



Customized employment:

leveraging job seekers social capital and innate strengths to find successful employment

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- Virginia's Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Assists people with disabilities to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment
- Participation is voluntary
- To learn more about VA DARS process and services
<http://www.vaDARS.org/>

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Notable Ideas and Legislation

- Employment First Movement
- Workforce Opportunities and Innovation Act of 2014
- Customized Employment



How WIOA Changes VR

- Emphasis on competitive integrated employment
- Increases Transition Services
- Expands and Improves upon employment services (ex. Customized Employment)

The achievement of CIE

“The foundation of the VR program is the principle that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving high quality, competitive integrated employment when provided the necessary services and supports.”



WIOA Fact Sheet

Customized Employment

- Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both (Griffin, Hammis, and Geary, 2007).
- It is based on an individualized determination of strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer (ODEP Customized Employment Grants Notice, 2002)
- It often requires multiple service providers such as AT, job coaching, behavioral supports and benefits consultation, for example.

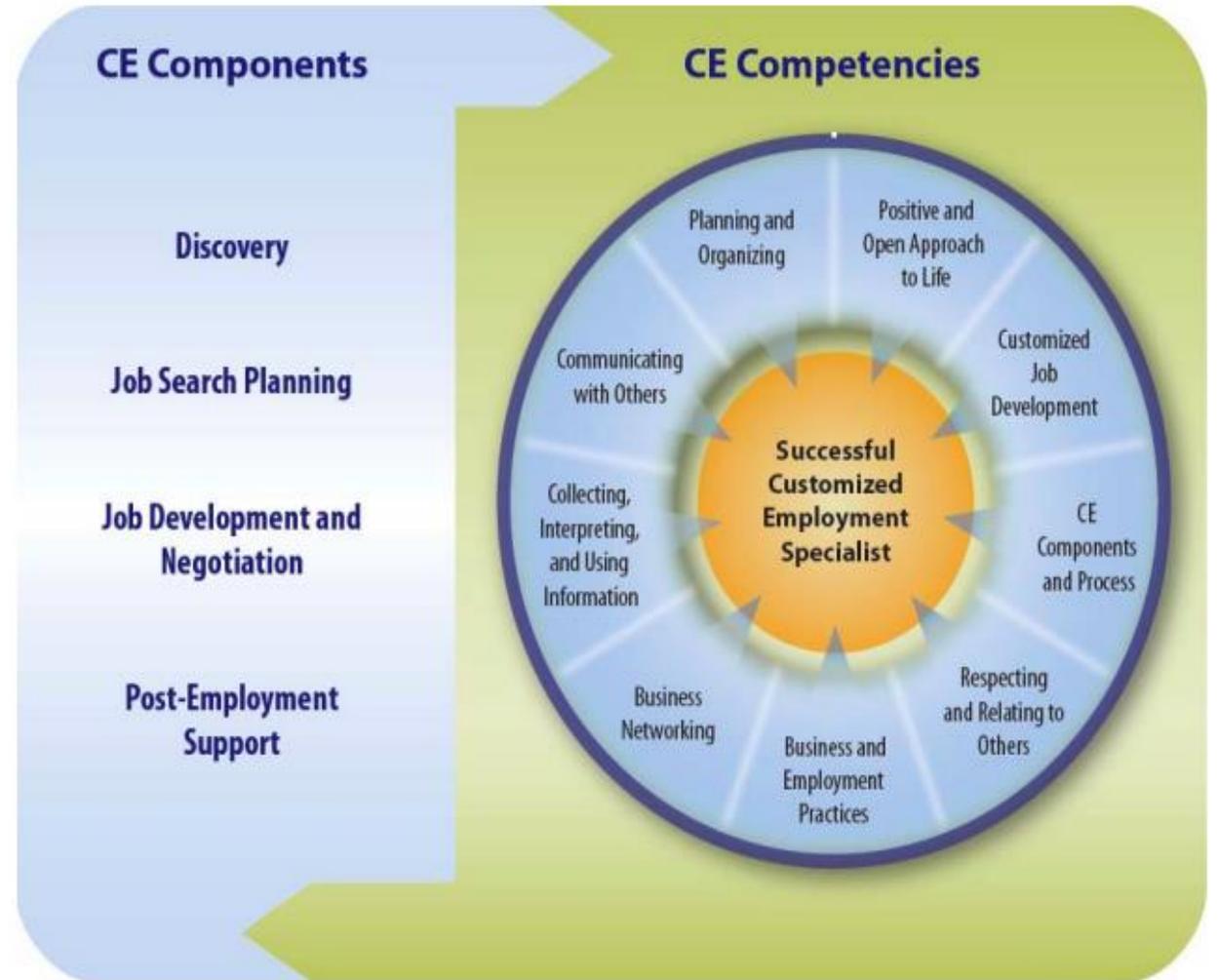
Unique Elements of CE

Supported Employment	Customized Employment
Focus on labor market needs	Focused on the talents, skills, and interests of the job-seeker.
Looking for a good fit; placement and training as needed.	Results in a new position being created for the person <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on job-seeker skills and talents• Also benefits an identified need for the employer
Job carving may be an option	The job is negotiated and a new job description is created. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible and personalized
Generally focuses on the individual completing already identified job duties to meet employer needs	May incorporate equipment, materials, or unique skills of the job-seeker to either meet a need or grow the business in a new capacity.

State of CE in Virginia

- Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC has been working to help train providers, provide technical assistance, and guide the process of implementing Customized Employment in Virginia.
- 2017-2019 Develop and implementing CE on limited basis with DARS approved CE providers
- 2020 Additional training & development projects began
- Enhancement and expansion will focus on capacity development, systems alignment and fidelity vs quantity

Customized Employment Competency Model



VA DARS Customized Employment- The Five Phases

Procedure Code	Procedure Description	SRM Description
CEPhase1	CE Consultation and Service Identification meeting (4 Hours)	Completed intake, Roles and Responsibilities agreement, and Initial Discovery Action Plan completed
CEPhase2	Complete the Discovery Process (30 Hours)	Completed Discovery Staging Record (Stages 1-5), which serves as evidence of the process. DSR stage five (Vocational Profile) must use a narrative format and may be augmented by digital photos.
CEPhase3	Customized Employment Planning (8 Hours)	CE Job Development Plan that includes a list of 10-20 specific local businesses (or business contacts) aligned with each vocational theme (DSG Stage 6). Includes supplemental (detailed) list of initial tasks, assignments, and directions for team members.
CEPhase4	Customized Job Development and Negotiation (35 Hours)	Customized Job Proposal/Description CIE placement consistent with the client's ideal conditions for employment (including pay, hours, benefits, etc.) Documentation of On-going Support Needs to be explored or addressed upon employment
CEPhase5	Customized Employment Job Supports (30 Hours)	Intensive on-site supports are implemented to assist the client in new employee orientation, learning the assigned job tasks, implementing needed accommodations, addressing workplace behaviors, employer expectations and interpersonal skills.

Who is customized employment for?

- The principles of Customized Employment can be applied to any job seeker.
- In Virginia, the partnership between DBHDS and DARS in implementing Customized Employment has focused on individuals with an ID/DD diagnosis.

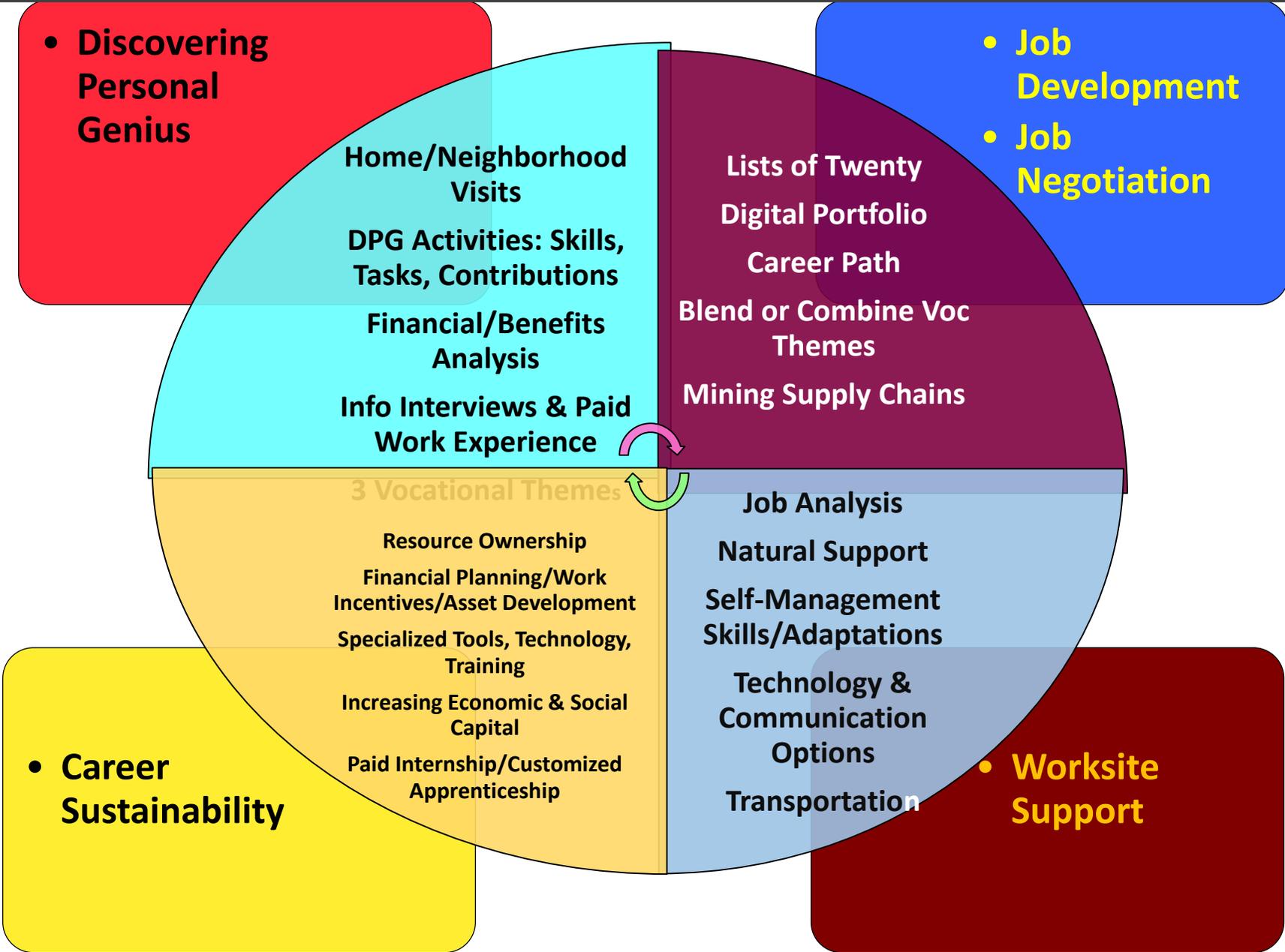
Customized Employment is appropriate for individuals with the most significant disabilities who:

1. Require and meet criteria for supported employment services; and
2. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, are not likely to meet the competitive demands set by employers in existing job descriptions even with the provision of supports; and
3. Due to the nature and severity of their disability, would not likely benefit from traditional supported employment services or have been unsuccessful with traditional supported employment services; and
4. Require employment that is individually negotiated to fit the individual's needs as well as employer or labor market needs.

WHO Can Provide Customized Employment

- **ESO STAFF CERTIFIED THROUGH AN ACRE-APPROVED TRAINING PROGRAM**
 - ESO Staff should, upon receipt of an ACRE Certificate for Community Employment Services with an emphasis in Customized Employment from Griffin and Hammis (or another approved ACRE program) send a copy of the certificate to Dionca Coleman-Williams at Dionca.Coleman@dars.virginia.gov
- The certificate will be kept on file at DARS and will be used to approve authorizations.
- To find out if a training program is approved by ACRE contact the ESSP unit at DARS central office or go to <http://www.acreducators.org/find-training-providers>

OVERVIEW OF CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT



Discovery (Discovering Personal Genius; *Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC*)

Griffin-Hammis Associates:
Elemental Flow Chart for Developing Vocational Themes

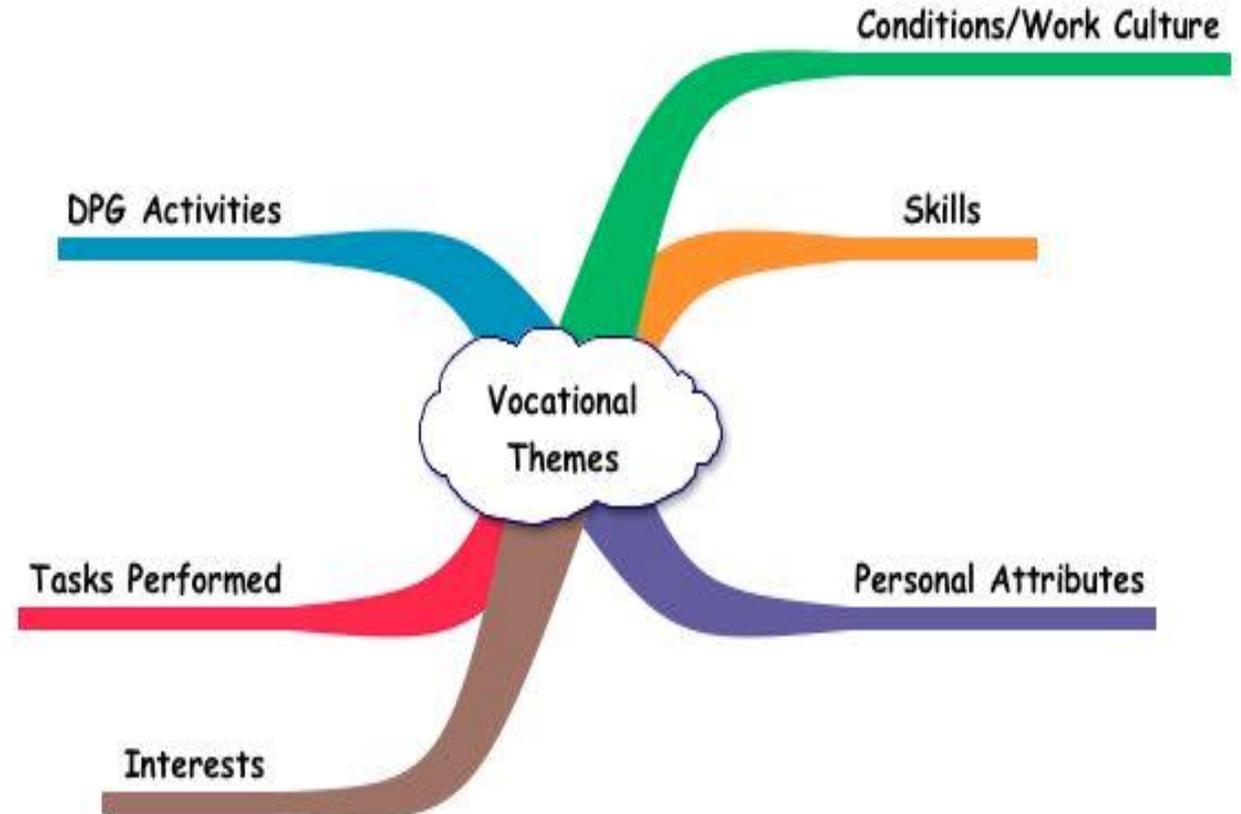
Discovery is a “no fail” (e.g. ***not an assessment***)

Discovery answers the question “who is this person?” before developing an employment goal- it does not focus on what career

Discovery uses real environments to better understand a person’s preferences, interests, skills, abilities, resources and supports

Discovery results in a completed **Vocational Profile** of the individual & at least three **Vocational Themes**.

Discovery is fast paced; it also can change as new information is learned about the job seeker.



Unique Aspects of Discovery

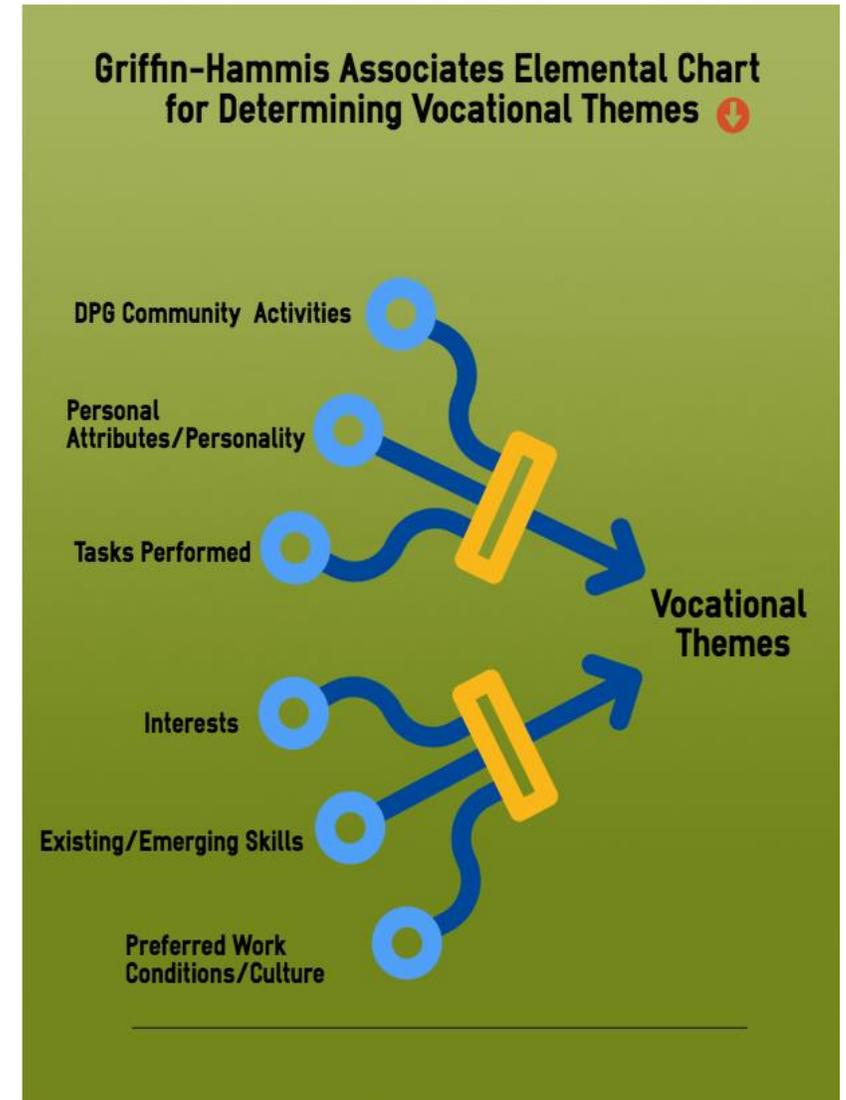
Traditional Evaluation	Discovery
Structured setting	Natural Setting
Comparative	Individualized
Performance based	Data from observation
Focus on deficits	Focus on attributes
Prescribed	Comprehensive

Discovery Activities include:

- Home and neighborhood/area observations
- Interviews with natural supports/individuals who know the job seeker well
- Familiar community-based activities (that demonstrate interests, performance, skills, community connections, supports, etc.)
- Unfamiliar community-based activities (note reactions, interests, support needs, demonstrated skills, etc.)
- Work-based learning experiences (visiting places of employment related to his/her emerging vocational themes to learn about and/or experience various aspects of the jobs)

Vocational Themes

- Vocational themes are broad categories of employment that represent an almost unlimited collection of many jobs, environments, skills/task sets, and interests.
- Themes begin to emerge as the individual is observed at home and in the community
- Based on observations of the job seeker's tasks, interests, skills, attributes, characteristics, and conditions...
- Themes are NOT job descriptions/codes (e.g. stock clerk, greeter, etc.)



Discovery - Home Visit



Discovery – Familiar Activities



Discovery – Unfamiliar activity based on interest



Discovery - Emerging Vocational Interests

**PERSONAL
TRAINING**



PUPPY SCHOOL

Bark Busters four-week puppy school classes held here for puppies aged 8 to 18 weeks.

Inquire within or contact

BARK BUSTERS
HOME DOG TRAINING

404-502-5511
www.barkbusters.com



Each vocational theme should be explored and confirmed in Discovery through active participation in additional community- and work-based learning activities. These are set up and arranged by the employment specialist and may use personal connections/resources of CE team members.

Theme 1: Organizing	Theme 2: Advocacy	Theme 3: Food/Cooking
1. CD Warehouse	1. State Highway Dept.	1. Big Mountain Catering
2. 1 st National Bank	2. Valley City Police Dept.	2. Roberta's Bakery/Deli
3. Valley Auto Pick & Save (junk yard)	3. San Jose Pre-School	3. Honeybee Aviaries

Select 2 places and arrange informational interviews.

CD Warehouse (return for 2nd Interview/short work tryout)

Big Mountain Catering

Notes from interview:

1. 3/7/10 Met with Jorge who owns the CD warehouse. Jeff noted Luis' organizing skills and demonstrated his ability to alphabetize, wipe the CD cases clean, and arrange them neatly on the shelves. They also looked over the database and Luis slowly entered the DVD titles Jorge handed him. With practice it was obvious he could do this task. Still Jorge said he could not hire anyone at the current time. Jeff and Luis mentioned they had been investigating a CD polisher that restores even heavily scratched CDs and DVDs. Jorge mentioned that he did not at this time have such a machine, anyone to run it, or the cash to buy it. Jeff said he and Luis investigated the Azuradisc Advantage CD/DVD Disc Polisher and were quoted a price of \$4,250. Such a machine could easily pay for itself in less than a year. Jorge said he did not want to hire anyone else, but Luis suggested that he set up as his own business inside the warehouse and offer his services to other people (like his neighbor) with scratched CDs and DVDs. Jeff noted that such a "business within a business" could pay rent and help Jorge earn better profits. Jorge liked the idea and admitted to having room for the business. Details such as insurance, % of sales/rent; other on-site work (e.g. data entry; organizing) need to be worked out if the team and VRC agree to pursue this idea.

Informational Interviewing in CE

“People are the most important sources of information about jobs.”



“An informational interview is a business term that is being used to describe an essential element of Customized Employment. The purpose of an informational interview is to learn about a potential career when information is not readily available. They are informal conversations with people who work in the area or career of interest. An individual who wants to learn more about a chosen field identified people who are willing to talk about their careers or jobs. When used as a customized employment practice, **the focus is on getting to know a business in a similar way that discovery focuses on getting to know a job seeker.**”
(VCU-RRTC What are informational interviews)



Adobe Acrobat
Document



La Petite Boutique RVA
Is an independent, locally owned women's boutique that provides customers with unique clothing styles from designers around the world, and accessories ranging from shoes, hats, scarves, and jewelry.



Helen curates a small inventory of clothing and accessories from trusted designers and labels from around the world. She mentions that it is very important for her to source clothing that is eco-friendly and produced in a socially conscious manner



Business Opportunities

Helen states that she would like to build more local connections and meet new designers, have more time to source clothing and merchandise.

- Hire an assistant to develop customer profiles to help her more seamlessly interact and market to her current customer base.
- Develop opportunities for consignment with local artists to expand merchandise selection, without having to take on the upfront cost (e.g. VCU Fashion Department).
- Hire a concierge for customers in other time zones who are looking to interact with the business outside of her normal hours of operation.



Leveraging Social Capital in CE

“People are the most important sources of information about jobs.”



BONDS

*family, close friends,
people who share our
culture or ethnicity*



BRIDGES

*distant friends,
colleagues,
associates*



LINKAGES

*people or groups
further up or lower
down the social ladder*

- Social capital is a way to identify businesses on behalf of a specific job seeker.
- Resources acquired from interactions between people or networks of people.
- Used by Employment specialists and support team members to identify and develop opportunities for job seekers

Key Characteristics

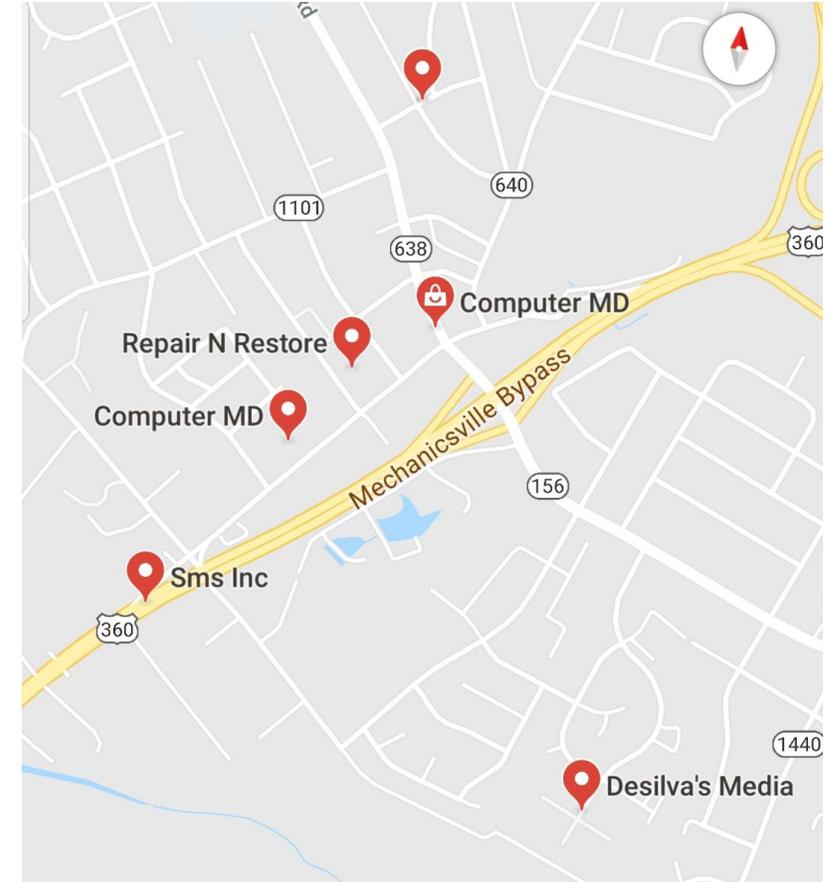
- social connectedness is the central premise
- relationships, social networks and how people help one another
- reciprocity, giving and receiving, the actions of supporting and helping and receiving support



CE Job Search Planning- Using the information learned about an individual job seeker in Discovery to develop a plan toward meaningful employment, research a local list of potential employers, and conduct an analysis of benefits. From *vocational themes* to vocational goals and using *supply chain mining, develop 3 groups of 20*, Digital (video) resume

Discovery → CE Job Search Planning Activities

- Completing the Vocational Profile
- List of 20 employers where people with the same Vocational Theme work. Develop for up to three identified Vocational Themes (
 - Focus on Small Business
 - Use the job-seeker's social capital, as well as team resources and community connections!
- The Development of Visual Resume



Vocational Profile

The vocational profile is a strengths-focused narrative, written objectively, that describes all the information learned about the job seeker in Discovery including:

- What works and what doesn't
- Best settings
- Interests
- Skills
- Personal attributes
- Conditions for success and support needs
- **Vocational themes** for job development

“Lists of 20”

Stage Seven: Job/Business Development Plan		
List of Twenty Places where people with similar Vocational Themes Work:		
Theme 1: Organizing (both physical items & basic data on computer)	Theme 2: Advocacy/Helpfulness/Customer Service	Theme 3: Food/Cooking
1. Jorge's CD Warehouse	1. Catholic Church	1. Big Mountain Catering
2. Valley Pick & Save Auto Parts	2. South Texas Physical Therapy Services	2. Roberta's Bakery/Deli Company
3. 1 st national Bank	3. Dixie Small Animal Hospital	3. Honeybee Aviaries
4. Hi-Valley Clerical Services	4. Senior Center	4. Cowboy Jerky Company
5. Car Quest	5. Dog Whisperer Training Service	5. Food Co-op
6. Surgical Supply Inc.	6. Meals on Wheels	6. South Street Kitchen Supply
7. Drake's Feed & Farm	7. Riverside Manor (Assisted Living)	7. River Bend Feed & Grain Supply
8. Golden Grain Rancher's Cooperative	8. Lazy Q Riding Stables	8. The Flying Burrito Brother's Taco Wagon
9. Blue Lake Bike & Boat	9. Busy Hands Daycare	9. All-Organic Horse Treats

10. Sam's Autobody	10. Public Pool	10. Jennifer's Greenhouse
11. Eclectic Music	11. County Petting Zoo	11. Community Garden
12. John Deere Tractors	12. Southwestern Homeless Services	12. The Brown Egg Company
13. Banyon Equipment Rental	13. The Nature Preserve	13. Texas BBQ Sauces
14. Jake's Office Products	14. Raptor Education Center	14. Ruiz Chili and Spices
15. City Library	15. The Food Bank	15. School Cafeteria
16. County Social Services	16. The Police Station	16. Smiley Catfish Farm
17. Ace Hardware	17. Catastrophy Clean-Up Service	17. Hot Licks Smokehouse
18. County Historical Museum	18. City Library	18. Mustang Market
19. Frederick's Accounting, CPA	19. Big Bend Search & Rescue	19. Big Bagel Company
20. Rio Grande Mini- Storage	20. Rio Grande Independent Living Center	20. Jawbone Confectioners

Create representational portfolios, picture books, resumes, and other tools for Job Development as needed;

Select 3 or 4 places and arrange Informational Interviews for moving into job development stage.

The Case for Small Businesses

Small Businesses versus Big Box (chains) and Corporations

- HR departments are usually not stand-alone entities
- They tend to be way more flexible and therefore provide greater opportunities for negotiations
- Small businesses have needs that larger ones do not, and we can HELP more
- Job descriptions are by nature more fluid, and are much less “title-driven”
- Owners are, by trade and choice, individuals with vision and passion!

Small Business Owners VS Corporations

Small Business

- More accessible
- In control of hiring and decision making
- Can be flexible and creative
- Generally have an interest in the community and ways to ensure it thrives
- Tend to be less encumbered by policies, procedures and bureaucracy (ex. Artsy Beads)

Corporation

- Rigid hierarchy regarding who one can talk to
- Rely on stringent HR policies and procedures which are generally not flexible
- Jobs are based on job descriptions and do not allow for creativity in job negotiation, job carving or job creation
- Pre-hiring processes tend to rule people out instead of looking at possibilities for hiring

Visual Resume/Strengths-Based Portfolio

Mandy is a business owner: Mandy's Pot Holders

She makes and sells pot holders in five local stores and at the Farmer's Market.



- ☞ She checks inventory at the stores;
- ☞ Communicate with the managers to assess inventory, restock, and invoice them;
- ☞ Sell pot holders at the Farmer's Market.

CE Development Activities

- Research, networking, and developing contacts and relationships
- Set up and conduct informational interviews and or tours
- Conduct Job Task Analysis for existing jobs as well as identified unmet needs
- May include the development of short-term work experience , mentor relationships, and or vocational skills training opportunities (ex. paid internships, apprenticeship, tec..)
- Presenting the job seeker establishing value to the organization
- Develop and present formal / informal proposal
- Analyzing planning strategies and supports to facilitate a successful match (ex. Natural supports, AT, training plan, ongoing supports etc..)



Working with the job seeker and the employer to negotiate a customized job:

- Work tasks the business needs completed that the job seeker can complete
- Job resources to enhance the job seekers performance
- Hours of employment
- Pay
- Accommodations if needed



Other considerations

- Resource ownership: Invests the job-seeker in the company and outcomes, and may help the business offset costs of adding new equipment or financial risk
 - If the employee leaves, so does the equipment – or the business may purchase.

Self-Employment

Enterprise: Identify what resources are needed, develop a plan, who is responsible for what?

Consider things that can be outsourced
The referral source should be consulted during this process and guide this step, in the case of DARS:

<https://www.vadars.org/essp/cs.htm>

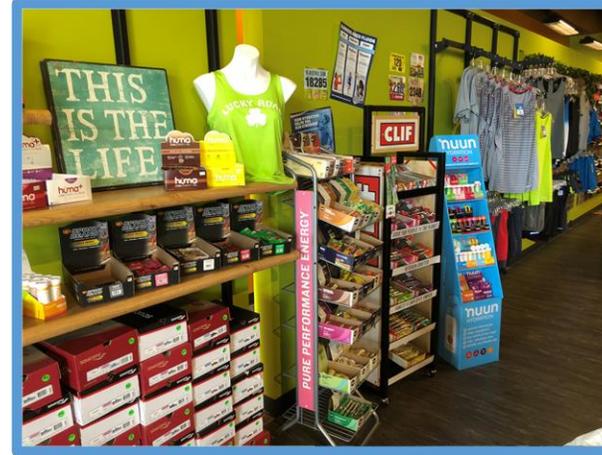
Business Plan

Cash Flow Projections

Personal Budget

- **Post-Employment Support-**

Setting up on-going post-employment supports and monitoring the employment relationship to ensure satisfaction of both the individual and the employer.



Customized Employment Outcomes Much more than just job carving.

- **RESOURCE OWNERSHIP**
- **BUSINESS-WITHIN-A-BUSINESS**
- **MICROENTERPRISE**
- **SUPPORTED SELF-EMPLOYMENT**
- **CUSTOMIZED JOB**
 - Job Carving
 - Negotiated job description
 - Created job description

What does it take?

- **Looking at a community differently**
- **Creating social capital by actually getting outside of office**
- **Moving toward economic development**
- **Spending more time with local businesses and less time inside traditional systems**
- **Collaborating around the notion of person-centered approaches, driven by the interests, preferences, and strengths, of one person---not a program**
- **Understanding that “disability” does not occur in a vacuum but rather is part of a local economy/community**