

Transition to Integrated Employment Brief

A publication of the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities @ RI College

Discovery and Customized Employment



Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities

August 2014

Volume 1, Issue 3

In June, Rhode Island College and the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities hosted the third of a series of public forums and workshops pertaining to integrated employment. Michael Callahan from Marc Gold and Associates (MG&A) led a day-long workshop focused on implementing discovery and customized employment. Customized Employment is a proven alternative to the typical supported employment approach of applying for competitive, demand job openings, an approach that tends not to work for many people with significant Intellectual and Developmental disabilities (ID/DD). This *Brief* highlights strategies, tools, and a variety of free resources to help you get started with the discovery and customized employment process.

Discovery and Descriptive Profile

Within the customized process, "discovery" is the starting point. A facilitator meets with the job seeker and their family usually in their home and, through qualitative interviewing, gathers detailed, strength-based information about routines, neighborhood, transportation opportunities, formal and informal work history, life activities in the home and other informal settings, other work skills, successful supports, work history, educational history, etc. The facilitator also observes the job seeker in community settings and may accompany him or her in a shared community activity to gather more first-hand observations of the job seeker's strengths, communication and learning styles, social interactions, etc. The facilitator may also review existing evaluations, but only as a supplement to the strength-based qualitative interview of the job seeker, family and others who know him or her well.

The information gathered by the facilitator during discovery is compiled into a comprehensive written profile that describes the job seeker in a narrative manner. It is descriptive rather than comparative or evaluative, describing individual strengths, preferences and interests, what the individual CAN do, and the supports and conditions that promote success. The information in a discovery profile can substitute for traditional vocational assessment and form the basis for the customized plan for employment.

The Customized Planning Meeting

The Customized Planning Meeting is held with the individual, family, friends, advocate, employment provider, VR counselor and others chosen by the job seeker. It is based on the information in the Discovery Profile and develops a blueprint for customized job development. It should include:

- What works and doesn't work for the individual
- Job seeker's interests, potential contributions and conditions for success
- Types of job tasks the job seeker can offer potential employers
- Specific employment sites where a job might be customized for the job seeker

Discovery Profile Resources

Forms, samples and detailed guides for completing a Discovery Profile can be found at:

<http://www.marccgold.com/publications/forms.html>

Source: *Profiles: Capturing the Information of Discovery*, MG&A

Visual Resume—An Alternative Job Developer’s Tool

It is well known that people with significant disabilities do not typically fare well in a competitive job hiring process. In the customized employment model promoted by Marc Gold and Associates (MG&A), a personalized job development plan, accompanied by a visual resume, is a recommended alternative to the traditional application or interview process.

The visual resume is a proven marketing tool used to illustrate a person's skills, talents and experiences, and potential contributions to a business. This non-traditional presentation strategy, also known as an Individual Employment Portfolio, was tested with employers in more than twenty states. Participating employers reported an increase in their comfort level with hiring someone with a disability and enabled them to see a person with a disability within their business (Mast, Sweeney & West 1997).

The visual resume merges two concepts, the artist portfolio and the business presentation. It is not a scrap book. Presentation methods are often via a Microsoft Power Point presentation or a three-ring stand up business portfolio. Input from the job seeker and family regarding pictures and information to include is important. A typical visual resume is 8- 10 slides and includes:

- Introductory portrait photo (facing camera)
- Images of performance related to past employment experiences, hobbies, competencies, talents (images of person completing task functions-doing a chore at home, completing volunteer or job task, etc.)
- Narrative pages using brief, clear phrasing that describes experience and work-related hard and soft functional skills (can alphabetize, follows written instruction, works until tasks are completed, etc.)
- The job seeker's preferred task list (when customizing) or job goal (when competing)

Sources:

Using a Visual Resume for Job Development, Ellen Condon, MG&A

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/Visual%20Resume%20Article.pdf>

Using Presentation Portfolios for Effective Job presentation of Individuals with Disabilities, Mast, Sweeney & West

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/Using%20Presentation%20Portfolios%20for%20Effective.pdf>



Visual Resume Sample, Ellen Condon, MG&A

Available at www.marcgold.com

Developing a Business Case for Customized Employment

The result of customized employment, as presented by Marc Gold & Associates, is for "employers to receive specific benefit to their workplaces from an employee who is granted specific consideration in providing those benefits." A successful customized employment relationship is therefore two-sided, with benefits for both the job seeker and the employer. For the job seeker success results when the job comprises the closest possible match to the individual's **conditions for success, interests, and ability to contribute**. For the employer, benefit is achieved when the relationship addresses **unmet needs of the business, tasks better performed by others at a lower pay grade, and/or tasks that enhance the business**.

The Employer's Benefits: Developed in a Needs Analysis		
<i>Unmet Workplace Needs:</i>	<i>Tasks better performed by others:</i>	<i>Specific Benefit / Productivity:</i>
This area focuses on tasks that need to get done but are not getting done in the way the employer would like. It also can include tasks that have not been performed but need to be.	This area focuses on aspects of jobs that might better be performed by others at a lower pay grade. This option can directly save money for employers.	This area focuses on workplace needs for additional productivity in specific tasks. It must be matched with job seeker's specific competencies.
Adapted from: Discovery and Customized Employment Workshop, June 2014, MG&A		

Negotiation is the recommended strategy for creating customized employment relationships. Although negotiation starts with job matching, it goes beyond finding a fit to negotiating a fit when existing jobs create barriers. Job developers are encouraged to generate a targeted list of employers during the employment planning process with the job seeker and to research those businesses prior to entering into negotiations. Advance preparation also includes being well versed in the concept of customized employment, related tools and resources, and the service system in order to make an effective employer presentation once contact is initiated.

Strategies for Accessing Hidden Aspects of Workplaces

- As part of a needs analysis during job development negotiations, following a tour, one employer at a time on behalf of a specific job seekers
- As part of information, "discovery" interviews with employers, concurrent with individualized job development
- As an effort to enter into a service partnership with a business to assist in the adoption of customizing employment internally
- As part of general activity in the community by job developers, family members, and job seekers

Source:

Employer Negotiation Strategies for Job Developers in Customized Employment, MB&A
<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/5Job%20Development%20Employer%20Negotiation%20Strategies%20Article.pdf>

Discovery and Customized Employment Resources

Documenting Discovery: Developing a Descriptive Profile to Guide Employment Plans - Provides a three-part profile that is a rich and comprehensive description of an individual's strengths, challenges, background, and conditions for success.

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/Profiles%20Documenting%20Discovery%20Article.pdf>

The Customized Plan for Employment: Developing a Blueprint for Job Development - Takes the information gathered through the discovery process and personal profile and incorporates it into an employment planning meeting process, guiding the team through the creation of the customized plan.

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/Customized%20Plan%20for%20Employment%20article.pdf>

Employer Negotiation Strategies for Job Developers in Customized Employment - Describes the negotiation process as a strategy incorporating an employment needs/benefits analysis.

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/5Job%20Development%20Employer%20Negotiation%20Stra>

Job Support: Suggestions for Supporting Persons with Disabilities on Job Sites

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/Job%20Site%20Supports.pdf>

Job Analysis: A Strategy for Assessing and Utilizing the Culture of Work Places to Support Persons with Disabilities

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/Job%20Analysis.pdf>

National Supports: A Delicate Balancing Act

<http://www.marcgold.com/Publications/White%20Papers/Natural%20Supports.pdf>

Customized Employment = Solutions for Employers (Video)

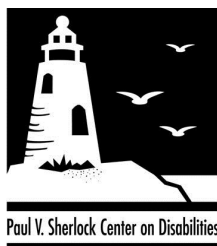
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/media/webcast/20110610-odep-ce/20110610-odep-ce-2.htm>

Customized Employment—Federal and State Policies

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/CustomizedEmployment.htm>

Self-Employment & Entrepreneurship

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/SelfEmploymentEntrepreneurship.htm>



Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities
Rhode Island College
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
Voice: 401-456-8072
TTY Relay: 711 or 800-745-5555
www.sherlockcenter.org

Transition to Integrated Employment
2014 Public Forum and Training Series
www.sherlockcenter.org