

CUSTOMISED EMPLOYMENT EXPLAINER FOR EMPLOYERS



IMAGINING



DISCOVERING



FINDING

School To Work
for Secondary Students
with Disability



**resourcing
inclusive
communities**

An initiative of Family Advocacy



What is Customised Employment?

Customised Employment is a mutually beneficial employment relationship between an employee and employer. The relationship is based on the specific contributions of an employee that meet specific areas of benefit to an employer. Meaning, rather than responding to a job opening or job description, a person is supported to obtain a unique role created within a business that matches their unique interests and skills.

Customised Employment was developed over 40 years ago and was founded on the belief that everyone can work in typical, paid employment.

Who is Customised Employment for?

- Everyone! The practices and principles of Customised Employment can be utilised to support any person into employment.
- Individuals who have faced barriers in accessing employment.
- Individuals who have not found success through the typical competitive or comparative employment process.
- Individuals with complex disabilities who are disadvantaged by traditional job seeking practices.

Benefits to Employers

Customised Employment can benefit employers in the following ways:

1. Assists in identifying workplace needs and areas of benefit
2. Matches Job Seekers with specific skills and interests to meet the specific needs of an employer
3. Supports workplace staff to confidently train and effectively support the employee with disability.

There are three stages of Customised Employment:

1. Discovery
2. Job Development
3. On-site Job Support

Stage 1: Discovery

The first step of Customised Employment is the Discovery Process. This process helps the Job Seeker determine:

- Areas of work interests
- Contributions they can make to a workplace, and;
- Conditions that enable them to thrive in a workplace.

While the employer does not participate in this step, they benefit from the rich, detailed information that is discovered about the Job Seeker which can possibly address an area of need for their business. The Discovery Process includes observations from people who know the Job Seeker well and hold high expectations of what the person can and will contribute to a work environment in a valued and meaningful way.

Stage 2: Job Development – this is where employers join the process!

Job Development connects the information learned about the Job Seeker during the Discovery Process, with a potential employer.

During the Job Development stage, a person in the role of Job Developer represents the Job Seeker by contacting businesses on the Job Seeker's behalf. The Job Developer will approach these businesses with the aim to:

1. Ask questions and conduct research on the business
2. Understand how the business operates and identify potential unmet needs of a business
3. Provide information regarding the concept of Customised Employment and, if/when appropriate, provide examples
4. Introduce the Job Seeker to the employer
5. Negotiate a mutually beneficial job on the Job Seekers' behalf

A Job Developer may work for an agency, they might be hired directly by the Job Seeker's family or in some scenarios, a family member might be in the role of Job Developer. In any of these scenarios, the Job Developer represents one person at a time.

During this phase, the Job Developer will offer to conduct an **Employer Needs and Benefits Analysis**. The goal of the analysis is to identify how the Job Seeker's interests and skills can

contribute to the business environment, while addressing the needs of the business. This process would only take place with permission from the employer and is not a critique of the business.

The Job Developer will explore the following areas within a business:

1. **Unmet Workplace Need:** 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, I.E. slower components of tasks, back-up/bottlenecks, material/tool supply, inconvenient location of materials.

An example of an unmet workplace need could include a backup of returned items at a department store.

2. **Tasks better performed by others:** Aspects of jobs that might better be performed by others at an entry pay grade. I.E. interruptions, high work demands, unattended materials/products, materials misplaced.

An example of a task better performed by others could include an entry level employee undertaking preparatory tasks before a car is serviced.

3. **Specific benefit to enhance business:** Improves performance and efficiency of workers by targeting specific tasks that enhance the existing jobs within a business, I.E. damaged materials/goods, episodic duties, unsafe or unsightly conditions.

An example of a task that enhances a business may be having someone engage with customers who enter a busy hardware store.

What can employers do? Be open to hearing about the Customised Employment process and how it can benefit your business. Ask questions of the Job Developer and if you're unsure about the process, seek out more information. If the process progresses, participate in the Employer Needs and Benefits Analysis to assist in identifying how the Job Seeker can contribute to the business.

Stage 3: On-site Job Supports – employer involvement is key!

In the Customised Employment approach, on-site supports are provided by Job Supporters, which are paid individuals, external to the company, who work as a team with the workplace to address the support requirements of the employee.

Once a job description has been negotiated between the employee and the employer, the Job Supporter will undertake a job analysis. This process focuses on identifying:

- The **way** employers do things
- The **means** employers use to train and support employees
- The **people** employers assign for supervision

The information gathered during the Job Analysis is the foundation of the employee's success. When an employee starts the job, they receive the typical workplace training from the typical

workplace trainer and are supervised by the typical workplace supervisor. Typical refers to 'natural supports' or workplace staff such as a co-worker, workplace trainer, supervisor, or business owner. The organisation's natural way of doing things is the best approach for a person with disability to be taught the correct method as well as understanding the organisations standards.

The Job Supporter remains available and will support the business in their training and supervision of the employee in the following ways:

- At first, they will closely (but discreetly) observe how the employee is trained and supervised and record how they perform the tasks.
- If difficulties emerge, they will seek solutions with the employer and make suggestions, if needed, about how the person learns best. The Job Supporter will thoughtfully suggest changes that might better suit the employer and the employee.
- When the employee can do their tasks multiple times without assistance, and the workplace feels confident to support the employee, the Job Supporter will fade their support.

What can employers do? Work with the Job Supporter to identify the natural ways, means and people of the business. Remain open to the suggestions provided by the Job Supporter in how to successfully support the employee into their new role. Ask questions and seek clarification when you are unsure.

Looking for more information?

For more useful resources and information, please visit our websites at www.family-advocacy.com or www.ric.org.au

Contact us



Phone: 02 9869 7753 or 1800 774 764

Email: info@ric.org.au

Website: www.ric.org.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/resourcinginclusivecommunities>