

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

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- A. Employment specialists should make the initial presentation to employers without the employment seeker**, unless the employment seeker prefers to participate. Since the presence of the employment seeker is expected in typical job seeking efforts, a job developer can send a clear message of a different approach by making the initial presentation contact to an employer without the employment seeker. This is also how agents proceed when representing professional athletes, actors, musicians, and other high-paid clients outside the disability field. In this way, potential employers are also better able to focus on the information provided rather than on employment seekers who have to listen to discussions on their behalf.
- B. Employment specialists should prepare materials designed to communicate the concept of CE to potential employers.** Because CE represents a change in the way businesses typically hire employees, employment specialists should develop materials to assist in the explanation of the concept to potential employers. These materials may consist of printed materials, videos, or portfolios that provide both visual and narrative information.
- C. Employment specialists should work with the facilitator of Discovery to develop an innovative resume for the employment seeker** that is designed to feature the best of the individual. Since many of the employment seekers for whom CE is a necessary strategy will have little or no successful employment experience, traditional resume formats rarely capture the best of the employment seeker's potential contributions. Employment specialists should work with facilitators of Discovery and employment seekers to develop alternatives to traditional resumes that offer examples of the employment seeker at their best areas of performance. Both video and photographic imagery may be used as well as letters of recommendation from former employers. The alternative resume should also contain, in employer language, a listing of potential job tasks the individual wishes to offer to employers.
- D. Employment specialists should represent only one employment seeker at any one time for any specific employer contact.** Employment specialists should focus on a single employment seeker for each discrete job development call rather than on a group of possible employment seekers. In this way, employers are not able to pick the "best" employment seeker from a group of similar individuals.



- E. Employment specialists should blend the professional strategies associated with making effective business contacts with a personal service tone that is sincere and respectful.** Employment specialists should engage employers by sending the clear message that they want both parties to experience success.
- F. Employment specialists should identify and contact decision makers who will benefit directly from the employment seeker's contributions** within businesses for purposes of initial presentations and negotiations. While most job development contacts focus on the personnel function of businesses, CE is enhanced by focusing on decision-making functions of businesses, especially by targeting managers who will experience a direct benefit of the individual's contributions.
- G. Employment specialists should carefully research each of the specific employers identified in the plan for customizing employment prior to making initial contact.** While all job development benefits from knowledge of community employers, CE requires a degree of information about the potential business that goes far beyond that typically obtained by employment specialists for demand employment. Employment specialists need to identify a decision maker who is accessible for hearing a presentation, the types of job tasks typically performed, the culture of the business, and many other features.
- H. When calling on larger and corporate businesses, employment specialists should seek to present to the highest-level decision maker possible.** Traditionally, hiring decisions are made by the personnel function of a business based on a competition among the applicants to determine the best individual for the job. In CE, employers are asked to consider areas of specific benefit in relation to the potential contributions of a single employment seeker. This consideration typically requires decision-makers who receive the benefits provided, and thus, these individuals become the focus of employment specialists.
- I. Employment specialists should seek to meet employer needs first, before negotiating for features that the employment seeker desires or needs.** Job developers for CE must balance the needs and benefits of two parties: employers and employment seekers. The likelihood of success is enhanced by detailing how the employment proposal will meet the employer's needs first before presenting the employment seeker's needs to the employer.
- J. Employment specialists should seek to hone their skills regarding creativity and innovation to better be able to see possibilities in businesses.** Since employment specialists must go beyond job openings as their target for success, they must learn to look at a variety of business operations from a creative perspective to offer innovative ways of customizing a job for the employment seeker. This takes practice and experience coupled with a personal knack for seeing possibilities.

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