

Engaging with employers and customising roles

Customised Employment Interactive Webinar - Part 2

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Record of Meeting

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Background

This webinar is part of an ongoing project - School to Work - which gives families tools to help their high-school students with disability find meaningful employment.

This series of Job Development workshops and webinars covers

- (Part 1) [Preparing for customised job development](#)
- (Part 2) [Engaging with employers and customising roles](#).

The videos of the original workshops, recorded in 2023, can be found on our website.

Summary of this webinar's conversation

We reviewed the [Job Development workshop on engaging employers](#).

- The workshop showed various methods for families to approach employers effectively. It emphasises the importance of balancing proactive efforts with respecting the employer's space.
- Various methods for reaching out to potential employers are mentioned, including drop-in visits, sending letters, sending emails, and making phone calls. The choice of method depends on the context and the familiarity with the business and local norms.
- Ideally, families, job coaches, or service providers will use a compelling script to approach employers. This script should effectively communicate the benefits of customised employment.
- The concept portfolio is a tool for presenting the essence of customised employment to employers. It explains support strategies, teaching methods and the ideal relationship between job developers/job supporters and employers.
- Use a visual resume to represent the person with a disability. A visual resume includes images of competence and brief descriptions of the individual's skills and past tasks.
- Performing an Employer Needs Benefit Analysis during tours of business operations is an essential step. This analysis helps identify tasks that
 - are unmet needs of the business

- others could perform better
- would benefit the business's efficiency or effectiveness.

We did three interactive exercises about

1. making appointments with employers
2. explaining customised employment
3. conducting an Employee Needs Benefit Analysis.

Q1: Do you have any insights into customised self-employment?

- We discussed adapting job development methodologies for self-employment or micro-enterprises.
- Milton emphasised the importance of narrowing down the person's interests and skills, which can guide the identification of suitable tasks and potential business types.
- He suggested conducting informational interviews with similar businesses to gain insights into how they started, their marketing strategies, and pricing, noting that small business owners often enjoy discussing their ventures.

Q2: How do we translate the interests and skills that we see into potential work roles?

- We discussed how to translate individual interests and skills into potential work roles, especially in the context of a customised employment plan.
- Brainstorming sessions can be helpful. Gather a group of people to think of potential businesses aligned with an individual's skills and interests.
- The challenge is effectively translating the person's attributes into viable work roles.

Q3: What method should I use to initiate contact with an employer?

1. Getting Appointments with Targeted Businesses

Plan your first ask - the appointment

Imagine you are approaching a business that might align with your family member's skills and interests.

- 1) How will you approach them?
 - Email, letter, phone, face to face
- 2) What might you say?
 - Who you are and why you are contacting them (context)
 - What will you ask?



In the chat box, please share your thoughts or a draft

- We discussed various methods for initiating contact with potential employers, as well as
 - the advantages of face-to-face interactions for personal connection
 - using emails, particularly when a warm lead is available.
- Milton shared his strategy of using emails to set up phone calls, rather than directly asking for appointments, and emphasised the importance of mentioning mutual connections.

Q4: How can you find the most appropriate person in the business to contact or email?

- Milton advised researching to identify the key decision-maker in a company, as this can vary depending on the business size.
- He suggested avoiding HR departments since they focus on job descriptions and instead, finding direct contacts like business owners or middle managers for more effective discussions.

Q5: How can we subtly communicate that our children have additional needs without making it overwhelming or discouraging others from getting involved?

- The discussion centred on how to communicate a young person's additional needs in a way that doesn't overwhelm or discourage potential employers.
- Milton suggested starting conversations positively and focusing on the individual's abilities before introducing their particular needs.
- The approach includes being upfront about representing someone with a disability while focusing on what they can offer to the business.

Q6: How can families support their loved ones during this process, especially when facing repeated rejections?

- Milton acknowledged the emotional challenges families face when advocating for their loved ones, especially when encountering rejections.
- He emphasised the importance of resilience and maintaining focus on the broader goal of securing meaningful employment.
- We discussed the need for families to adopt a positive, strengths-based approach when representing their loved ones.

2 - Develop speaking notes

Conveying the essence of Customised Employment to employers

Imagine you're in a face-to-face appointment with a potential employer, representing your family member with a disability.

What might you say?

- Introducing yourself
- Talking about customised employment
 - how it benefits both employees and employers
- Talking about your family member via the visual resume
- How to ask for a tour

Please take a moment to jot down your thoughts on each of these points.



Feel free to share your ideas or your draft speaking notes in the chat box.

Q7: How much detail about customised employment would you include in the initial introduction?

- Milton discussed the appropriate level of detail to provide about customised employment in initial introductions with potential employers.
- He mentioned using tools like concept portfolios or visual resumes to communicate the concept of customised employment effectively.
- The focus should be on presenting the individual's skills and interests in a way that aligns with the business's needs.

Q8: How do we talk about our family members? How can we focus on the positive aspects of a situation, like my son's preference for less crowded environments due to his germ OCD, without bringing up the negatives?

- We explored strategies for positively presenting family members to potential employers, focusing on their strengths and potential contributions.
- Milton suggested approaching the conversation about disability and potential accommodations later in the discussion with the potential employer.

Q9: How can a parent or family member manage their emotions and mindset when preparing to represent their child?

- Milton emphasised the importance of maintaining a positive mindset and resilience when facing rejection.

- We discussed how family members could manage their emotions while representing their loved ones by focusing on finding meaningful employment.
- Milton suggested that families shift from a deficit-focused approach to a strengths-based perspective.

3 Conducting an Employer Needs Benefit Analysis

Imagine a setting : can you identify ?	Employees	Work Settings	Customers
1. Unmet Need			
2. Tasks that Enhance Business			
3. Tasks Better Performed by Others			



2) What would you propose to employer to benefit them and your family member?

Q10: Milton's reflections on ENBA

- Milton shared his thoughts on identifying unmet business needs and proposing solutions that align with the individual's abilities.
- He emphasised the importance of a personalised approach, using examples and stories to illustrate the effectiveness of customised employment.
- The discussion also touched on the role of job coaches and parents in representing individuals with disabilities in the employment process.