Customized Employment
Who benefits from customized employment?

- Limited or no work history in mainstream employment
- Past work experiences have been negative and/or poor matches
- Difficulty fitting in to standardized job descriptions
- Difficulty with traditional application process or interview process
Customized Employment

According to the US/DOL:

Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both.

It is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of an employer.
Two Distinct Approaches

- **Labor Market Job Development:** Responding to the needs employers with applicants who are “qualified” to meet those general needs.

- **Customized Job Development:** Discovering the “strengths, needs and interests” of applicants and negotiating a job description that meets both the applicant’s and employer’s specific need.
The process:

- Discovery
- Vocational Profile
- Vocational Planning Meeting
- Visual Resume
- Customized Job Development
- On-site and Off-site Support
- On-going Support
Discovery

This is the first phase of the process, where our main goals are to get to know the participant and to form a trusting relationship with them. It consists of:

- Home Visit (if approved)
- Community Exploration
- Exploration of Current Activities
- Novel Activity
- Situational Assessment at a work site (if necessary)
- Interviews (…with family members, friends, neighbors, community members, teachers, therapists and/or other agency providers)
The Vocational Profile is a comprehensive 3 part document where all the information we’ve gathered during Discovery is collected in preparation for the Vocational Profile meeting and future Job Development.
In the profile, our goal is to state:

- what the person DOES, not what we think they can or cannot do.
- what we have observed directly or learned during the Discovery process.

We avoid statements like “can” or “is able to.” So instead of “she is able to use the computer” we say that “she uses the computer to check and respond to e-mails on a daily basis.”
Vocational Profile Meeting

- This is the culmination of the Discovery process. In order for the meeting to be successful, we try to generate a list of people that will be helpful in offering information about the participant, and also people that might have connections in various businesses. Of course all of these people will need to be approved by the participant.
Topics discussed:

- What Works/Doesn’t Work
- Conditions
- Interests
- Contributions
- Possible Job Tasks
- Potential Employers
Visual Resume

- When in Job Development, every job seeker will have a resume of some kind. The process of building a resume after the Planning meeting is an important one, and we find it leads to better overall outcomes.
Pictures taken during the Discovery Process are used in the Visual Resume, and here we try to highlight the job seeker’s talents, abilities, and the contributions they will bring to a job.

It is shown to potential employers in presentations during the Job Development phase.
Customized Job Development

- After the planning meeting is held, employment specialists will have the initial list of employers from which to begin job development.

- The potential employers discussed in the meeting will be fully explored before moving on to other businesses. We will always exhaust all avenues into a business and try different angles when the initial one doesn’t work out.
Meetings with employers

- Discover ‘unmet needs’ through discussion and tour of business
- Talk about specific tasks
- Discuss interests, skills and contributions of job seeker
- Assess social environment; meet staff and managers
- Show visual/traditional resume
- Set up time for job seeker to meet with potential candidate
- Use as opportunity to network further; learn about other employers…
Job developers can offer three options for conducting a Needs Analysis:

1. Conduct the Analysis at no charge to the employer

2. Conduct the Analysis in a partnership between employer representative and provider

3. If desired, have the employer conduct the Analysis without assistance
Customized Employment targets...

**Unmet workplace needs**

CE provides a strategy for employers to focus on the unmet needs that inevitably occur in a time of multi-tasking, high expectation demand.

**Tasks better performed by others**

CE can focus on the discrete tasks of job descriptions relating to highly skilled and credentialed positions in workplaces.

**Specific employee competencies**

CE can utilize specific job seeker competencies based on discovering their “strengths, needs and interests” and matches and negotiates with existing employer needs.
Support

- Once a Customized job is found, on the job support is provided. Assistance is provided with learning tasks, acclimating to new environment, and interacting with coworkers.

- Ongoing support is provided on an as-needed basis, both on and off the job site

- Support is provided to participants and staff alike, with the goal of building in natural supports

- The better the match, the less support is needed on a job
Geneva C.

Geneva began work at Foot Locker in January 2009 and has become a very important member of their team.

The job was customized around her unique skill set and the specific needs of staff at Foot Locker.
Paula E.

Paula is filling a need that wasn’t being met at Cooper Square Realty, the largest realty company in NYC.

The job was customized around her skills using computers and her sharp attention to detail while meeting the employers need of sorting and organizing invoices for appropriate account managers.
Paula E.

This job has changed her life in so many ways, including increased confidence and social life.

Paula recently saved the company thousands of dollars by pointing out a billing mistake.
Job Path has used the Customized Employment process based on the model developed by Marc Gold and Associates.

Their website can be found at www.marcgold.com/

Our website can be found at www.jobpathnyc.org/
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