

CUSTOMISED EMPLOYMENT





Customised employment is a flexible, person-centred approach to job design which supports individuals with intellectual disabilities to obtain and maintain meaningful employment. Employment, particularly in the open job market, is important for people with intellectual disability as it provides them with a liveable wage, a sense of purpose, connections to community and the ability to learn and develop their skills and abilities. Customised employment focuses on the strengths, needs, and interests of the job seeker whilst considering the specific requirements and expectations of the employer. This powerful process can lead to mutually beneficial employment relationships, enhanced productivity and increased job satisfaction.



How do we achieve customised employment?

Customised employment can take a bit more planning and maintenance but leads to benefits for both the employee and the employer. Open employment is a human right as set out by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability to which Australia is a signatory. There are a few steps involved in the customised employment process which when done well can lead to long term jobs for people with intellectual disability where they are able to make a meaningful contribution to their workplace.

1. Person-Centred Planning:

The process begins with a deep understanding of the individual's unique skills, preferences, and interests. This process of self-exploration can involve interviews, observations, and discussions with the job seeker, their family, and other support networks to get a sense of the person's preferences surrounding work.

2. Discovery Process:

A discovery process is a powerful phase where a job seeker's strengths, abilities, and potential contributions to a work environment are explored. This can include situational assessments and volunteer opportunities to better understand the individual's capabilities in various settings. This phase is important as people with intellectual disability are often not afforded the opportunity to consider what they might like to do when it comes to employment. Having the opportunity to really consider and be involved in work experience allows them to consider and discover their preferences for long term job satisfaction.



3. Job Development:

Based on the discovery findings, supporters can actively seek out or create job opportunities that match the individual's strengths and interests. This might involve customising job duties, negotiating job roles, or developing new positions that capitalise on the job seeker's strengths.

4. Employer Engagement:

Building strong relationships with employers is crucial. This involves educating employers about the benefits of customised employment, addressing any concerns, and demonstrating how hiring an individual with an intellectual disability can meet business needs and enhance workplace diversity. Employers may need support to provide an inclusive employment experience to employees with an intellectual disability. There are many organisations that are able to assist.

5. Job Carving:

Job carving involves modifying existing job descriptions to match the skills of the job seeker, potentially redistributing tasks among current employees. This is particularly beneficial to people with intellectual disability as it can allow them to show their expertise in an area that they are proficient in while getting support to learn new or unfamiliar tasks. Remember, people with intellectual disability can learn new tasks in their job and should be expected to grow and develop their skills.



6. On-the-Job Support:

Providing ongoing support and training to both the employee and the employer ensures a successful integration into the workplace. This support can be in the form of job coaching, workplace accommodations, and continuous communication to address any challenges that arise.

7. Sustainability and Career Advancement:

Customised employment is not just about job placement but also about long-term success and growth. Regular evaluations and support help individuals with intellectual disability advance in their careers, acquire new skills, and achieve greater independence and job satisfaction.



Benefits of Customized Employment:

For Individuals:

- Increases access to meaningful and rewarding work.
- Enhances self-esteem and independence.
- Provides opportunities for social interaction and community involvement.
- When combined with open employment, provides a livable wage.

For Employers:

- Access to a dedicated and motivated workforce.
- Enhanced workplace diversity and inclusion.
- Potential for improved productivity and morale among employees.

Customised employment is a powerful process that transforms the traditional employment model, making it more inclusive and adaptable to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. An inclusive employment market is good for everyone and allows for a diverse and accepting community. An emphasis on collaboration, creativity, and the recognition of each individual's unique contributions, fosters a more equitable and dynamic workforce.