have to walk away from such a great setting and compromise on less then great job matches elsewhere, while the possibility of a tomorrow employment solution is years away and may or may not be possible through long-term job development efforts. Also in the 1 part of this series of articles it was clearly shown that:

"Small business ownership while receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) poses an unparalleled opportunity as a potential gateway to personal wealth through a unique self-employment option to accumulate unlimited cash resources in a small business owner's business account. The difference in self-employment versus wage employment wealth accumulation is so substantial for a job seeker who receives SSI that it's beyond any rational mathematical comparison."

In conclusion, job development and creating jobs in a no-jobs setting through small business ownership options is a set of proven and powerful job development tools. Being open to negotiating employment through entertaining the possibility of opening discussions with employers about self-employment possibilities and businesses within businesses creates an entire new range of possibilities in securing employment in some of the most employment resistant situations and for job seekers that traditionally might be considered the most difficult to develop jobs for and the least likely self employment candidates. Self-employment is concurrently an outstanding wealth creation option for someone receiving SSI and Medicaid and also opens employment creation doors not possible in traditional wage employment situations. Incorporating self-employment discussions and proposals in job development efforts results in increased flexibility, more options to choose from, and enhanced employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities, employers and job developers.

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