

Customized Employment

Put It To Work
For Your Business



Do you try to match your employees' strengths to particular jobs and tasks? Do demands on your organization fluctuate, requiring some tasks to be performed more often than others? Does this require you to assign employees tasks that they weren't hired to do, that take them away from their core functions? Would you like to have a more welcoming and diverse workplace, with greater employee satisfaction and less turnover?

If so, Customized Employment may be the solution.

What Is Customized Employment?

Customized Employment is an approach to hiring, retention, and return to work that ties the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate or employee to the business needs of an employer. It provides greater employee satisfaction and productivity, among other benefits, bringing better retention and profitability.

An often-overlooked labor pool with a wide range of backgrounds, experience, and skills is available to meet your workplace needs. Potential employees include people with disabilities, single parents, mature workers, caregivers, and others. Leveraging their abilities to meet your needs is the basis of Customized Employment.

“At Stony Brook, customizing came pretty naturally,” says Corey Smith, a Customized Employment expert in Pennsylvania. “They had one individual with a physical disability and had been customizing his job for years.”

How Does Customized Employment Help Employers?

Customized Employment helps employers capitalize on the talents that people with disabilities and other diverse groups can bring to the workplace. Customized Employment helps employers:

- Meet longstanding or newly recognized needs.
- Unbundle tasks and recombine them to best use employees' skills, such as to refocus on primary tasks.
- Apply particular skills to tasks that need more assistance or productivity.

Business Case for Customized Employment

By meeting unmet or newly recognized needs through Customized Employment or reassigning tasks to a customized position, the employer benefits through more efficient allocation of resources. The employer can:

- Increase productivity and profitability of business operations.
- Increase retention of experienced employees, resulting in lower turnover costs.
- Improve return-to-work outcomes following injury or disability.
- Increase efficiency of operations through reorganization of work flow.
- Develop a more diverse workforce and inclusive environment.

Customized Employment: Another Flexible Work Arrangement

Customized Employment is a unique Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) strategy that offers employers the option of flexible assignment of job tasks, in addition to the more typical strategies for work locations or schedules. Below are some FWAs that also can be considered customized work options.

Task reassignment: Some of a current employee's tasks are reassigned to a new employee. This reassignment allows the employee to focus on the critical functions of his/her job and complete more of that core work. Such arrangements improve productivity, morale, and retention. Task reassignment typically takes the form of job creation, whereby a new job description is negotiated based on unmet workplace needs.

Job sharing: Two or more people share the responsibilities and tasks of a single position based on their respective strengths, skills, and interests while meeting workplace needs.

Job creation: Work tasks that need to be done but are not getting done can be assigned to employees to form customized positions addressing unmet workplace needs.

Assigning tasks that require additional productivity: Tasks that require more productivity can be assigned to employees with specific competence in those areas.

Customized Employment: A Universal Benefit to Employers And Employees

In New York, Stony Brook University Medical Center has had long-term success with Customized Employment. Robert Barravechia, Operations Manager/Patient Transport, says, “We’ve been using Customized Employment at Stony Brook for many years. It’s been successful for us because it allows us to focus on our first priority, our patients.”

Deloitte, a global accounting and consulting company, builds flexibility into the jobs of all employees so they can work to their strengths and interests. Employee satisfaction and retention rates have risen sharply as a result. The success of this approach demonstrates the universality of meeting the needs of both employers and employees.

Cathy Benko, Deloitte’s Vice Chairwoman and Chief Talent Officer, says, “The one-size-fits-all model of the workplace doesn’t fit a heterogeneous workforce. It doesn’t fit the changing nature of our workforce. We need to fit work into life. The fundamental difference between today’s workplace and the old model is that there are multiple sides of success.”

Business leaders see often-overlooked workers as assets to their workplaces. A Virginia Commonwealth University survey of 250 supervisors in 43 businesses found the supervisors were pleased with the performance of their employees with disabilities, rating it similar to that of their typical peers.

A Job Accommodation Network survey determined that most large- and medium-sized businesses report no significant costs in accommodating the workplace needs of employees with disabilities. Where there are costs, employers say they are outweighed by the value that people with disabilities bring to the workplace.

Join the growing movement of employers who have recognized the benefits of building flexible arrangements, including Customized Employment, into their businesses.

“Our county agencies have the opportunity to negotiate individual job tasks or reassign basic job duties to improve productivity,” says Montgomery County, MD, County Executive Isiah Leggett. **“It’s a win-win for everyone.”**
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For more information about Customized Employment, see:

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/CE-FWA>

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/custom/index.htm>

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