



Jason Snider at TPC (see story on page 6)

## Art & Science

### Helping People Find Good Jobs (Part 2 – Negotiating with Employers)

Finding and developing customized positions often takes the creativity of an artist – and the discipline of a scientist. It is not a process that happens overnight, but with creativity and diligence it is highly likely to result in a successful employment search.

In the previous issue of *Workforce Development*, a series of steps offered the initial stages of the process used to conduct customized job development. These steps included:

1. Completing a Positive Personal Profile that documents the job seeker’s interests, skills, preferred working environments, supports and accommodations needed, etc.;
2. Creating an initial list of tasks that represent what the individual could contribute to a potential employer’s operation(s);
3. Completing a job search plan based on the Profile and driven by what kinds of tasks the individual might perform in a customized job;
4. Conducting informational interviews to get a foot in the door of prospective employers and to find out about specific operational needs; and
5. Refining the task list based on employer visits.

The next series of steps involve the process of negotiating with employers for the hire.

#### Offering value

The aim of customized employment is to enable job seekers who have trouble competing for “off the shelf” jobs to attain desired employment. This will only take place, however, when there is also a resulting value to an employer’s operations. By observing a company’s operations and by eliciting information from employers during informational interviews (see *Volume 1, Issue 2*) it is likely that a career specialist

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can identify ways in which employers can receive added value from a customized employment arrangement. Typically, an employer may consider customizing job tasks if it...

- ...saves money,
- ...helps make money,
- ...helps the operation to run more efficiently, and/or
- ...improves customer relations.

In order to negotiate a hire a career specialist must show the employer how customizing a job has the potential to accomplish one or more of these things, that is, add value to the employer's operation. Presenting a carefully considered employment proposal is one way to facilitate successful customized job negotiation.

### The Employment Proposal

The employment proposal is a presentation of the specific potential tasks (from the refined task list) that can be performed by the job candidate, the on-site and follow-up support to be provided, and most importantly, how such an arrangement will benefit the company. Employment proposals may be informal and verbally negotiated or formal and in writing – depending on the relationship with the employer and the company's procedures. Whether the proposal is informal or formal, a good employment proposal is generally organized as follows:

#### Step 1

Present tasks (from the refined task list) that might be re-assigned.

#### Step 2

Outline how these tasks might be re-assigned to the jobseeker you represent.

#### Step 3

Highlight the skills of the candidate and how they match the tasks.

#### Step 4

Delineate the potential benefits to the employer as a result of assigning identified tasks to the job candidate.

*For a graphic representation of steps 1 through 4, please see page 3.*

Ultimately, effectively negotiated customized employment will result when the career specialist, the job seeker and the employer jointly agree to the answers to these questions:

- What tasks does the employer need to have done?
- What tasks can the individual do?
- What hours will the individual work?
- How much work does the employer want the individual to get done each day?
- How much will the individual be paid?
- What accommodations and support will be necessary?
- How will all of this help the company?

#### Step 5

Discuss what your role (and your organization's role) will be in supporting the job candidate.

#### Step 6

Make the "ASK":

- Does this look like it will work for you?
- Do you have more questions?

- Is there anything else I can do to make this work for you?
- Can we set a start date?

#### Step 7

Reiterate the potential benefits of the arrangements to the employer, e.g., how others can produce more, money can be saved, more sales will be generated, etc.

A sample employment proposal can be found under Tools of the Trade on Page 4. This same information can be imparted verbally when the relationship with the employer and/or employer hiring procedures suggest a more informal approach.

Once an employment proposal is under consideration, additional points for negotiation will include the hours of the job, wages, production and outcome expectations, and prospective support and accommodation strategies.

No deal should be considered finalized, or sealed, until all parties are satisfied and in agreement with the end result. Even after the individual starts the job, often there will be conditions when re-negotiation on specific aspects of the job may be necessary or when additional services to the employer are necessary to keep him/her satisfied with the arrangement.

Once the hire is complete, the work is not done. In order to insure **post-hire success** it is important for the career specialist to seek continuous feedback on how well the arrangement is working for the employer.

To that end, creating an employment follow-up plan is important. This will be discussed in a future issue of *Workforce Development*.

# Negotiation

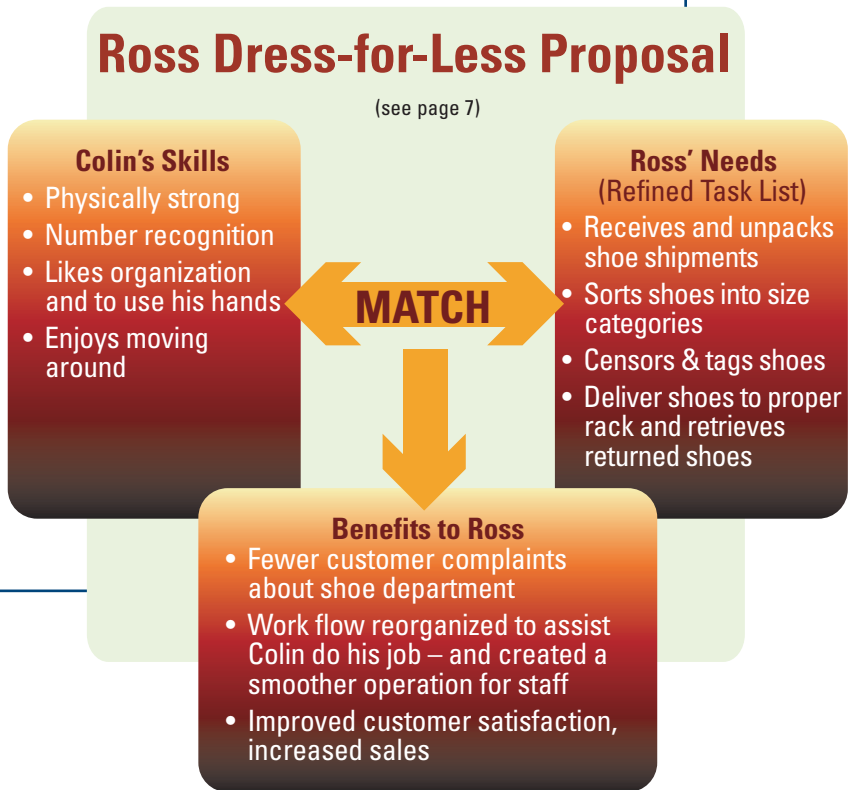
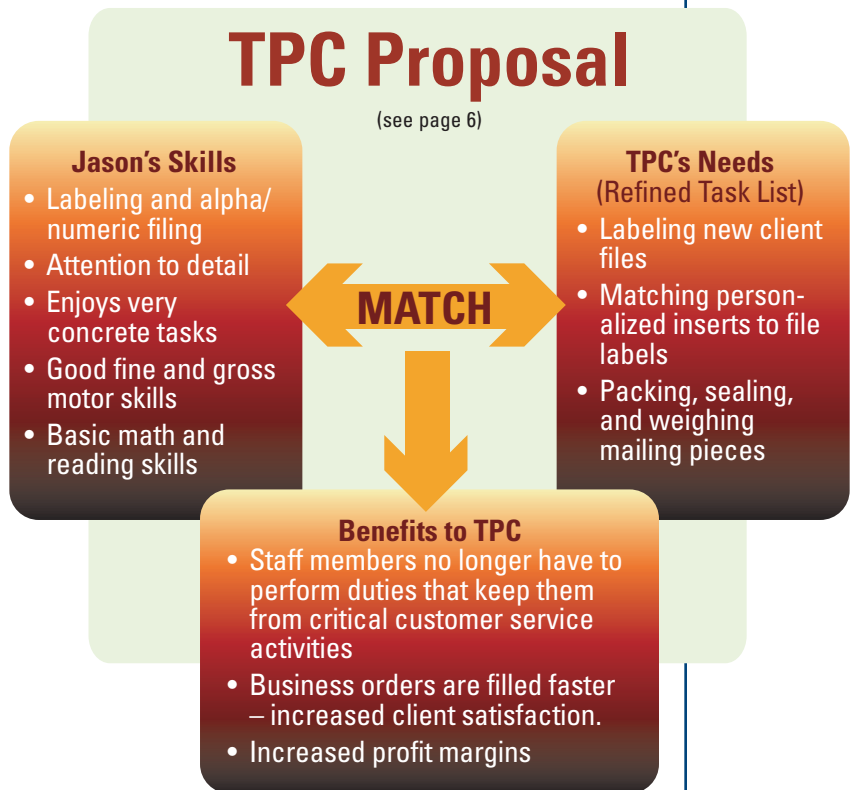
*mutual benefit = mutual gain*

Using the steps delineated on the previous pages, negotiation can result in highly customized positions that are well matched for One Stop customers and lead to specific benefits for employers.

Two such examples are featured in stories elsewhere in this newsletter. TPC, a marketing support company in Montgomery County, hired Jason Snider (*see page 6*) after a career specialist presented Jason’s skills and negotiated a position based on a mutually agreed upon refined task list and the benefits to the company, as illustrated in the first chart on the right.

In examining the circumstances at Ross Dress-for-Less during an informational interview, a career specialist presented a proposal which led to a negotiated position for Colin (*see page 7*) with benefits to the company as shown in the second chart.

As one employer who hired an individual through a customized arrangement recently told us, “*Nothing beats showing me how you can make my life easier.*”



# Tools of the Trade

## The Employment Proposal

MontgomeryWorks

SAMPLE

Sally Smith  
Ross Stores, Inc.  
123 State Street  
Anytown, USA 12345

Dear Sally:

It was a pleasure meeting you last Monday. I greatly appreciated the time you took giving me such a thorough tour of your operation. There is so much more that happens behind the scenes than I ever imagined!

During my visit we discussed some of the log jams that occur in the warehouse when new shipments arrive - especially since customer service is your number one priority. Once I was able to view the daily shipping procedures, I realized that there are many basic tasks that might be undertaken by assistants to the warehouse and sales associates that would greatly free them up to focus on the broader aspects of their jobs, and provide the excellent customer service to which your company aspires. Perhaps my agency could be a resource for you.

I currently represent a job candidate named Colin Robinson whom I'd like you to meet. Colin is a strong gentleman with a terrific personality and work ethic. I think he could be a true asset to your team at Ross Dress-for-Less. Since you mentioned the shoe department being your greatest need of continuous concentration, Colin would be able to:

- Unpack and sort shoe shipments into size categories
- Censor and tag shoe merchandise to prepare for the sales floor
- Deliver shoes to the proper rack on the sales floor
- Retrieve returned shoe merchandise from the customer service area and replace in the proper location

In the event you hired Colin, as with any of the job candidates we represent, MontgomeryWorks would assist with the initial training and necessary supports needed for Colin to be successful.

Sally, I look forward to discussing this proposal with you and setting up a time for you to meet Colin. I think you'll agree that by Colin attending to these continued needs, Ross will generate more sales - and the customer will continue to be the main focus of your associates. I will call you next week. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call me at (555)555-5555. My e-mail address is: myemail@isp.com.

Sincerely,  
Career Specialist



## Spotlight on MCEP Partner *DORS (Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services)*

Vocational Rehabilitation programs nationwide provide services and programs to assist individuals with disabilities who want to work. The Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is one of the many collaborative partners helping to make the Maryland Customized Employment Partnership successful in helping people with significant barriers to employment obtain the jobs they want through the One Stop Career System.

DORS offers a variety of individualized and time-limited services to help eligible job seekers make informed decisions related to getting and keeping a job. DORS provides and coordinates services so that individuals may achieve employment or personal career goals. Some services are short term and some are provided at no cost, while others will require financial eligibility. A sampling of these services includes:

- Career assessments, decision making, counseling and referral
- College or work readiness training
- Medical rehabilitation services

- Referral to supported employment agencies
- Rehabilitation technology
- Specialized assessment
- Support and assistance with a job search, job placement and job-maintainence
- Vocational training
- Other vocational support services – such as transportation, maintenance, and personal assistance for a limited time.

In addition, DORS also offers special services for people who are deaf, blind, or who choose self-employment as an option.

As a collaborative partner, DORS has been an integral part of the MCEP employment team - in assisting individuals entering the competitive workforce for the first time and for those re-entering the workforce. DORS has assigned one counselor to MCEP in order to better facilitate the coordination of systems and services. For more information about the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, please visit [www.dors.md.us/index.html](http://www.dors.md.us/index.html).

## MCEP Update...Sustaining efforts one step at a time

One of the goals of the Maryland Customized Employment Partnership is to better coordinate the disparate systems of disability employment, funding agencies, and the One Stop to ultimately achieve greater employment outcomes for people with significant barriers to employment. To that end, a new partnership has been created with Montgomery Community College's Division of Workforce Development and Continuing Education to provide agency personnel with a new course in **Advanced Job Development**.

The course is intended to provide a practical experience for employment service providers to implement a customized employment approach to secure employment options for people with disabilities. The course is intended to go beyond traditional training and workshop presentations by providing methodology coupled with applied practice. Students enrolled in the course will identify one jobseeker they are currently assisting in the job search – and will apply strategies learned in the course to assist the jobseeker to gain employment.

# Online Resources

## New Online Publications from the Institute for Community Inclusion

### Case Studies of Local Boards and One-Stop Centers: Levels of Involvement of State VR Agencies with Other One-Stop Partners

[text] [www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pub.php?page=cs10](http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pub.php?page=cs10)

[PDF] [www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/cs10.pdf](http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/cs10.pdf)

Although the Workforce Investment Act's requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) participation are clear, the parameters are flexible. This publication showcases numerous examples of VR agencies working creatively to establish effective partnerships with the One Stop System.

### Getting the Most from the Public Vocational Rehabilitation System

[text] [www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pub.php?page=to19](http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pub.php?page=to19)

[PDF] [www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/to19.pdf](http://www.communityinclusion.org/publications/pdf/to19.pdf)

Every state has a vocational rehabilitation agency that is designed to help individuals with disabilities meet their employment goals. Vocational rehabilitation agencies assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, get, keep, or regain employment. This publication, written for the consumer population, answers questions frequently asked by individuals with disabilities.

## Montgomery County Business Finds Customized Help

TPC is a marketing support service company in Rockville, Maryland that has experienced a large influx of new business orders. In order to keep up, all staff, including the Vice President and the General Manager, were taking on additional supplementary duties that needed to get done – but had no particular person assigned to doing them. These tasks included general support such as labeling files, matching personalized inserts to labels, and data entry. This was detracting from their ability to keep up with growing client demands.

Cindy Selby, Vice President of TPC, called MontgomeryWorks Career Center for advice. She knew the type of work that needed to be completed, but needed some assistance in organizing positions to complete this work and in identifying workers to fulfill the tasks associated with them.

Through careful analysis of the business operation by a MontgomeryWorks career specialist affiliated with the Maryland Customized Employment Partnership, two sep-



arate and unique positions were created — one in the fulfillment department and one in the database management department. The two individuals hired by TPC for these customized positions are Montgomery Works Career Center customers with disabilities. With the help of the career specialist they were matched to these assignments based on their particular suitability for the tasks. Now administrative support work flows more smoothly and business orders are filled faster. Senior staff members no longer have to perform duties that keep them from critical customer service activities. Through MontgomeryWorks assistance, the continued growth of TPC is being supported by the new employees.



## customized employment in action

What follows are the coordinated services at MontgomeryWorks that resulted in Colin returning to work:

A **Positive Personal Profile** was completed. With input from Colin, his family and other people that know him well, it was determined that Colin had many traits that would be attractive to prospective employers, including a friendly and outgoing nature. He also indicated that he no longer wanted to work in the food service industry. After much discussion, the team decided to pursue retail related work.

His **employment plan** included prospective employers to contact, transportation considerations, and identification of supports and accommodations needed for Colin to be successful. The plan noted that initial and periodic post-employment job coaching would be necessary.

Colin's family was encouraged to apply for long-term supported employment services from the **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)**. The career specialist would be able to provide the initial job coaching, but long-term employment services would be necessary as determined by the employment plan.

Colin was referred to the **Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS** – see Page 5) for additional short-term job coaching services until such time as his funding was approved by the **Developmental Disabilities Administration**.

Colin's family was referred to a **Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO)** for assistance in applying for medical coverage through Social Security Disability Insurance until he became employed.

Through **informational interviews** with prospective employers, the career specialist soon identified a possible position with Ross Dress for Less, a retail clothing store near Colin's home. She helped **negotiate a position** for Colin in the shoe department where he performs tasks customized to his skills and the store's needs.

Through the facilitation of the career specialist, Colin's funding was approved by DDA. He and his family choose a DDA funded developmental disabilities employment agency that now provides the **occasional job coaching** Colin needs to remain successfully employed.

As of this writing, Colin has been working in this customized job for almost a year. His employment was made possible through the coordination of resources that were facilitated through Montgomery Works with its various One Stop partners. The career specialist helped Colin and his family to navigate various disparate service systems that eventually came together on his behalf. The result illustrates what is possible when resources are managed effectively and in synch with one another. The One Stop Career Center system proved to be an efficient vehicle to make this happen.

With his family at his side, **Colin Robinson** walked into Montgomery Works One Stop Career Center looking for help to find a job. He had recently lost his job as a food service worker. Colin met the requirements as a dislocated worker, registered for services, and was directed to meet with a core services resource specialist – as any other customer would have been. During this meeting, Colin's family expressed the belief that he needed job coaching to assist him get and maintain a job. A career specialist with the Maryland Customized Employment Partnership was then invited to become part of the employment team.

The family disclosed that Colin received special education support services in high school – but once school ended, the supports he received while on the job had disappeared. Though he had been employed by the same company since leaving school 14 years before, his job in the food service industry had become more and more challenging, especially as the original manager and many of the co-workers who knew him well changed jobs. He was eventually released because of low productivity.

**2005 – Volume 01 Issue 03**

Published quarterly for MCEP by TransGen, Inc. To be added to the mailing list or to request additional copies of this publication, please call (240) 283-1576 or send an email to [lcuozzo@montgomeryworks.com](mailto:lcuozzo@montgomeryworks.com).

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MCEP is funded under a grant supported by the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor, Grant #E-9-4-3-0106. The opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Labor.

**MCEP Partners & Collaborators**

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TransGen, Inc.

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WayStation, Inc.

Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Montgomery County Public Schools

visit us online at  
[www.marylandcep.org](http://www.marylandcep.org)

