INTRODUCTION

Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities have much to offer the business community. Job developers should use a person-centered approach to focus in on a job seeker’s strengths, interests, and preferences rather than relying on low-paying, low-skill jobs with little opportunity for raises, advancement, or increased hours. Preliminary work gathering information about a student through the Discovery process, job tours, and informational interviews with potential employers are all critical steps for good job development planning.

ELEMENTS OF JOB DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Applying the work of Condon (2013, Marc Gold & Associates), job development planning includes:

• Identifying characteristics of a job seeker’s ideal job (conditions and contributions)
• Stating what works and what does not work for the student in a job setting
• Development of a task list and matching tasks needed by the employer with skills the student can perform or learn to perform
• Developing a job proposal
• Preparing for a job proposal meeting

Throughout this brief, we’ll describe the steps in creating a job proposal for Akemi, a student who is looking for work. You’ll see how the elements above tie in to this process as Akemi and her job developer work toward finding fulfilling work for Akemi in her field of choice.

AKEMI’S STORY

Akemi is a 20-year-old student with Down syndrome. Her vocational themes are fashion, art, and history. She especially likes to pull together a “look,” whether it be creating a fashionable outfit, setting up a party, or decorating for the holidays.

Akemi has a speech impediment that can sometimes make it difficult for new listeners to understand her. However, if she takes her time and focuses on the point she is trying to make, she can usually be an effective communicator.

Akemi is always on time, works hard, and likes routine. She is a good organizer, has an excellent memory, and once she knows her job tasks can work independently. She has worked in several jobs at her high school, is very sociable, and is active in her church.
CHARACTERISTICS OF AKEMI’S IDEAL JOB

Characteristics of an ideal job include the **conditions** the job seeker needs for the job to be a successful fit and the **contributions** the job seeker will offer to fill the employer’s needs.

While developing the plan, it is important to keep in mind what works and does not work for the student in a job setting. In this example, the job developer draws on the information in Akemi’s Positive Personal Profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What works for Akemi</th>
<th>What does not work for Akemi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiar routine including scheduled time to check in with supervisor</td>
<td>Inconsistent procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly environment</td>
<td>Supervisor &amp; coworkers too busy to get to know her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient supervisor &amp; coworkers</td>
<td>Coworkers impatient with her communication difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful, clear, &amp; consistent supervision</td>
<td>Coworkers hesitate to provide supportive cueing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for growth in her position</td>
<td>No clear career pathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily accessible public transportation</td>
<td>No public transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conditions** refer to specific elements of a job, such as days and hours worked each week, pay, benefits, location of the job, inside/outside work, time of day, etc. Prioritize non-negotiable conditions, such as accessibility to public transportation or an environment that may trigger seizures or behavior challenges. Consideration of these conditions is important to have a successful outcome for both the job seeker and employer.

**Akemi’s Conditions for Employment**

- Four days a week – 9:00AM–3:00PM
- On the bus line
- Sociable environment
- Opportunity to take on new job responsibilities
- No Sundays

**Contributions** refers to what skills, credentials, experiences, and personal qualities the job seeker will bring to the job that will meet the needs of the employer.

**Akemi’s Contributions**

**SKILLS**

- Organizing items and displays
- Providing customer service
- Performing inventory
- Wrapping gifts
- Recalling local history

**EXPERIENCES**

- Worked at high school coffee shop: stocking, inventory, cashiering
- Helped build sets for high school theater group
- Helps set up for events at her church
- Audited a college-level marketing class
- Takes regular workshops on local history

**PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS**

- Always on time
- Hard worker
- Friendly and outgoing
- Organized and thorough

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- High school teacher
- Church friend

**CREDENTIALS**

- CPR & First Aid training
Development of a Task List

The task list represents the job tasks that can be performed or learned by the job seeker that are related to their vocational themes and that you can negotiate on behalf of the job seeker. Tasks that can be performed or learned by the job seeker are identified during the Discovery process and initially documented in the Positive Personal Profile.

AKEMI’S TASK LIST

- Performing an inventory of items
- Setting up “looks” in a shop
- Sorting clothes and putting together outfits
- Helping customers locate items
- Setting up for gallery events
- Stocking shelves
- Organizing spaces
- Assisting visitors at galleries, tourist locations

Skills & Tasks Matched with Potential Employers

Identifying what tasks may be required at a job is done during an informational interview or observational tour, or by completing online research about potential jobs (for example, through O*Net job descriptions). You can create a table to document matches between the student’s current skills and tasks needed by the employer and what the student should be able to learn in a reasonable timeframe.

Below is a list of potential employers and the match-up of skills and tasks for Akemi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL EMPLOYER #1: COLLEGE THEATER DEPARTMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL EMPLOYER #2: ART GALLERY &amp; SHOP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop – front of house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shop – back of house</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL EMPLOYER #3: LOCAL MUSEUM &amp; SHOP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum – front of house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum – back of house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CUSTOMIZED JOB DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKSHEET
The companion worksheet with this Grab & Go will help you develop a job proposal for the employer. The proposal may outline a job that is carved out from existing positions within the company or is a new job created specifically for the job seeker (Condon, Enein-Donovan, Gilmore, & Jordan, 2004). For either situation, the job proposal describes how the job seeker can meet the needs of the employer.

Since transition-age students’ interests and preferences evolve over time, you should update the worksheet regularly as new information is gathered from the student. A recommendation is to update the plan after each work experience.

Using these task lists, you now have a good template to begin drafting a customized job proposal letter for one or more of these employers.

NEXT STEPS: JOB PROPOSAL LETTER AND MEETING TO NEGOTIATE
Our next Grab & Go Practice Brief, Employer Negotiation, will walk you through developing the job proposal letter and meeting with the employer to negotiate the job proposal.

REFERENCES