



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE and CONTINUING EDUCATION TACE CENTER: REGION IV

*A Project of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University
in collaboration with the DBTAC: Southeast ADA*

UNBUNDLING DEMAND: SHIFTING THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP FROM COMPETITIVE TO CUSTOMIZED USING UNMET NEEDS AS A STRATEGY TO ENGAGE EMPLOYERS

Event Date: September 30, 2009

Presenter: Michael Callahan, Marc Gold & Associates

Facilitator: Steffany Stevens

Overview

Steffany Stevens: Welcome to TACE Region IV webinar *Unbundling Demand: Shifting the Employment Relationship from Competitive to Customized*. Good afternoon and good morning depending on where you are. Welcome to the 2009 TACE IV webinar series. My name is Steffany Stevens and I'm a member of the Southeast TACE Region IV team. I want to welcome back many of you who have participated in many of our previous sessions and a big welcome for those of you who are joining us for the first time.

As you know, the mission of the Southeast TACE Region IV center along with our other nine counterparts across the country is to work together and work together to improve the quality and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services. The primary purpose is to enhance employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Our TACE works in eight southeastern states. We have the largest region to serve and we are very proud of that and we are working with some great people. As you know, we serve Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Our TACE is a collaboration with the DBTAC the Southeast ADA center and both the TACE and the Southeast DBTAC are managed by the Burton Blatt Institute. We're hosting quite a few webinars this year and many of you have already signed up for those but if you haven't seen our latest webinars please feel free to go to our site at TACEsoutheast.org, and see what we have coming up next.

Just a quick note about our webinar system. We use a system that is fully accessible to everyone regardless of their disability and/or an assistive technology that might be used with a computer. This system makes it possible for us to conduct workshops over the internet with just about any computer with an internet connection and web browser. Please note sometimes long distance charges may apply if you do use our phone bridge. Unfortunately, there are many computer issues that we cannot help you fix

because it is inherent to your connection or web browser. Staff is available to work with you in advance of the session and I want to stress in advance, so if you do need assistance, please make sure that you contact us an hour prior to the webinar.

For those joining on the telephone line, you may not be able to see what's in the chat room, but all of that is captured through our Caption Colorado group and so you'll be able to see that at a later time. I'd also like to tell you to close all other applications that may be running on your computer because this may interfere with a successful experience today.

If you are connected to a network, do not forget to periodically tap the space bar once in a while just to let the webinar system know that you are still there. Sometimes, your computer may shut down if it is idled for too long.

So now that we have all of those logistics in place, we're about ready to begin and I will take a moment to introduce to you all our presenter for today. Our presenter today is Mike Callahan, and Mike is a native Mississippian, and he has consulted throughout the United States, Canada and Europe in the area of employment and transition for the past 28 years. He has worked with Mark Gold & Associates for thirty years and has served as President of the organization since Mark Gold's death in 1982. MG& A is a network of consultants that provides technical assistance to systems, agencies and families interested insuring the complete community participation of persons with significant disabilities.

In 2000, Michael joined three other colleagues to form a non-profit organization, Employment for All, EFA, which is dedicated to assuring full access to employment for all persons with disabilities. He is a co-author of two popular how-to-books on employment for persons with significant disabilities; *Getting Employed*, *Staying Employed* and *Keys to the Workplace*. He has written numerous articles, chapters, manuals and curriculums pertaining to employment. Michael's current work focuses on customizing employment and as an extension of the concept of supported employment for persons with significant life complexities. I would now like to go ahead and turn it over to Mike Callahan. Thank you, Mike so much for joining us.

Slide 1: Unbundling Demand: Shifting the Employment Relationship From Competitive to Customized

Michael Callahan: Okay, let's try this. Somebody let me know if you can hear me now. Oh, good! And just to make sure, thank you, thanks, everybody, and just to make sure that we are on the same page, could you folks please put up the presentation and I shall be ready to go. And a belated good afternoon to everybody. Thank you so much for hanging in there. There we go. We thought we had all of the glitches worked out and of course, right at the beginning, you get a glitch but it's better to do it at the beginning. So again, thank you for having me today. I'm looking forward to this presentation and I hope discussion with you around the issue of customized employment. And one of the

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things I'm going to try to do is let you know when I move slide to slide. And I want to spend just a few minutes on our initial slide so realize I'll be on this just for a couple of minutes. As I talk to each of you to try to help you sort out what I think is the unique benefit of a customized relationship to Voc. Rehab and obviously to people with very significant impact of disability in their lives, particularly regarding employment.

I think that we've obviously got an experienced group of rehabilitation professionals on the line. So you know employment. You know how it works. And you certainly know that for years, we have used the term competitive to modify virtually all of the employment that Voc Rehab is involved with. We have a clear direction toward employment in the community for pay at or above the minimum wage in a job context that is a relationship between the individual and a regular community employer. And we've referred to that all of that in relation to competitive employment. And it's an interesting term, competitive, because in the sense that competitive is used in general language differs from the way it's used, I think to some degree, in the rehab act. In the rehab act, we refer to those presumptions that employment is in the community and in the employment relationship that is held between an employer and an employee and the pay is for minimum wage or better in most situations that VR is involved with. But there are two at least two dimensions of the competitive relationship that go beyond that. And that is in a demand workforce that we are all involved with on kind of from the disability side of all of this.

Employers look at their workplaces and look at all of the tasks that are necessary to carry out the business of the workplace. In my community down here on the Gulf Coast we've just had a new retail center open with a Target store so just kind of think of that Target store and the Manager. Now, somewhere years ago, Target looked at all of the tasks necessary to successfully run a discount department store, and bundle those tasks into common sense categories, exemplified by a job description. And then when a new Target store opens like has just happened here on the Gulf Coast, you might have somewhere between 350 and 400 of those jobs available as described by the job description and as characterized by the set of bundled tasks that the employer has put together. And for decades, it's been the duty of Voc Rehab and your community rehabilitation providers to look at those demands as held by employers and then to prepare and assist job seekers with disabilities to meet those demands. It's been the bread and butter of what we do, and that works very well. It works above us, I guess you could say at the workforce level. It works very well with rehab, most of you know your own states employment percentages and about how many people that you're able to offer employment using this approach.

When we get to the actual competitive part, however, some interesting things occur. Those bundle demands become a threshold that any job seeker with or without a disability has to meet. And again, with the supports we can give, the counseling, the facilitation, the assessments for good matching, we can more times than not effectively find the right job opening for the right person and make sure that that happens. But I think we all know that ultimately, people do apply against those demands and come up

short. And then we have other decisions to make. Maybe just a different job, maybe that just wasn't the best fit for you. Maybe the person needs some more skill training or credential education of some sort. So there are back up plans to what happens when people don't do well. I think there's some point though that many of you who all of us actually have been involved in working with the entire range of job seekers with disabilities, you begin to see people that again and again their effort to meet employer demands just is not there. They've possibly got things to contribute, but it just doesn't seem that whole package, wanted by the employer is there. And more and more, and state after State those are the job seekers coming to us. The other dimension of competition at this level, is the dimension of the other job seekers who most of whom do not have disabilities. So if you're thinking about competitive employment, I think about those two dimensions. I think about the demands of the employer and the capabilities of the other job seekers. It really creates a significant competitive threshold for people to get over, to get by in relation to their employment. And as a person who spent most of his life working with people who struggle at that competitive threshold, we've been needing an additional way to get employment accomplished for people and yet have that way completely acceptable to Rehab law and demands and to employers who have a business perspective about all of this and not a social perspective. So I guess what I'm saying is this situation brings up the need to extend the employment relationship beyond competitive for those job seekers for whom the competitive relationship is a barrier. And so with that, I'm going to start the presentation.

Slide 2: Unbundling Demand

Going to Slide 2 on Unbundling Demand. And this really, the Slide 2 says narratively that which I was just talking about in general. And especially I think many of you are dealing with CRPs and other community providers who are coming to us and saying that in addition to the competitive thresholds that I just talked about, we're in a very tough economy and in that tough economy, I think you add the kind of features of the difficult economy to the demands of the employer and the competitive status or the competitive ability of other job seekers who would want a job. It's like a triple problem that people face. And one of the interesting things about customized employment is I'm going to lay it out to you. It allows an employer who would not have a job opening in these tough times or who might have a job opening and have a high threshold of expectation and credentials, etc., for the job, and excellent job seekers who would like the job. Customized employment allows us to unbundle the demand that exists in those jobs by focusing on unmet needs of the workplace. And that really, if you kind of come away from this presentation with an understanding that unmet needs is as legitimate a workplace issue as the demand, then it opens the door for us. So I'm going to go to Slide 3, the next slide.

Slide 3: From the Employer's Side

From the way the employer would look at it and of course this gives us a model, there are at least three areas in terms of workplace needs that we can focus on. The first is

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unmet need. I have a theorem I guess or a hypothesis as it were about community workplaces, for profit, not-for-profit, governmental, the whole gamut of all workplaces and that theory is workplaces have needs. Unmet needs occur when the employees doing the demand positions are not fully able to do all aspects of their job description. Now, employers don't tend to think and focus this way. It's just a natural condition I think of any workplace. Just like many of you, I've been in thousands of workplaces, I've never found a single one that did not have unmet needs. And if an employer is willing to focus on unmet needs rather than demand, it's a door opener.

We're also learning from some of the experiences of innovations like project search which I'm sure many of you have heard about, some may even have project search projects in your area, that if an employer takes a close look at all of the job descriptions that exist in a workplace and particularly job descriptions for employees at pay levels of substance, of significant pay levels, high credentials, important duties. There are often aspects of those job duties that could better be done by someone at a lower pay grade. And this is not in any way a handicap perspective in my perspective. This says that highly educated and skilled professionals would benefit from having someone do tasks that could be performed by people without those high credentials and experiences and kind of whole package skills. A good example occurred during an interview a couple of months ago with a human resource manager at a large healthcare system in Louisville, Kentucky, and upon hearing this concept, the human resource manager said to me, you know, Mike, I just spent 30 minutes doing a certified letter. At my pay grade that was absolutely no reason to spend that precious 30 minutes doing that certified letter. And she looked at me and she said "surely, you would have people who could do a certified letter". And that's a great example of how a Company could actually benefit from a discrete need that has been unbundled based on it makes more sense for someone else to do it.

The third aspect, and these are just kind of the state-of-the-art as we know them now, relate to aspects of any workplace that might need specific productivity assistance that would be a unique or would reflect a unique aspect of the job seekers contribution. We work with many job seekers who have specialized productivity to offer but then when asked to fulfill all of the obligations of a job description, or a job opening, people struggle. And when we have people who have specific contribution or productivity to offer and you find employers with regularly existing spot needs for productivity assistance, again, you expand the opportunity to get beyond the barrier set by a job description. As we move forward in understanding customized employment, indeed you're going to find it's only as a concept eight years old. It has a birth date of 2001. We'll be able to learn far more perspectives about how we can assist employers to unbundle need so that the threshold begins to equal, you get an equation of a sort where what the job seeker brings as a contribution and what the employer needs in terms of having things done on workplaces can be effectively negotiated.

Slide 4: The Employment Matrix

I'm going to move now to Slide 4. And one of the things I try to do in this matrix is to explain the interaction, the intersections I guess as it were between a number of the concepts that I'm going to be talking about today. You'll notice that in the columns, competitive employment on the left and customized employment on the right relate to the two concepts that I've been talking about. Competitive Employment relating to job openings and demands as stated by the employer and put forth in some announcement to the local labor pool as to, we've got a Target store open and we've got jobs so come on in. Those are competitive employment jobs. Customized employment, being a negotiated relationship based on employer needs and job seeker contributions, and these two options are, they not alternatives where we say well we'll have to decide, are we going to use competitive or customized from now on. These concepts really apply as options for the job seeker to consider as to whether the job seeker is seen as capable of competing in the traditional sense for a job opening or in order to become employed would need a customized relationship. On the rows, we come up with, and if you think about the columns, these primarily are pre-employment concepts, if you will. The employer and competitive employment has set the demand through a job opening and a job title. In customized employment, it's a set of procedures based on a process that we will talk about during this call. On the left-hand side refers to post employment services and the two distinctions there are in the first column you get only that which is available post employment. Of course, understanding that employers may make reasonable accommodation and certainly natural supports being available but we're actually not doing a post employment support strategy for the first row. The second row brings in the innovation of supported employment which has existed for in the Rehab Act for 23 years since the amendments in the 1986 act, they've been described legally in our federal statutes and the Rehab Act. And one of the things, this matrix tries to do several things. It tries to distinguish that customized employment is not just good supported employment. It is a customized relationship. Supported employment talks about job site supports, not the nature of the relationship. And so let's take a quick look at each of the quadrants. And I'll give you my sense of why I think each is important. In the top left quadrant, competitive employment using natural supports. That's kind of typical Title I VOC Rehab employment services. Most of the people that a typical counselor sees on a caseload would be expected to compete for a job opening, meet the demands of the employer, even against the competition from other job seekers, and for the most part, we don't have post employment supports. We're relying on what the employer offers. Maybe there could be some assistance particularly in getting reasonable accommodation, but there's no post-employment support. I don't know what percentage state by state it would vary but most Title I regular case VR employment situations are in that top left category. If we go down. What the bottom left quadrant refers to is when it's felt that an individual can be competitive but that person is likely to need job coaching support, now we fully realize from VOC Rehab that support is time limited by both federal law and your state plans that will stipulate the length of time which supports are offered. And we also recognize

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that there's a requirement for an identification of the ongoing supports that the person would need in supported employment. And so what supported employment really basically says is that it is competitive employment and that the post employment supports available typically through a job coach and of course using to whatever degree natural supports are available and negotiable in a workplace, that the person can be competitive in those approaches, and that has added to the disability workforce as it were, tens of thousands of people into regular paid employment since the mid eighties when supported employment was added to the rehab act.

The bottom right category is my primary focus but for many of you it may not be completely your focus. But most of my work is accomplished in the bottom right quadrant. In that scenario, we say that yes, the person needs ongoing support but they not likely to be competitive, either against the fully bundled demands of a job or against other job seekers, and in that case, there's a need to negotiate the relationship in a way that you have a customized relationship and then you get post-employment supports. And the proper term of art that for instance, APSI, the network on employment that represents supported employment nationally is used is customized supported employment, as distinct from competitive supported employment. Both are for regular wages in the community in a job relationship between an individual and an employer. The distinction is to whether that relationship is a demand competitive relationship or is that relationship a customized relationship with the employer.

Now, the top right quadrant is very interesting and is only beginning to be explored and considered in terms of its relevance. And what that says is, and particularly for those of you who are case counselors with people who have struggled against the employers demands but you feel like they probably don't need the support of typical supported employment. For those people, a negotiated relationship where the demands of the employer are matched with the unique skills and contributions of the job seeker may make it so that post-employment support is not really needed. And that's a savings any way you look at it. So all of these quadrants come into play for VOC rehab counselors if you think about it that way. You've now got additional room to move and to meet needs than we've had before. So I'm going to go to Slide 5.

Slide 5: Customized Employment

What this provides you is just the current definition, starting in 2001, the Office of Disability Employment Policy, within the U.S. Department of Labor, conceptualized customized employment out of work done in the late 80s and 90s in what was being called individualized supported employment. They realized at ODEP that this was beyond supported employment. But at the time, as with today, the funding that is necessary to do supported employment is going to be found within, excuse me, the funding to do customized employment is going to be found only within supported employment because there is no funding stream anywhere at this point, either within the workforce system, the generic workforce system, certainly not within VR except a

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number of states beginning to create the category, nor within the developmental disabilities or mental health systems. You'll see that the definition relates to individualizing the relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. I think critical for VR and in keeping with VR tradition, the job search and the definition of where a person works is related more to the job seeker in customized employment than to the available demand. I've been talking about Target opening a store in my community. If I were doing job development for customized employment, the fact that Target had jobs open would only be of importance if the job seeker took me there through the process that I'm about to talk to you about. In other words, in customized employment, the job seeker is the driver of the concept, and that's very important distinction.

Slide 6: Value Added to Employers

I'm going to go now to Slide 6, and in Slide 6, you get to see at least an outline of some very important things we've learned in eight years of implementation with the funding primarily through the Office of Disability Employment Policy but also beginning to be picked up by states VR like within the state of Wisconsin, for instance, and the state of Alaska VOC Rehab has been very involved and customized and also to some degree within the Medicaid infrastructure grants that are finally now kind of in their last years really looking at employment as a valued outcome within states. So you're seeing a focus on customized and one of the things that ODEP learned, that's the Office of Disability Employment Policy, was that if you were going to customize you probably needed a sequential process for the pre-employment services that get offered. If you just do a seat of your pants off hand customizing, the problem is what was, if you think about research based or evidence based practices what really caused the outcome. And so embracing a process has been a thing that ODEP has come to terms with. And this is kind of the generic process starting with discovery as a way of understanding the individual, as an alternative to traditional assessment. For a person who's not likely to meet competitive demands, a comparative assessment is likely to be problematic. And I'm sure many of you who are case counselors know that you refer people all the time to assessments and what you get back from the assessment is basically bad news, negative perspective. I'm not saying on all people but too often, particularly for people with more significant impact of disabilities, the results of the evaluation or the assessment are negative. So discovery provides a different avenue to move forward so that who the person is, defines the job search. And the basic concept of discovery is that it uses translation from activities of typical life to work possibilities rather than comparison to standards. I know that's kind of a lot but since this is an overview, you just, it's a way of thinking about it, we translate what we see in the job seekers typical life to employment possibilities rather than comparing through a competitive evaluation to see how they do against a standard. You still get the equivalent of an assessment report in a narratively descriptively written profile. And in many many states are accepting discovery and profile as an alternative to assessment and assessment report. And we're finding that for instance like in Wisconsin right now, we're using the same

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time frames and the same pay so it's not like that it takes longer or that it costs more. It's just an option, an alternative for your CRPs to use.

The customized plan is different than most plans. It's certainly different than an IPE, in that the customized employment plan is a blueprint for job development, more than it is an authorization and a target. So it does not replace the IPE, and in fact, in states that we've been very successful in, we're finding that DVR is willing to hold the IPE until after the plan and then authorize the discovery profile and customized plan through a different way of authorizing. And I'm not going to try to get into all of the different terminologies and ways that states do that but it is being done. We're also recognizing that people with more significant disabilities, more significant work impact of disability usually don't do very well in kind of the classic resume-interview-application process, so we try to bring some innovation around both the explanation to employers of the advantages, the business advantages of customization and a unique sort of visual resume to represent the job seeker so the employer can see some of the same skills that we see because these don't always translate well to narrative. And then of course, there's the job development representation which we have found needs to be a representative approach. In customized employment, we've not found it to be very successful for job seekers to go out and try to negotiate their own customized job. Now, there's certainly no restriction for that but the use of a representative, a job developer, is very helpful. And the job development representation depends on a concept called a needs analysis that is performed at no charge for an employer to help identify the unmet needs of the workplace. Upon successful negotiation of the job description, then you dovetail with supported employment job analysis, reasonable accommodation, job coaching, and job site support.

Let me also say before I leave this slide that job carving is different from customized employment in that job carving is a demand side approach. In job carving, you try to remove tasks from a demand job description that don't fit the job seeker. In customized employment, you really aren't referencing job titles at all. You're getting down to the basic ingredients of what's done in any workplace which is the tasks and you're looking at unmet needs. And it really, it is much more formative for employers and the rationale holds up much better than employers ever were willing to go along with with job carving. Job carving unfortunately worked well for the job seeker but didn't seem to make good employment sense by why an employer should remove tasks and then pay anywhere near typical wages for a job.

Slide 7: Benefits of Customized Employment for Employers

Okay, I'm going to go to Slide 7. And just kind of do a quick overview of the benefits of customized employment. And I'm really referencing this to employer perspectives simply because times are so tough in terms of employment. If we can't figure out how to make sure employers will benefit, we probably won't get too far. We start with discovery and discovery is a form of recruitment that can actually reduce cost by having us get to know

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the job seekers strengths, needs, and interests. This is very important to be touted to employers as a savings on their recruitment. And the plan helps to make sure that the reason this job seeker is being represented to your business is they want to work here. They've got interest in the kind of work that you're doing. It's not just that you have an open job. Employers can use customized to target specific areas of need rather than just thinking, do I have another position open. And obviously, in something like the great recession we're in, there's just not that many positions open as you go out and talk to local employers. Let's go to Slide 8.

Slide 8: Features of Customized Employment

One of the things I love to tell employers about this. Is that there's no requirement, no demand, no statute by law that an employer has to customize features of their job. So if they enter into a customized relationship or better said, negotiations that we hope would end up in a customized relationship, they're doing it in a voluntary way. So to the job seeker, voluntarily accepts a job offer or rejects it based on whether it fits their strengths, needs and interests. So the voluntary nature of this, I have found actually brings some employers who have circled the wagons, around their ADA responsibilities and says, let's talk. Let's put the issue of disability on the table in a way that is like positive disclosure, fully authorized by the job seeker and when I say fully authorized, I ask for written permission to do the kinds of positive disclosure that allow a customized relationship to evolve. And what we found is that when you disassociate a task from demand and have it exist as a need, pay- workplace pay has not been a problem. In fact, the overwhelming majority of customized jobs are paid at above the minimum wage. And the U.S. Department of Labor set minimum wage as the threshold for customized employment in the initiatives that they've done since the early part of this decade.

Slide 9: Features of Customized Employment

So I'm going now to Slide 9. It's probably clear to you that within any caseload, customized could be used across-the-board. And in fact, customized employment is a concept as it were born of necessity within the disability field but applicable to all users of the workforce system. I think as we move forward we're already seeing customization occur. That it's not always as with the intent that I've described it and the process but it is already occurring in the broader workforce system. The interesting thing to say to you about that, I've been out there a lot talking with employers and also listening to other aspects of the recession and the decline in jobs that we're having right now, at this point, and I see this in the foreseeable future, no one in the general workforce system even though it's totally applicable, nobody is picking this up as a way to work with unemployed generic job seekers, job seekers without disabilities. This is a niche that we pretty well have in the disability field. I hope we continue to have it but there is complete applicability beyond just the issue of disability.

If people need ongoing supports like supported employment and reasonable accommodation, any other pre or post employment support, these are not in conflict with customized employment. If we can find a way to fund those services, then it's completely compatible. And one of the things that's a subtle thing, I never sell this but employers tend to buy it, and that is that employers who want to hire a person with a disability but are having a difficult time figuring out how to make that happen competitively can meet diversity goals and other aspects that I think are part of kind of corporate responsibility and citizenship if you will, through a customized approach. It's an additional avenue beyond the competitive standard, and that really assists I think in our job development efforts. Again, I'm careful not to pitch that, to try to sell it or promote it but I'm very careful to let an employer buy it if that's what it is that is kind of driving their interest in this.

Slide 10: Customized Job Development

So I'm going to Slide 10. And Slide 10 represents a way of thinking about this process that's unique. And one of the things, for those of you who have a visual issue, there's a set of clip art characters on the page and there's basically three groups. On the right hand side there's a group of potential employers and that's all of the employers in anybody's community. And then there's a group of job seekers and I think the important thing about this group is these are job seekers that we feel strongly need customized employment in order to be successful. We should not be feeling like we need to stop doing our competitive demand approaches to employment and pick up customized if competition is something the job seeker has to offer. And it really clarifies the effort, the investment for people in this particular pool of job seekers for customized employment. And on the left, we have a rehabilitation professional, the woman with the microphone, the magnifying glass, and she's looking at the job seeker uniquely through discovery and that's really the issue that I'm trying to talk about here as we go to Slide 11.

Slide 11: Discovery

And discovery is a set of interactions with the job seeker in conjunction with the VR counselor but facilitated by a community rehabilitation provider more often than not. Just as VR rarely do assessments in house. You probably as a case counselor would not be doing discovery as part of your duties, but you should feel free to participate. And what discovery does instead of bringing a person into an evaluation context, we go in to the person's life context and we cast a pretty broad net across life. We look at as many aspects of the person's life trying to find interests, trying to find conditions for success, and trying to find unique contributions. Remember that in discovery, we often need to translate what we see in life to what an employer might want. And kind of a most interesting aspect of this, I was doing discovery with this young woman who was a job seeker about 21 years of age. And Jenni has a very very significant impact of disability, intellectually and physically, so we were asking siblings what she did best of all, instead of looking at, it's real clear what Jenny struggles with but it's not so clear what she does well with and her 9-year-old brother at the time suggested that Jenny opened Christmas

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presents better than anyone in the family. Jenni has got lots of siblings and they all laughed and mom and dad laughed and one of the interesting things was that I saw a lot of head nodding. Now folks, I would never be so patronizing as to go into an employer and ask if they had any needs based on opening Christmas presents. That would just be, that would take us backwards. But if we can translate the activity, the actions associated with opening a Christmas present with a potential job task such as receiving materials or stock and preparing those for either sale or processing, then the same actions that Jenny used to open a Christmas present were also used for her first job that lasted 18 months. And then in a similar way, she was caught in a general layoff, where half the employees in the company were laid off. We found another activity of typical life, translated that and now she's been working for another eight years. Jenny has got 10 years of paid employment under her belt in a customized relationship that came from these kinds of life translations. This is also a young woman who DVR has paid for evaluations and she has failed those evaluations. So it gives us an option to move forward. That's basically the idea.

Slide 12: Customized Job Development

We go to Slide 12. And it's from discovery, that a plan that ends up in a task list, you think about a task list is where the activities of typical life have been translated into employer language and then you have a job developer meet with an employer and through a needs analysis begin to see if there's a fit between the unique contributions of the job seeker and the needs of a potential employer. As you're looking at this particular page, and the images, the clip art on it, look down at the bottom at the employer community. We've kind of recast this and turned it vertical instead of horizontal but one of the things you'll notice is there are far fewer employers in this job seekers employment plan than there were in his community. And what the process has done, the process has shrunk and focused our attention on a unique set of employers that make sense in relation to this job seekers conditions for employment that need to be there for success. And say a condition might be proximity. His interests that are stated in a general way and these employers relate to that interest, and what we feel like their needs might be related to his task list. And then job development simply negotiates the deal. I say simply, obviously it's more complex than that, but the fact is it gives us a way to walk to employers in very tough economic times.

Slide 13: Customized Job Development

In Slide 13, when it's successful, you have this partnership among the employer, the provider/VR agency, and the job seeker. It's a real partnership in the way that the employer is getting unique needs met through this negotiated fit. And it's the aspect of the negotiated fit that takes us to customize and distinguishes us from the demand in competitive employment. Okay, we're going to go to Slide 14.

Slide 14: Needs-driven Job Development

The needs analysis is one of the important aspects of this whole approach. And one of the things I did was to as I was thinking about this presentation was kind of to go into Microsoft Office clip art and interestingly, some workplace needs are so stereotypic that even a clip art artist has drawn pictures of them. I didn't draw these obviously and I didn't have them done. They exist as stereotypes. These are the sorts of things that one would find when you go into a company and begin to do a needs analysis with or for the employer.

Slide 15: Needs-driven Job Development

And what we try to do in good customized employment. I'm going to Slide 15 now. Is to turn these things we see in the workplace, these needs into tasks. We can take these forward, and even though it's, if you're like me you spend quite a bit of time screaming at your computer. Well let's find out what the problem is. Why is the person upset and if we can turn that into a task, we might be able to take that forward to an employer and say, you know, we can really reduce kind of the anxiety that's part of the stress that so many employees are feeling this economic downturn by assisting different employees to do different things. And so the knack in needs analysis is to take an employer need and translate that into a task that we can then start matching with a unique contribution of the job seeker. It's very intentional and it's very much in keeping with employer needs. Going to go to Slide 16.

Slide 16: Categories of SE Customized Employment

I'm going to begin to wrap up the presentation. We're probably just to give you an idea, this is a two hour total webinar. And what I'm going to do is take you through a number of examples in categories of customized supported employment. And one of the things that you might want to begin to do is maybe on a piece of paper that you have close at hand, begin to jot down some questions and you can also type those questions in the chat room box which is at least on my computer is on the middle right and I see a number of you have been communicating with each other. And put some questions in there and I will be reviewing those questions at about half past the hour, about 35 minutes from now. And if you have any specific questions in the meantime, I'll try to keep one eye on the public chat box and see if a question comes up in relation to any of the categories of customized employment that I'm about to present to you. So on Slide 16, this is a page that delineates five categories that we now know about customized employment. These are pretty well accepted by the Office of Disability Employment Policy within the U.S. Department of Labor. And they represent distinct aspects of how you can think about a certain category of a customized job. The first three categories, single source job descriptions, multiple source job descriptions, and created source job descriptions, all relate to the keyword here is "source." The source job descriptions from which these tasks were originally based. In other words, these all workplace tasks or most all workplace tasks, particularly the first two, are in somebody's job description and

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it's just not getting done in a way that the employer would like. The created source job description says it was not in anybodies job description and yet the need existed on the job site so we'll talk about those. The last two approaches, contract job descriptions, and micro-enterprises, relate to entrepreneurial efforts and the job there is owned by the individual as an entrepreneurial effort. And I'll give you a couple of options there. Certainly, it's also fair to say I guess two things. One is I fully expect this list to grow as we understand more about customized. And there are categories within some of these issues like micro-enterprise development has maybe I've got a colleague in Montana who could give you four or five subcategories just under micro-enterprise so there's lots of complexity but for our purposes for this call let's look at these and let's start with a single source job description so I'm going to go to Slide 17.

Slide 17: Single Source Job

One of the things you're seeing here. You've got a single source job and you see a gentleman doing a filing a set of filing duties. And the reason it's a single source job description is that 100% of the duties that this gentleman was doing at the time, I have permission to use his full name, I'll use his first name, James. One of the things he's doing, this is a filing aspect of the job, and 100% of his customized job description came from a file clerk one position in this setting. So that's the single source job, but if you think about customized employment like an equation to be solved, think about it this way. Hopefully without giving you too much of a headache, it's a little bit like an algebra equation. And here is what I mean. In an algebra equation, you have known aspects of the equation and you have the easiest ones for me to solve anyway was the unknown. And in our case, in the conceptualization of customized employment, James needs to be our known aspect of the equation. So we use discovery, we use the writing of James story and the profile which substitutes for the assessment report, and we use the customized plan to really come to terms with who is James. So the process defines who he is. And then job development solves for X, if you see what I'm saying. The X then is what potential employer has the set of needs and willing conditions, etc., flexibilities to meet James? And an interesting aspect, this is a guy, if you will in the middle of the autism spectrum that is the easiest way to say, classic autism is James disability. And when he was in high school, he had a teacher working closely with the local rehab counselor and found James four competitive jobs all for pay while he was in school, from which James walked off all four, the shortest time he worked was two weeks, the longest two months and he's out of there. And so imagine as a counselor you're beginning to wonder, is this a guy that really wants to work? Is he trying to say through his actions he doesn't want to work? Should we continue our services for him? And I can tell you if you customize, there's an investment that will pay off. James has been working for 11 years. He works for a local Sheriff's department, and based on who he was, he's a guy that wanted to be in law enforcement. Now, if you asked him what he wanted to do in classic demand-side job development and he could speak, he would tell you, I want to be a cop. But I think most of us realize the likelihood that James is going to be a police officer is just about nil. The competitive standard is so high, he wouldn't

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be able to meet it. But he's had 11 years doing things like sorting misdemeanor arrest reports and traffic citations for a County Sheriff's department. His job has morphed over the years. He now takes care of equipment for the local Sheriffs department for a set of people doing drug busts. And he's like a football equipment manager who takes care of the gear after a drug bust. Again, the job descriptions based on unmet needs and the tasks are unbundled from demand and James interest and his contributions have been worth it for 11 years of paid employment. Now that's, I mean that's quite an outcome over what we might have had in his life.

Slide 18: Example of Single Source, Shared Job

Let's go to Slide 18. And there are all sorts of flexibilities. Slide 18 involves two gentlemen, brothers actually, with very significant physical impact of disability who wanted to share a job. And they also wanted to do, they wanted to work with computers, each brother does it separately, the young man on the right is a guy named Otto, and he uses one of the Dragon software systems for his data entry. The brother on the left is named Glenn and Glenn uses a mouth stick because his voice isn't as reliable as Otto's. And the guy you see standing up is the job developer who negotiated the job based on unmet needs in dealing with a customer database. So again, their interest and the employers needs come together in a job and now they don't work this job at the same time. When I say they share it, the bother on the left works in the morning and the brother on the right in the afternoon and they share a brief time around lunch where there's some hand off communication from one person to the other so there's continuity on the job site. The very interesting thing here is that sometimes people who have strong contributions to offer to employment would have some rather frivolous conditions it might seem. For instance the gentleman on the right, Glenn, in years and years of unemployment at home, had become enamored by afternoon soap operas and he wanted to be home by one. If we could find Glenn work in the morning he will go to work. If not he would continue unemployment. The brother on the right, Otto, had developed a habit of staying up most of the night watching movies and working on his computer and he wanted to work in the afternoon, so customized employment really isn't a work hardening kind of concept as it were. It's really a very accepting concept in that we start with where people are and we try to work with what they have to offer. Now I'm not saying we accept everything, but we accept things that are understandable in life. Okay, I'm going to go now to Slide 19.

Slide 19: Multiple Source Job in Retail Setting

This is an example of what we might refer to as a multiple source job description. And what we mean by that is that the tasks, this is a gentleman, middle aged guy named Jimmy, who works in a mall department store. And he works for a Sears store; we have permission to let you know that. And in that position, the tasks that describe his customized position come from an array of tasks in the job setting. Not just in maintenance and supply, which you see him doing here as he's stocking a cash island but he also helps the advertising guy put up and take down the never ending

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advertisements that Sears has. He also helps on the retail clothing sale floor with stocking and kind of logistical movement of clothing. He also works in the computer and technology area where Jimmy can set up computers right out of the box or set up televisions as new stock comes in. He also works in the warehouse and in the business office and I think you begin to see that as what Sears did was look around their entire store and found needs across departments. So instead of having his tasks related to a single job description, which would be a single source, it's got a multiple source. The interesting question that we might want to ask is well what difference does that make? What is the unique benefit or problem associated with either of these? And we are still just learning that particular, the answer to that, but some things are pretty clear now. For instance, in a single source job description, you've likely got one supervisor because most individuals in their positions have a single supervisor. If you're working with a job seeker who needs a single supervisor in terms of that's just who they are as a person, they latch on to and take direction from one person, not from two or more, then a single source would be the way to go. If you are like Jimmy and have just this wonderful personality to offer, the ability to meet so many people's needs, and works well with others, and then he's got nine different supervisors as he moves from department to department. That would be a problem for many people, but on the other hand, Jimmy handles it well and on top of that, one of the kind of Murphy's law of all employment is that the good supervisor, the perfect supervisor will leave. So if you're on a single source job description, you can pretty well guess at some point you never know when but it will almost always be at the wrong time, your perfect supervisor is going to leave. If you're on a multiple source job description, along the way various supervisors will leave, but for Jimmy, it's hardly a blip on his radar screen when one of nine leaves, he's able to deal with that. So you've got to set a variable that you can try to work out in favor of the job seeker by seeing distinctions in multiple and single source job descriptions.

Slide 20: Multiple Source Job

Let's go to a different scenario and here is just another example of a multiple source job description. This young man's name is Tony. He's a guy who wants to be a musician. He wants to perform live music and he actually has musical skills. So it makes sense that his interest would take him, take us to a music store on behalf of Tony. And what you see him doing here is a task better performed by others. During the needs analysis in this music store it was noted that the salespeople love selling guitars but they did not love doing their duty of keeping the guitars and other musical instruments clean. And this was a store in which janitors were not allowed to touch musical instruments because of damage and scratches that had occurred after-hours. So it was the salesperson's job to clean the guitar but they hated to do it so when they would pull a guitar down from the shelf so to speak, it might be completely dusty and that when the cost of a guitar gets up around \$2000, that starts looking bad for the Company. Tony absolutely loves to dust and to clean them. He treats these instruments as if they're sacred items. It's kind of like watching somebody work on the altar at church. He is so respectful of a musical instrument. So for Tony, doing the task that another person did not want to do is

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not just a dirtiest job, it's very very interesting to him. And he's got tasks across the music store that involves setting up musical instruments, cleaning them and even learning a life skill of cleaning band instruments for marching bands so a number of different aspects of his multiple source job description.

Slide 21: Multiple Source Job in Child Care

I'm going to go to Slide 21. And this is a very interesting slide that helped me understand the concept of an unmet need within a company. A job development call was made on a child care center to assist Carolyn to perform duties within the child care center that needed to be done. And the manager, this was I don't know, six or seven job calls into different centers around her community, the manager begins to think Oh, I know just the job for her. And actually made an offer of what for those of you who have watched dirty jobs with Mike Rowe on the discovery channel know that the American workplace is full of absolutely dirty, disgusting jobs. The dirtiest job at the child care center you can probably guess, is changing diapers. I think it's very important for customized employment not to become the dumping ground for the dirtiest jobs for people with disabilities. And a lot of that is going to be up to CRPs and counselors to kind of just use good sense. And when diaper changing was offered to the job developer representing Carolyn, the job developer saw the problem and helped the employer think back and one of the indeed, one of the problems is that diaper changing is a production task in a child care center. It almost by definition cannot be an unmet need. Those of you who are moms or dads, imagine picking your child up at the child care center at 4:30 or 5:00 only to be told by the manager, you know, I'm sorry, we're not able to get the diaper changing, I'm sorry, your daughters diapers are down around her ankles. That can't be an unmet need. And it really allowed the company to go back and to rethink their needs. And the little guy you see with Carolyn is really her unmet need. One of the things that was occurring in this child care center were young children, unfortunately guys from our perspective, gender problem here, all young guys, young boys, were biting other kids just as an aggressive problem solving strategy I guess you could say. Carolyn was hired to focus on the kids who were biting in a positive behavior intervention way and within two months had stopped biting in that child care center. Imagine the value of her contribution to her employer by meeting an unmet need. And another thing to say is Carolyn does change diapers along with everybody else. There's no implication here that she is above it or people with disabilities should not perform the same things that other people do. That's not the real point. The point was that if we just go for what we know or the disgusting jobs in society and if you're uncertain about that, tune into dirty jobs with Mike Rowe on the Discovery Channel you'll find out there's plenty of them. But we can balance that with a uniquely negotiated job description that involves unmet needs as the primary focus and then participating right alongside everybody else in what might be some of the things whether it's silverware rolling or whether it's cleaning up after a group being in a place or diaper changing, no matter what it is, there are things in any business people really employees would really not prefer to do.

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Slide 22: Created Job

So let's move to Slide 22. And let's look at a created source job description. What a created source job description basically says is that the company has a need but no one has ever done it. So there's not really in a classic sense a source to that job description. But the employer looks at his or her workplace and says, you know, it would be a benefit to me to customize or target certain heretofore unmet tasks for this person. And in this case the workers name is Sal, and he's working in a Trans America field office. And one of the things the employer needed was the faxes coming in that were actually requests for insurance quotes were being put in a cubby hole mailboxes in the mail room and over time, the people in the cubes came and talked to the manager about having the mail room, file room, copy room clerk, this multitasking employee, you need to get her to hand deliver the faxes as soon as they come off the fax machine. Well now the employer just has a classic workplace management decision to make. Do I ask her to multi task and tell her to give it 110% rather than 100%? The fact is she's probably already maxed out already and most employers realize that. Do we hire another full position to assist in the copy room or what if a CRP came in as a job developer and said I'm representing a guy whose got delivery to offer. Would you like to target some of your delivery needs? And that would then bring Sal in. Sal is a guy whose got just about as much physical disability as a human can have. He has Cerebral Palsy and it requires for both of his arms and legs to be strapped to his wheelchair. You'll notice in the picture that he requires bolsters between his legs and against each side to keep him in an upright position. And about the only aspect of his movement he has control over is he has sufficient head movement to move his wheelchair. And he does not produce speech at all. Just no speech sound. And one of the, so discovery, you couldn't just go, you couldn't just take someone like Sal to a delivery job unless the competence of discovery, the contribution was found, I say of discovery, of delivery, was found during discovery. His mother talks about a very interesting story about going grocery shopping in a tough part of her community and in going to the local grocery she walked carrying a pull along steel cart to put the groceries in and she had to pass through gang territory, in two different streets. They pretty well left her alone but she was often intimidated with cat calls and comments about her not living in that area. When Sal graduated high school he ended up at home unemployed at first and his mother asked him one day if he wanted to go with her to the market and Sal's wheelchair was fully charged and he told us he can understand what is asked of him and he said yes. And his mother noticed a couple of things. She noticed for whatever reason the gang members actually holding back. She didn't even have a hypothesis of what the deal was, but the most interesting thing is when she was in the market and preparing to load her cart with all of the groceries, she asked for plastic instead of paper, meaning that the plastic bags had holes and carrying handles and asked Sal if it would be if she put the groceries on his wheelchair. And she described having groceries literally hanging all over Sal's wheelchair and she didn't have to carry the heavy groceries back. Well, during discovery when we heard that story, it allowed us to translate, you know, if he can carry a whole wheelchair full of groceries through gang territory, he can probably make it

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through the halls of a genteel insurance company delivering papers pretty well. It really kind of opened the door for possibility that otherwise you wouldn't have seen in an evaluation or in a comparison of Sal to other demands that would be set outside of really getting to know him.

Slide 23: Created Job

One of the stories I really like to talk to employers about is this gentleman named Curt, who worked in a sheltered workshop and did not want to leave. Curt also doesn't speak. He's got cerebral palsy in the sense that it affects his speech significantly. He's got an intellectual disability. He is able to stand. He usually walks with some sort of assistance kind of cruising the work area. And he didn't want to leave the sheltered workshop because as his mother said he loves cleaning. He loves sweeping, and she turned to those of us who were trying to talk Curt into going to regular work in the community and said you just want to put him in front of a computer somewhere and he would be miserable. And I know that janitor work has been frowned on by many people as being stereotypical of kind of the entry level or the bottom end of the job market, and probably for pretty good reasons. About 80% plus of all supported employment jobs have been in service. But on the other hand if you follow a persons interest, I think it raises the dignity and the value of that job in ways that if we just kind of stereotypically went out and found a person with a disability, a cleaning job would not. And for Curt, we were able to find a factory that was having slip and falls due to a by-product of a milling operation that was occurring with some laminate cabinets that were being made in this company. And the dust control system picked the dust up pretty well but left laminate chips like little pieces of ice under employees feet, and of course, a production employee won't stop and police the area. So the negotiation with the employer was to see if they had unmet sweeping needs and the employer immediately wondered if Curt could offer spot sweeping around and beneath the feet of workers who weren't doing it themselves. This guy had terrible workmen's comp problems because of the number of injuries related to the slip and fall. In six months, Curt was able to reduce the workmen's comp premiums more than his six-month salary. Now of course, that's going to change as you get the basics, the initial savings but then on top of that, he's reducing pain and suffering of employees, and these are real contributions made by people with very significant disabilities because we've been able to translate their contributions and their interests and conditions necessary for success into meeting real employer needs.

Slide 24: Contracted Job

We're going to move from Slide 23 to Slide 24. And what this slide focuses on is an entrepreneurial aspect and a basically a contract job. You can take all of the concepts that I've talked to you about and you can apply those in a workplace and instead of having a wage relationship you can have a contract relationship. The CRP of course will have to assist with setting up a small business, getting a license but there's almost no capitalization to this as many counselors have problems with spending case dollars on high end capitalization. Almost all of this is done within the business and what we found

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is that it can be a real foot in the door for people who want to use contract job relationships as a way to establish yourself very similar to the way that many people in temp agencies have done for years. But this is a different situation, instead of a temp agency; here you have a CRP negotiating on behalf of the individual. And one of the wonderful positive things of the social security law is that any money that's part of a business can be placed in a business account and it's not counted as assets or earned income until it comes out of that account and into personal use. And it really allows for a cushion. Now you can't, you can't scam the system. There's a very legal standard of the money has to be seen as being necessary for the business, but the fact is that at times you may get a contract check in that could kick you off of your amount of money either under SSI or SSDI your asset limit and it could stay in that business account and be drawn in leaner times so it's another option that customized gives. And of course we've got the kind of micro businesses that are part of any of the entrepreneurial efforts which have become popular in the last five years or so.

Slide 25: Created Job

Here is an example of a young woman who had extreme interest in hospitality and in simply making coffee. And in discovery we found that Katherine made coffee at all family gatherings, at church, no one in her school knew about this though. And we found an accompanying market need at a branch of a local university that had its coffee vending machine broken and Katherine was able to come in, by the way in this case with assistance from VR, and start a small business that was extremely successful. So again there's all kinds of entrepreneurial efforts and obviously with the time we have I can't go deeply into all of the issues. Be glad to answer any questions.

Slide 26: Micro-business & "Day Job"

Here is another example of micro business and a day job and it's one of my favorite things. A lot of times, people will come, the gentleman you see in the jump suit is a guy named Kevin, who wants to be a club DJ. DJ, that was his target and it was just not a job he would qualify for but by assisting him to start a small business as an event DJ instead, Kevin is able to have a small business with very very low capitalization, the total amount of money was about \$1500, and also a day job he can have the money he needs to have a living wage to pay for music that he needs for his job, to have a living job, and to pursue his passion. So I really like this following for the people who have passion jobs and sometimes they are referred to as hobby jobs. We can negotiate with them to do both, not one or the other and it really I think brings a degree of satisfaction which is significant.

Slide 27: But is Employment for Everyone?

I want to wrap up just with some perspectives that we really haven't touched on and then I want to open up for questions. And I just want to answer in my opinion, if we're able to customize the fit between very specific employer needs and individual

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contributions, we can get through to a level of people working that we've never seen before. This is a situation at a hospital where a man is with assistance stamping “sterile” on the packets that holds surgical instruments. And now VR can't be counted on for all of the ongoing support needs. That's why we have Medicaid. We've got our other disability services to back up VR, but as far as VR being a part of assisting people who are very non-traditional recipients of employment; I think customized opened significant doors.

Slide 28: Customized Employment Makes Employment Possible

My last story involves a young woman that I got to meet about 10 years ago who requires virtually complete assistance in all aspects of her life in order to survive as a human being. Who for 10 years has worked for a newspaper with workplace personal assistance support in a job that we could call specialty stapling as one of her primary contributions. And this situation has allowed Marcie to make more in all of the years she's worked per hour than any of her support people. In other words, employers are willing to pay for contribution at a different rate than they think about comparative production, and that's really important for us to understand and to take advantage of. And she's done this in several ways. She does shredding, she does stapling, and her job, albeit it's fairly static over type has lasted the test of the years.

Q&A

I'm at a point where I'm ready to really begin to get into some questions. I'm going to leave this additional information page up for all of you to think about where you might find additional information and I'm going to go and start answering some questions.

Question: And I see Laura has asked a question of how does one factor in production needs of the employer to justify the needs of payment that one task or better, how do we show the long term gains to maintain that job?

Answer: You know, it's a tough question when you're negotiating Laura but what I've found is since you're negotiating the relationship, as a facilitator of that, as a negotiator on behalf of the individual, and I'm trying to put myself in the place of an employer asking that question. I would say that I would give the employer some indications of how long customized relationships have lasted. Customized relationship isn't the kind of guarantee that is often implicit in the employers decision as can this job seeker meet my demands. What it is, is a reasonable effort and the reasonableness comes through the whole process of discovery, of targeting, and helping in the focus of why we're actually there, and then I say to an employer, you know, it's our presumption, it's our strong feeling based on our knowledge of this job seeker that this would work out for you. If it doesn't meet your needs and remember we have purposely avoided productivity by getting to unmet needs, so the very fact that an unmet need exists in a company, it's off productivity because it's already not been done. And it allows us to kind of create a new way of thinking about the value of having that need met. Let me give you maybe just a

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real example and I'll do this not based on the slides that I saw. I went know a motel in a Midwestern state a couple of months ago and I saw a man with very significant cerebral palsy. His spasticity was just overwhelming in his life and he's working in a laundry folding hand towels. He's got this massive stack of hand towels and I'm watching Jeff fold and his productivity is so slow it is just heart breaking. His body is not working for him. He's trying to make the fold correctly. He's working as hard as a human being can work, and I looked at my watch and the cycle of folding that hand towel was two and a half minutes. And the CRP had gone in thinking that they had negotiated, got Jeff this job folding hand towels but then, of course, the employer wasn't willing to pay anywhere near regular wages for a two and a half minute cycle for what should be about a three second cycle so they had negotiated an individual certificate with that employer and his pay was about \$.25. Well the employer comes in and looks at Jeff working, gets embarrassed that he's working so hard and offers to pay him a dollar. Well, so now that's charity that Jeff's getting paid four times more than he's producing. The problem as I saw that is that those hand towels did not represent an unmet need of that hotel. If they did, let's say there were three or four guests at the front desk complaining or calling about, I don't have hand towels, how am I supposed to take a bath? Then any hand towel that Jeff produced would be of greater value than the productivity associated with it. And yet it wasn't and that was my feedback. We routinely put people in these productivity situations and I don't know of anyway to resolve that. The best training, the best job station redesign is not going to increase Jeff's productivity on those hand towels. But if we could help him target unmet needs, the value really goes up so that's how the pay value gets connected and I think that connects with the long term maintenance of that job. We're seeing significantly longer term employment for well negotiated customized jobs than we are seeing for almost any other form of employment. I hope that helps and I want to go to the next question by SD. And you've asked, are there any outlines or samples of how to begin the discovery process, how do you begin? And SD, the answer is absolutely yes. That Marc Gold & Associates is a training contractor for the Southeast TACE, so we can bring to you. We've got a discovery manual that takes you through how to do this. We have step by step procedures developed. We've got samples of observation notes and interview notes. We've got samples of the profile documents and reports so that's an easy one for me. Those examples exist and many of you may have heard we're doing in all of the eight Southeast State, excuse me, let me start that again, the eight states in the Southeast region of TACE, we are doing communities of excellence where we're bringing these procedures in. If that is something you would need outside of that if you could let TACE know they will let us know and we could get you some of those materials so thank you very much because of that question because that's one of the easy ones to answer.

Question: Okay folks, I'm looking at the questionnaire area and Charles has asked, how do you get into see employers?

Answer: And I think the first way Charles I would start with answering that is go back to the process itself and when I say that, one of the unique features of the customized plan

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is that it brings employer identification into the plan. Now compare that with your IPE where you get a tight vocational goal. You get a target with a job title, but you have to leave in that scenario employer identification up to whoever does job development. Often a CRP, maybe the individual himself or herself and some of you as counselors may be expected to do your own job development so now it's left up to you. The distinction in customized employment, at least the set of strategy that we bring to this, is that the plan wraps up with the identification of between 15 and 25 specific employers with real employer names and how that answers your question is that when you know exactly who the employers are and even negotiate with the job seeker or with a job seeker support is necessary because we are usually working with people with very significant impact of disabilities including communication, we also negotiate a sequence so it's not just a list. It's an okay who do we start with first, whose second, whose third? That allows us to treat each employer contact with a unique effort of research? We recommend about an hour of research be put into each employer so you begin to think about what's the best way to get to this employer? And even ask one of those age-old questions, who's the best person to contact? It's should I go through personnel or HR, should I try to go to the top? Should I go to a manager that oversees processor production? Who do I go to? And the research really allows us to ask and then answer those questions as best we can so it tells us, can we do a drop in visit for purposes of getting an appointment? Might we know this employer in an informal context in our community and we can at least approach for purposes of getting the appointment through that strategy? Do we know a third party who knows that employer who can get us in the door? Do we have to make a phone call? Those are some of the strategies that are available and the research associated with knowing specific employers is very powerful. By the way, one of the things we found, you've got about a 90% chance of getting a job out of a list of 15-25 employers, in the years we did Marc Gold & Associates had a relationship with the National Office of United Cerebral Palsy and in a huge national PWI, we were using some of these practices and did some research and found that you got about a 90% chance of getting a person a job if you can identify that critical mass of between 15-25 employers and then you go to your question, how do you get to them, you use research to do that and you have this entire range of options that really best fits that specific employer. That's not available to you when job development is kind of driving down main street and seeing a job open sign on a Pizza Hut, you pin in you say how will I get in there to make the presentation? You just kind of spur of the moment seat of your pants done that call and this way is way more intentional and also way more successful I think, so thank you for that question.

Right now, the question list is open. I'm not seeing other questions up so if we still have a, well we've got 45 participants on the line so just think to type your question and come on. Steffany I'm not sure at this point we're seeing more questions. We're about an hour about 45 minutes in. Probably a lot of people are looking for lunch but here we go.

Question: Tell me more about the information about employer research.

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Answer: Thank you, Nancy, I appreciate that. One of the things we try to teach in job development is developing a research list and again, and probably the most important thing is knowing who your employers are and who you intend on calling this week. And I find a lot of job developers do that in a very haphazard unorganized way. They just kind of call on the usual suspects as it were in a community. The employers that you've had a relationship within the in the past or the people that you think are hiring or that sort of thing. And what the research does first it's placed on that specific list of employers, it really is empowering because you can begin to say well gosh, I don't have 25 hours to do with research, well it's just like eating an elephant. You take it one bite at a time. So if I can find three hours for research this week, I can make three job calls or prepare to find my way through. And one of my first suggestions is, and this is so important in customized employment, is find somebody in your community who knows something about that employer. Ideally maybe it's a person who worked there. Might even be a person who does now. You're not asking them to give away trade secrets. You're just saying I need to ask you some questions about the business like who would be the best person to make a decision about a negotiated job description. That's a term that anyone could understand, and you get some help with that. You might not know an employee or a former employee but usually in any community there's a sort of person who just rubs shoulders with that employer. Where we live here on the Gulf Coast we've got just that sort of person who is the kind of guy that spends a lot of time at Rotary Club or the Chamber. You look for those people as resources to help you with your research. Now most of the research is just making sure you kind of got the right presumptions. That if a person has an interest let's say in warehousing, now that's a broadly stated interest, my research might say does this place actually have a warehouse function to their business, yes or no? And if you go there and you talk about a person who has warehousing contributions to offer and the employer says well, Mike, that's really nice but we don't have a warehouse, you feel a little foolish so hopefully you would have picked that up during research. And also, I look for things like clarity. Do I have the employers name correct. Do I know what their position is? Do I have a general sense of the type of tasks that are generally performed in this company? And one of the things I do now especially with the internet, it's so easy, I will type in the company name into your favorite search engine, and just see what comes up. It would be nice to know if your company had, if the company you were about to call on had a newspaper article a couple of weeks ago saying they were just about to leave. I mean I've actually had employers hire people with the full knowledge they were about to go out of business. And the ease of doing just a search engine search around that particular business name allows you to scan. Now I'm not talking about doing a Dunn and Bradstreet rating or really trying to get any kind of insider information as far as the workings of the inner workings of the company. That's something you can do during needs analysis and during job analysis but that general information is so valuable, so you're not going incompletely kind of uninformed. Let me say one other thing about your question. Sometimes, it will make sense to do what's called an informational interview to another business of that sort. And if you do that, this is a typical sales strategy to learn about a segment of the market. Do it outside of the area in which the individual you're

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representing would be working. And the reason I'm saying that is when you do on informational interview, the employer is giving you information about their company, about their industry, not necessarily so much about their company. And it's important that you not then do a sales thing called bait and switch. Don't tell them you're in there to learn about the company only to change and say okay, would you be interested hiring this person. That the informational interview is a form of general employer research about the industry, and if you don't know about a certain industry segment, you might use an informational interview to give yourself more information so you can be more confident whenever you're making a job call. I'll give you just a, this is really weird but let's say you had a person that wanted to work in a law enforcement situation, maybe around a jail. Now I'm proud to say to everybody on this call, I've never been in a jail so I don't have any idea about what their unmet needs might be. I might do an informational interview in a town somewhat the same size as the one I was doing representation in to find out about that segment of the industry because I have no idea just being the law abiding citizen that I am. So and then take that back and now I feel better prepared research wise to make the calls that are on the individuals employer list. So those are just some of your options.

Question: Let's see, I'm looking at my name and I see that Joan has asked a question about how many attempts does it take for you to convince the ER to and I'm guessing that's Employment Resource or employer to hire your individual. Joan, there's two different ways to answer that question.

Answer: Let me just answer it, thank you, thank you. I didn't want to, if we were going to an ER department at a hospital I may have a different answer so thank you for that. Let me just answer it both ways for you. First, in order to customize any job, you can figure on a number of employer contacts. I think that it's been our finding we've done some just practical base research on this, between about two and a half to three employer contacts on average are necessary to customize a relationship. It almost never happens and probably should never happen to try to get a complete commitment on the first contact. Because what you're dealing with, you haven't even done needs analysis so how can the employer commit and in fact an employer who commits too quickly is actually committing to something that they aren't sure about so I see that as a problem, so between about 2.5 and three contacts. Now, another way to answer your question and I have to say there's very very little data on this nationally. Is given the employer list that I've talked about from the plan, how many of those employers does it take as you're going employer to employer, to get a successful yes? And I have told you that you've got a 90% chance based on our research in that whole employer list. If you go through that list you've got a 9 and 10 chance that an employer will be found in that job. In one very tight situation that we did knowing how closely the CRP stayed to this process, we were able to find that on average about 6.5 employer contacts are necessary to get a yes on average. And I feel pretty good about that because one of the things that we've been seeing is that if you prepare well, you do your research, many times you're getting a job in the first or second call and then reality says sometimes you

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work through 20 or 25 employers. So the 6.5 is a number that we feel real confident about that if you make the calls on average and really follow the process you've got that kind of option or that kind of effort required to get the kind of positive outcome. That puts customized right up there with any other approach. Now, I know you're doing some initial investment but you're getting the pay off. So let me just stop there and let's see.

Question: Where can I find more information on microbusiness, self-employment is tough and not common here due to budget constraints. Good point.

Answer: We could direct you toward, there is a “start up USA”. If you'll go to a search engine and type “start up USA”, this is a disability focus support service for micro enterprises for people with disabilities and it's being funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy so that's probably why you guys don't hear much about it in VR, but it is available to VR. So start up USA, there's three initiatives nationally in New York, Florida and Alaska and that website and the supports are still ongoing. So Charles if you'll think about that, if you have any trouble with that, let me know through TACE and I'll work on it a little better for you but that's where I would go immediately as a micro business Resource.

Question: Okay, we have just a couple of minutes. Any other questions? I sure have enjoyed this. Let's see. We've got Stephanie. I have encountered employers that hire people with a disability but they seem to put more demands on their work performance than the others. This is unfair not to mention that they are more qualified than others.

Answer: Well, Stephanie here is my feeling. I have seen that too. I think I've seen employers especially in a demand situation actually do that. And in some ways I think it's part of the natural skepticism that employers have around people with disabilities being able to meet a set demand and there for, let's say somebody like me comes in and tries to say I really believe they can and so then the employer is actually putting more scrutiny. I don't know if it's always conscience but I think I have seen what you've said happen again and again. It's also why I think when you, if you feel like that productivity is an issue, by customizing you have a way for employers to appreciate and accept something other than productivity, because of the dimensions that I've talked about, and it has truly worked, so one of the things I might consider or I guess there's two parts I guess to my answer or my response. First, you're exactly right in that employers do that for demand jobs, it's unfair, and I think more often than not it's even unconscious because they don't tend to focus on the other positions because they're skeptical about this, they focus on it more and that's what I'm trying to get at. But then a way to get around that is to be very intentional about negotiation so that you keep coming back to that. Now I'm not saying that won't happen in customized. I'm afraid what you're identifying is kind of a common trait among employers is that once I focused on something I'm really more aware of it so the issues are probably more poignant than there are, uses with jobs I'm really not focused on for the typical every day employee in the company, but I think they're significantly less so and I've just continued to negotiate

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with employers to try to say remember what you're getting here. No one was doing that and now it's getting done. Is this a value to you, and that's the way you need to look at it. You can keep negotiating or keep trying to negotiate and maybe it will work out.

Question: Laura, I'm going to try to answer Laura's question will probably be the last. What are some of the strategies to market customized employment in a market laying off individuals with higher education, going after entry level jobs and willing to take on those unmet needs?

Answer: Its obvious, if you're actually finding that Laura, it's one of my biggest fears that the workforce system is finally going to figure all of this out. But it doesn't hold me back for several reasons, and one, those individuals with a higher education going after those unmet market needs. First, their not be represented, the likelihood is they are doing it in a haphazard way and not making a presentation to employers. Yes, they're very attractive because there's no challenge or complexity or disability necessarily set with those but I even wonder about what I'm saying is because a potential complexity is as soon as they get the opportunity to leave they will. If an employer has had an unmet need, that has been ongoing since before the economic downturn then the person that you hire is just going to go right on and take the first job that they can get, not so probably with the customized employee. So I think what we tend to do is tout the benefit, don't try to compete. Say yes, if that works for you what I say to an employee and I'm not glib about it go for it but let me tell you what we have to offer. We have taken a close look at this job seeker and they want to work in your company. It's not that they're desperate. They want to work in your company. We feel they've got the skills to offer and you have the chance for a loyal, long term employee if that works for you, if that meets your needs. We will do a needs analysis at no charge to you to make sure that we're really targeting needs that you have and maybe identify some potential unmet needs that you haven't even thought about. And if you see what I'm saying, you're saying you're not trying to compete against that group because they're very difficult to compete against, you're trying to say here is another alternative, think about this too. And so far, we're not seeing the scenario that you describe be a significant barrier to customized employment. Obviously it's some barrier and I would recognize that it is but it's not been significant enough to keep us from really saying well it's just not working because of this scenario occurring. I think that it is.

Closing Remarks

Steffany I want to turn this over to you. My clock has exactly the hour and I guess for most of you that's three and those in central time I know it's two because that's where I am. So, let me turn this back to you for you to wrap it up and Oh, good. There's contact information available to you. Thank you, folks. I very much enjoyed this..

Thank you so much for a wonderful presentation, Mike, and so much information that was given out to all of us. We appreciate the time that you've taken to present your expertise to our audience, and I want to remind the participants of the session along

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with all of the handouts, will be posted on our TACE website within approximately two weeks after the presentation and you can contact us if you have any questions, our information is on the screen, and we want to make sure that after the presentation that you do go in and do the evaluation for us and give us your feedback of today's session. And it's very important to us to our continued planning so that we may address your specific needs and concerns. As with all of our presentations that offer so much information, if there are other questions that come up or that you cannot think of at this time please feel free to send those questions to TACE or you can send those questions and I'll go back and you can send those questions to Mike and he will, I'll get his information back up in just a second. Sorry about that but he will gladly address through e-mail and send them to me and I'll be more than happy to send to Mike. So with that I'll go ahead and conclude our session for today, and I'll put Mike's information back up. This session has been approved for CRCC credits and pending for CEU credits and so I will have Mike's information up if you guys want to contact him, send him an e-mail and again you can also send one to TACE. I want to thank you so much for your participation today and with that I will bring this to a close and I look forward to seeing you all in future participation and thank you again, Mike, for your presentation..

[Event Concluded, September 30, 2009]