

**JOB CARVING:**  
***A GUIDE FOR JOB DEVELOPERS AND EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS***

By Cary Griffin

Job carving is the act of analyzing work duties performed in a given job and identifying specific tasks that might be assigned to an employee with severe disabilities. While full-time employment is certainly a reasonable outcome, job carving, or job creation, is typically utilized with individuals in Supported Employment who, for a variety of reasons, including physical disability, psychiatric illness, intellectual capacity, medical fragility, available supports, and choice, may not be in the market for full-time employment (Griffin & Winter, 1988). The utmost care must be taken not to create jobs that further devalue people with disabilities by physically separating them from other workers or by having them perform tasks that are considered bothersome, dangerous, or unpleasant.

There are many variables associated with the job carving process. For instance, the marketing approach in job carving should be deliberate and businesslike. Job developers should approach potential employers as diagnosticians, ready to determine needs and offer solutions to productivity challenges. Another variable is consumer employment objectives. No job development effort can take place without a thorough understanding of what type of work is suitable and acceptable. The attitude of co-workers is also an issue. In creating employment opportunities, the "corporate culture", or all those unwritten rules of a particular workplace, must be taken into consideration.

For instance, a short lived job was once carved for an individual to pick up and deliver parts for an automobile dealership. Employing a designated parts delivery driver was a financially efficient method for this dealership to approach parts delivery problems. The dealership's traditional method involved taking a parts order from a local garage and then pulling a parts department, service department, or repair employee from their current task to deliver the part. This was a very inefficient process, but the employees enjoyed it because they got to leave the building for a while and take a break. The job created for a person who wished to work under thirty hours a week did not last because the other employees saw this new worker as taking one of the few benefits associated with their jobs. A little observation of the worksite culture may have lead to a different employment approach and the avoidance of this job loss scenario.

Observation, with frequent employer contact, is the key in job carving. Without spending time in the actual business setting, or one very closely associated to it, the job creation process will not succeed. Every workplace is different: different culture, different quality standards, different personalities, different procedures (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). To insure a good employer/employee fit, the job match process must include job site research based upon consumer desire and employer need.

While the scope of this paper does not allow for a thorough discussion of job development strategy, the following chart may help to loosely define the steps often associated with the creation of new employment opportunities.

<i>STEP</i>	<i>ACTION</i>
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1	Determine Consumer Needs & Desires
2	Research Target Businesses: Personnel, Training, Retention, Competition, Technical Issues
3	Visit Sample Target Businesses
4	Inventory Activities of Typical Workers Performing Target Tasks
5	Observe Corporate Culture: Rules & Rituals
6	Task Analyze Duties & Determine Consumer Capabilities, Training & Assistance Needs
7	Negotiate With Employer
8	Teach & Refine Tasks
9	Build on Typical Supports/Relationships
10	Fade
11	Maintain Consultative Role

A few examples of Job Carving follow to illustrate the strategies or approaches employed in developing work options for individuals with severe disabilities.

*THE BUSINESS EFFICIENCY & PRODUCTIVITY STRATEGY.* This approach can be utilized with a variety of service and manufacturing operations. This particular example is based upon a composite of small town service stations. The discussion of research concerning the gas stations illustrates the types of questions that will need to be answered in developing a sales approach and, ultimately, a job.

Jim's Texaco is located in a town of approximately 10,000 people in the Southwest. The town is slowly becoming a year round resort due to its proximity to mountains, fishing, hiking, camping, and skiing. Jim has operated the station for over ten years and usually works alone. He has had part time help, but finds that local college students are unreliable and hard to supervise.

Jim was observed over an eight hour day. His tasks were recorded and he was later questioned concerning income, demand for his mechanical repair services, etc. The inventory of Jim's day revealed that he spent approximately four hours a day performing mechanical repairs, for which there was always ample demand. The rest of Jim's day was taken up by the activities shown on the chart below. A quick check of these activities, and a little behind the scenes research, which included calls to the local gasoline wholesaler, the National Automobile Dealers Association, and General Motors revealed that Jim earns \$34.00 per hour when performing mechanical repairs and tune ups, but only five cents per gallon when pumping gasoline. Jim has to sell gasoline to keep the Texaco franchise. The other activities, which account for half the workday, have little direct revenue generating impact.

<i>Jim's Inventory (Non-Sequential)</i>	<i>Efficient &amp; Productive for Jim?</i>	<i>Valued; Useful Labor for Assistant</i>
Answer Phones	Sometimes	Yes
Pump Gas	No	Yes
Check Oil	No	Yes

Trouble Shoot	Yes	N/A
Wash Windshields	No	Yes
Clean Tools	No	Yes
Wash/Detail Cars	Sometimes	Yes
Mechanical Repairs	Yes	No
Go to Post Office	No	Yes
Re-Stock Shelves/Islands	No	Yes
Check-in Deliveries	No	Yes
Talk with Customers	Sometimes	Maybe
Tune-Ups	Yes	No/Maybe
Fix Flats	No	Yes
Clean Facility	No	Yes

A little further discussion reveals that Jim takes home approximately \$26,000 per year in salary. If Jim were to spend eight hours per day performing mechanical repairs, which he enjoys and for which there is a waiting market, the annual salary doubles to \$52,000. By carving out the activities which are vital to the operation of Jim's Texaco and creating a job for an individual with a severe disability, the owner can concentrate on the more profitable activities. The new position might have an annual salary of \$12,000 (a very reasonable salary for this type of job), and thereby reduce Jim's take home pay to \$40,000. This new salary represents a marked increase over the original \$26,000 figure and will look appealing to Jim if a cautious, relationship building sales approach is utilized (Griffin, 1991).

The actual job created, of course, will depend upon consumer choice, competence, and available supports, as well as local market conditions and the general climate of the work environment.

*CONSULTATIVE/EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STRATEGY.* This approach can be utilized in a variety of businesses, especially those that suffer high personnel turnover or seasonal market fluctuations. Be advised that jobs typically having high turnover may not be choice jobs for anyone. These positions should not be utilized as dumping grounds for people with severe disabilities, and may indeed result in heightened anxiety about work demands, job loss, and employment expectations. Approach these jobs with common sense and the understanding that such jobs can be great first jobs or seasonal jobs. This may simply be a step on the career ladder.

Again, it is important to take note of the corporate culture of businesses that appear to be high turnover operations. One motel that this author worked with had a high turnover rate, but after a few days of on-site observation, a core group or clique of stable employees became apparent. This group of housekeepers had long-term employment records and shared a highly ritualized culture that was hard to break into. Admission was gained through showing work stamina, a strong sense of insider humor, and by contributing to the purchase of donuts, pop, and snacks for this team to share. Failure to read the culture and take slow, decisive action to fit in lead quickly to exclusion. New hires failing to perceive these rites were left to fend for themselves. In such a situation, many workers simply moved on to the next job. A good job developer recognizes these worksite traits and develops strategies to make consumers members of the workforce, thus protecting the job and the individual.

In the Consultative/Employment Service Strategy, research is performed to find business trends conducive to job development (Griffin, 1989). In keeping with the motel example above, research was performed in a western city to assist in the creation of a service niche for a local supported employment agency. The research included the identification of motels near the homes of individuals seeking first and second jobs in housekeeping departments. Calls were made to the owners of a dozen small to moderate sized motels.

Almost all of the owners were willing to discuss their turnover, recruitment, and training issues. From these discussions it was determined that the average moderate sized motel in this area employed five housekeepers, one of whom was the head housekeeper with additional duties, responsibilities, and pay. The average work week for maids was 40 hours over six days, and the pay averaged \$4.50 per hour with varying benefits. Head housekeepers made \$6.00 to \$8.00 per hour. Average annual turnover was approximately 200%, with a range of 80% to 300%. Turnover varies from city to city, motel to motel, which necessitates case specific research.

When a housekeeper terminates employment, either the manager or the head housekeeper is faced with performing the work or seeing that the duties are covered. Head housekeepers get first option on overtime pay in many cases. Usually, overtime is split between the head housekeeper and the other maids. Regardless, the manager or owner views this as a possible time for reduced work quality, poorer customer service, and additional cost. The search for another housekeeper is vital and is initiated through classified ads, calling a known pool of former employees, or through word of mouth to friends of the other housekeepers.

Once a new hire is identified, a week is often required for training to company standards. This pulls the head housekeeper from typical duties and opens up more overtime expenditures. When recruitment and training are finally complete, the cost to the employer can range from \$500 to \$2000, largely in hidden costs. If the motel employs five maids and has an average turnover rate of 200%, the employer stands to lose as much as \$20,000 per year in hiring and training costs. The job developer must create a problem solving relationship with the manager or owner and approach discussion of these costs over time. A rush to accomplishment here can cause the owner to feel incompetent or angry. This situation can inhibit employment opportunity.

The job developer can approach the manager with a possible employment service strategy. This service might include hiring, screening, training, and follow-up. Charging for this service, based on an analysis of what the employer stands to save by hiring one or two people through the service agency, is also a reasonable business activity. When people get something for nothing their dedication to it often remains minimal. On the service delivery side, if the provider agency does not value the employment services it offers, on-going service accountability to the employer is diminished. Good employment services are worth paying for, and the addition of a market-based price may raise the expectations and accomplishments of all involved parties.

Another strategy here is to perform an analysis of housekeeper routines, and in a similar fashion to Jim's Texaco, carve out unproductive or duplicative efforts to make all workers more productive. This also reduces the inconvenience associated with a team member quitting. Such carved duties at a motel might include: stripping beds; emptying trash cans; stocking the supply carts; replenishing towels to the towel carts, etc. All these activities save time and make the workers more productive.

Do be aware that making people more productive can have the short range effect of lowering weekly paychecks, however. This event can lead to trouble for the new employee if viewed by the others as the

cause for their misfortune. If this situation may occur, strategize with the employer. Perhaps increased productivity dictates that the next vacancy not be filled, thus guaranteeing full employment for those remaining, while securing the need for the newly created assisting position.

The example of the motel should not limit job carving, restructuring or creating activities to this industry alone. Many businesses and offices of all types face similar circumstances, and can benefit from consolidating activities into a new core job or jobs.

For instance, Grease Monkey, a franchise quick oil-change company, has carved a number of duties to speed production and smooth operations. Customers at Grease Monkey are greeted by an attendant who takes vital information on the service desired. Quickly, an employee begins to vacuum the carpets, while another cleans windows. The vehicle is pulled inside a work bay and one employee, stationed in the grease pit, drains the oil and lubricates the chassis, while topside, employees check tire pressure, fill fluid reservoirs, and add new oil. The whole process takes less than fifteen minutes and costs a little less than typical, slower, service at a local garage. The labor costs for Grease Monkey can be higher than other companies in the oil change business, because Grease Monkey has as many as four employees working on one car. However, customer satisfaction resulting from convenient service hours, short wait periods, and quality service, brings an increase in highly profitable, repeat business.

*INTERACTIVE DUTIES STRATEGY.* This approach to job carving shares aspects of the other examples given here, but is presented to show how job restructuring can lead to the creation of natural or typical supports.

A welding shop operation was observed and inventoried to determine a possible job match for an individual with severe mental retardation. The shop employed four welders who performed all the duties associated with business, except accounting which was hired out.

In order to create a naturally supportive environment and minimize job coach presence, the inventory of daily activities identified tasks that could be carved for this individual to perform, but also included duties that normally would be accomplished with two welders working together. The sales approach here emphasizes that now, instead of having two welders, who each earn \$12.00 per hour, perform a task, one welder and the newly hired assistant, earning less, can perform the same job at less cost and greater efficiency.

Again, this example can be modified to fit many industry applications. The chart below illustrates the tasks that are routinely performed, possible carved tasks, and the duties that can be performed by the assistant with other workers, or performed in the presence of co-workers. The interactive job performance decreases job coach presence and stigma, emphasizes natural supervision and co-worker involvement, and reduces consumer reliance on service systems (Rogan, 1990).

<i>Welder's Inventory (Non-Sequential)</i>	<i>Carved Tasks</i>	<i>Interactive &amp; Shared Tasks</i>
Clock In	Yes	Yes
Drink Coffee; Talk	Yes	Yes
Get Work Orders	Yes	Yes

Design; Trouble Shoot	No	No
Weld	No	Maybe
Change Tanks	Yes	Yes
Sort Scrap	Yes	Maybe
Carry to Recycle/Trash Bin	Yes	Sometimes
Clean Work Area	Yes	Yes
Clean Facility	Yes	Maybe
Label Stock/Supplies	Yes	Yes
Check-in & Stock Deliveries	Yes	Yes
Talk with Customers	No	Maybe
Lunch/Breaks: Talk; Joke	Yes	Yes
Check-Out; Ride Home	Yes	Yes

The above job carving examples are taken from job development activities performed by the author. The information presented is related to specific research or to individuals with unique employment goals. Market situations and worksite cultures vary drastically in many cases, but the general concepts presented here should generalize to a variety of employment settings and situations. The implementation of a job carving approach is at first quite time consuming and, therefore, not readily utilized in its more sophisticated forms. If the process as outlined here is considered, and significant attention is given to addressing both consumer and employer concerns, lessened reliance on service system supports and increased job tenure should result.

#### References

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Please note that this article appears in slightly different form in: Wehman, Paul. *Life Beyond the Classroom: Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishers, 1996.