

QUATSEE COURSE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

LESSON 7

2nd PHASE OF S.E. (B): JOB FINDING AND ANALYSIS OF THE WORKPLACE AND DUTIES.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, you should:

- Know how to perform the analysis of a job, considering all the factors involved in the process.
- Know how to perform the environmental analysis of a company and the workplace.
- Learn to discover the needs of the employer and negotiate with him/her the individualized working conditions (*customized supported employment*).

Introduction:

As always, we start by highlighting the **technical competences** that professionals must demonstrate when preparing to analyse a job in a specific work environment, they are:

- Write the duties / job functions, along with the tasks involved and the approximate time to be performed.
- Identify and describe each of the job skills that are required to work in this job.
- Identify natural supports that exist in the workplace and in the environment.
- Identify natural and social reinforcers that occur or may occur in the workplace.
- Identify the interactions that occur among employees to carry out the job.
- Assess the integrative potential of the job including the physical and social factors.

- Briefly analyse the labour environment and other environmental factors such as physical dimensions, noise and temperature, tools, machinery, security conditions, etc.
- Make the analysis of the company as a whole: the most important features, internal culture, customs, rules and guidelines, precautions, etc., in order to know what is typical in it.
- Discover possible needs of the employer or of the production process, in order to fit a candidate with specific skills.
- Know how to negotiate with the employer individualized conditions that allow a *customized supported employment* for a specific candidate.
- Gather all the information in a protocol or record of job analysis.

The employer is not the problem

In the beginning, when he is invited to participate in a supported employment initiative, the employer usually has an open mind and is willing to collaborate. Contrary to what is believed from social services, the employer is not a stumbling block for supported employment. Paradoxically, the greatest difficulties are found within the system of social services, or within the disability sector. During the last decades in Europe this sector and the service system have not fully appreciated the potential extent of people for whom they work and have feared, perhaps, that the companies refused their integration into the regular labour market. Hence, perhaps, the sector has been dedicated to develop and consolidate the sheltered employment, rather than promote supported employment, a system of labour inclusion that arose precisely in Europe as a pioneer movement in the late 80s.

Employers give jobs

The industry has not attempted to persuade entrepreneurs that labour inclusion of people with diverse abilities in the business community is viable... Luckily, those who believe in the supported employment did it and the companies, in many countries of Europe, have been giving employment opportunities to a large number of citizens.

Testimonies of employers

Here we have some testimonies from entrepreneurs who are giving real employment opportunities to people with diverse abilities involved in supported employment programmes in Spain, to see their thinking and how they are willing to participate in initiatives of this nature.

1

The owner of a major **supermarket chain** told us:

Supermarket

"Why did not anyone asked before for a job for this group of people? I see no problem in hiring one of your candidates, if you tell me he/she will be good for the job.

Here all we want is to carry out the job and a good atmosphere among the workers."

2

The director of a **catering company** told us:

Catering

"When we were asked to assist in this programme, we had a problem because our company had had a bad experience with a previous programme that did not work. But now, with the help of job coaches, it has been very different and we are very pleased with how it all worked. Proof of this is that we have hired three boys and now we will hire another boy or a girl. I would like to encourage employers to help you on your programme, because it is a great satisfaction".

3

The director of a **tourist centre** told us in a review seminar:

Hotel industry

"I dare say that in the service sector, where our company is, these workers are as productive or more than the others. We hired them three years ago and we are very satisfied. In subsequent years, we will repeat the experience, of course."

4

Industry

The director of a major **tap industry** took years to get to work with our initiative of supported employment, because he was already working with an association of parents, giving them routine work for its sheltered workshop. However, when he understood our arguments and opened the doors of his business to our project, his collaboration was exemplary: he instructed the chief of staff for the integration of these people was successful and to receive the maximum support from all co-workers. In fact, our workers could always count on the natural support of the entire staff.

These real testimonies from entrepreneurs who have experience in supported employment programmes confirm that the binomial *employment* and *support* is feasible and well adjusted to workers with different skills that we try to match on the open market. In addition, these statements encourage us to continue to apply rigorously and seriously the technical procedures we are studying.

7.1. JOB ANALYSIS

The job analysis always starts from the interview with the employer. If this goes well, we will surely visit the company to discuss any specific job or to find where our candidate could be matched.

Visit the company

The fact of visiting the company to locate potential jobs that fit well with our candidate's needs for support is an important achievement in the contact with the entrepreneur, because right now we have opened the doors to collaboration. And as we know that supported employment has two clients-the employer and the person with disabilities or in a disadvantaged situation -from this moment, let's find a job in a particular work environment that must satisfy both of them, and we should bear this in mind throughout the process to make the experience positive for everyone.

Identify a job

Therefore, the first step is to identify the job that match with the conditions of our candidate. If this job did not exist, according to standard job descriptions that the company has, we would apply other techniques of **negotiation**, which belong to the "*customized supported employment*" that we will see in section 7.3 of this unit.

Analyse

Sometimes we can find other jobs that match with our candidate, or the job offered by the employer will match with our candidate from the beginning. In both cases, we will visit the company in order to gather all accurate and plentiful information that forms what we call the job analysis.

4 steps:

- *Preferences*
- *Job*
- *Skills*
- *Natural supports*

In Figure 1, we see the four necessary steps to locate jobs that we must analyze. First, we always start from the work preferences of the person seeking an employment. According to these preferences or wishes, we will locate a suitable job in the convenient field and area. Third, we will try to find a job whose duties meet the skills of our candidate. And finally, we should identify a job that is well endowed with natural supports and a job that has a good potential for social integration.

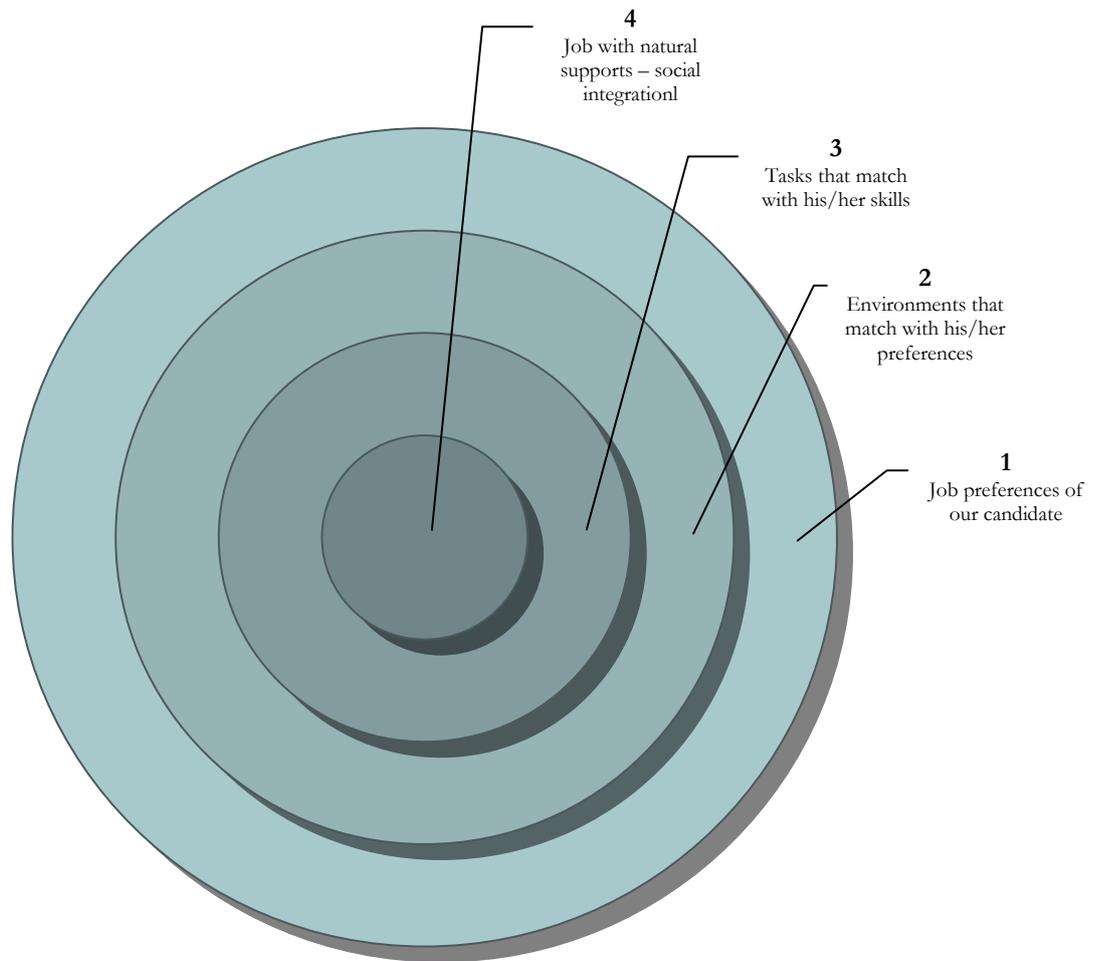


Figure 1: Steps to locate a suitable job.

This is the ideal situation that we should follow, although later, we must adapt these approaches to the actual market context of our community.

The main purpose of job analysis is to obtain all relevant and useful information for the job performance in relation to the needs of the organization and workers.

Questions for the analysis

The analysis should respond to these questions:

What is his/her task? How should it be done? With which thing is it done? Why does he/she do that? What does the job requires? Where is the job done? Who performs it? Who does he/she work with? What are the risks? Which materials should be used?

The results of this simple analysis, together with the observations of informal type, will provide sufficient information to locate our candidate in this job, or to investigate the most appropriate location for the one who needs more support.

It is helpful to classify work routines or duties of the job in different categories:

- Types of routines:*
- *Key*
 - 1) key routines: those activities, operations or tasks that constitute the basic and most important job content and, as such, are repeated often throughout the week. In the job of a painter, for example, the core operations will be to "paint surfaces with a roller" with routines linked to "wet" and "drain" the roll, etc.
 - *Sporadic*
 - 2) Sporadic routines: the operations or activities of a job that only occur occasionally, depending on certain needs or circumstances. "Changing the paint pail", when completed, will be a sporadic routine that is also a part of this job and one should know how to do it.
 - *Linked*
 - 3) The linked routines: those activities or operations that, although they are not related to the job, must also be run and therefore these are routines that the worker should know and learn. Clock in, go to the dressing room to change clothes, go to the canteen or cafeteria for lunch, etc., may be examples of these routines linked to the job.

But the most important thing of this analysis is to identify the natural supports in the job and determine the support that our candidate will need in that environment to perform the tasks of the job. Therefore, the fact of discovering those jobs, where the worker is not alone, but in frequent contact with non-disabled peers, jobs with a high integration potential, it is critical for the group of people that need supported employment.

7. 2. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF A COMPANY AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF A JOB

Another aspect to consider is the environment in which the job that we analyse is inserted; the nearest environment, department, section or unit, and the broader business environment as a whole, located in an industrial area, or in the city centre or in a rural area.

Location of the company

The location is important because it affects transportation and learning how to get there. Spatial orientation is involved in this whole environmental aspect and is a factor that affects especially the novice workers, producing additional anxiety and it should be taken into account in the first job. The fear of getting lost, of missing the bus stop, or the fear of not know how to make the transfer, these must be eliminated with a good learning.

Analysis of the structure

The spatial orientation within the company must be also a good learning object, especially when the company is large and has several buildings, or many divisions within the same building, with different floors, departments, etc. We will have to identify the pathways relevant to the job.

Environmental variables

Overall, the protocols of job analysis assign some of their items to assess the environmental variables and other physical demands of the job. But, in order to make a good environmental analysis of a company and the environment of a particular job, we should go a step further and analyse the culture, learn the history of the company, its customs and standards and people that maintain it.

Contacts and observation

It will be necessary to spend time observing the staff, talking with people who are involved in the job environment: peers and bosses, and we will have to observe the workers that are doing already the similar work or exercise in an equivalent position. Moreover, if possible, the job coach must be available to do the work him/herself, to get a real idea of all the tasks involved in the analysed job.

Analysis of the inner culture

We must discover the secrets of the internal culture of an organization: set of values, rules, customs, procedures, rewards, privileges, guidelines, and even the demands or whims of the employer and managers; all together creates a style of relationships and interactions that generate a specific work environment, in which our candidate will be integrated. Therefore, the more details and information elements, the better we can guide the new employee as to the most appropriate behaviour guidelines that will be followed in that

Different physical environments

particular environment.

Identify natural supports

Perhaps, the job takes place at several different environments, where the staff and different customs are involved. The environmental analysis will have to record it and describe successive environments where the workday will go by, identifying the sequence of tasks that the employee will need to run in each of them and the critical skills required in each environment.

Analysis of the typicalness

Finally, we insist on what we consider essential in the analysis of a job under the supported employment scheme, and this is to analyse natural supports that exist in the job. An environmental analysis of a company and a job would not be enough if it did not describe in great detail the availability of colleagues and managers, and even their preparation, attitudes and training, for dispensing supports and monitoring the new employee, when necessary, and with the guidance and supervision of the job coach.

Also, do not forget to collect all the information regarding what is considered typical (usual, admitted, normal) in this company and in different environments. Knowing this typicalness factor is essential for the job coach to never act in an intrusive or artificial manner, using striking procedures that are inappropriate with what is typical and natural in the company. Current research is highlighting the importance of this adaptation to what is typical in the workplace as a factor that facilitates and promotes better social inclusion of the disabled worker.

(See bibliography- Mank, D., 2003, and other references on typicalness)

7.3. CUSTOMIZED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Customized employment

When speaking of strategies and procedures for analysing jobs, we cannot but refer to *customized supported employment*, a concept that has been moving into this field in recent years, that is, the employment is adjusted to the customer, tailored to his/her needs. This concept is not different from supported employment, but that is exactly supported employment of quality, the same system applied in a personalized way and to facilitate access to employment for people with significant disabilities and most in need of support.

Personalized employment

When we are commissioned to accompany and guide a person to find a job that meets his/her skills and taking into account his/her needs for support, we must begin a specific process of job finding for this person with great limitations, fleeing from the standard approaches of the formal offers of jobs that exist in the market. This single procedure is adjusted to the specific characteristics of our candidate and is what we call *customized employment*.

Definition

Meet the needs of the employer and the job seeker

Following the definition given by the Ministry of Work of U.S.A. (Federal Register, 26-06-2002, vol. 67, No. 123), *customized employment* means individualizing the employment relationships between employers and employees, so that it meets the needs of both. It is based on an individualized assessment of the strengths, needs, and interests of the disabled person, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer.

It may include the employment created through techniques of *job carving*, self-employment or business initiatives, and other strategies for creating or restructuring employment that result in customizing job responsibilities individually negotiated to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Customized employment assumes facilitating the adjustments that are reasonable and necessary supports to enable the person to perform the functions of a job individually negotiated and created for him/her.

It needs representation and negotiation

In short, *customized employment* requires two basic things: representation and negotiation to individualize the description of the job. That is, first, the mediating entity, or job

coach, takes responsibility for representing the person with various capacities and is acting on his/her behalf; and, second, this type of employment requires a considerable amount of negotiation that leads to the best possible job, taking into account the characteristics and support needs of the candidate, as the needs of the employer.

Thus, the result of our analysis and our negotiating skills can create or restructure in this context new jobs, that can receive different names, depending on how we proceed, for example:

It creates jobs:

Carved

Negotiated

Created

- *Carved jobs*: refers to the description of a new job based on a part of the tasks contained in a traditional job description.
- *Negotiated jobs*: they are based on tasks derived from a variety of positions.
- *Created jobs*: they are new jobs or self-employment jobs whose tasks match the employer or the market needs that are not covered so far.

These require a high dose of imagination from the job coach or job-hunter and a high capacity of exploration and discovery, when analysing work environments and specific situations of production within firms.

Customized supported employment is, therefore, an approach based on common sense, to build the foundations of a person-centred planning. It requires spending a lot of time to discover and approximate to the real life of the person, in order to know him/her deeply and obtain a descriptive profile, rich in nuances, which will be very useful to look for a suitable job that fits well to his/her personal characteristics. As advocates of this approach say, "*the more significant is the disability, the deeper and more detailed must be the discovery process.*"

Characteristics of customized supported employment

Main features of customized supported employment

- ⇒ The job description of a disabled candidate is personalized through voluntary negotiation with the employer.
- ⇒ Candidates are usually represented by a job coach or mediator in negotiating a customized job.
- ⇒ The candidate with diverse capabilities and the mediator present a concrete proposal to the employer to consider it voluntarily.
- ⇒ Applicants often reveal aspects concerning their disabilities as a strategy in good faith to resolve critical issues of support needs and the adjustments required.
- ⇒ The negotiation is based on a "template strategy" in

which the potential contributions of the candidate are placed as a template on the potential needs of the employer. Each pairing of a contribution of the candidate with a need of the entrepreneur will become a component of the set of responsibilities that make up the customized job.

⇒ So as to meet the needs of specific support of candidates, the company, through reasonable accommodation and cooperation of natural supports, and the administration, financing programs or supported employment services, must contribute.

As you have seen, *customized supported employment* is an original and imaginative approach that directly affects the job finding and the analysis of the most suitable jobs that fit the characteristics of the people we accompany.

You can obtain more information on *customized supported employment* in Luecking et al., 2004, and in VCU-RRTC Worksupport web site.

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