

# Customized Employment as Accommodation: The Economics of Citizens with Disabilities

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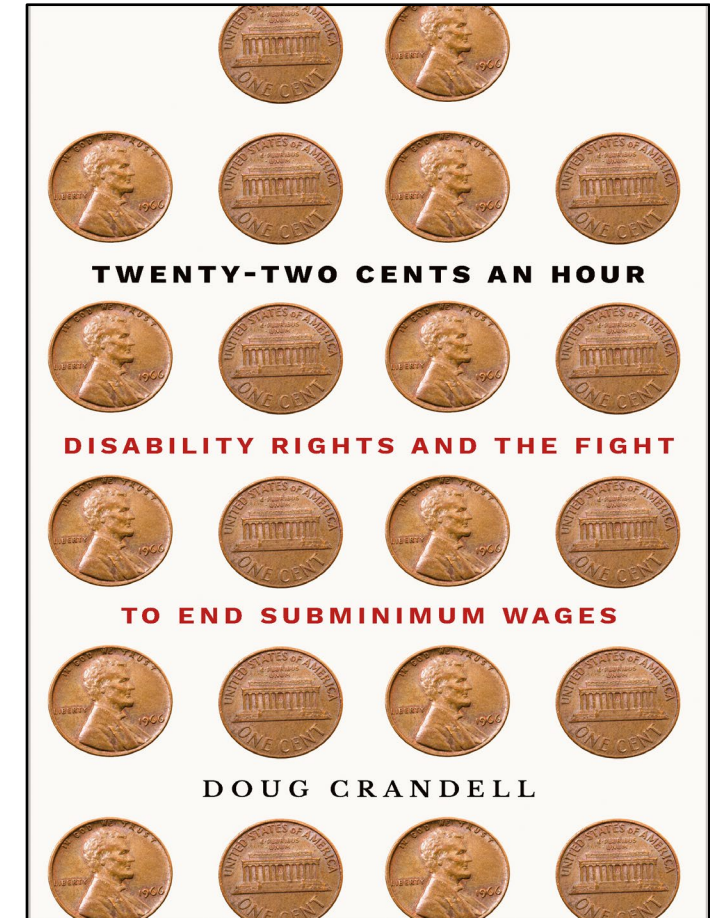
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# Bio

**Doug Crandell** has worked in supported employment for 30 years. He has been the Project Director for several demonstration grants funded through the U.S. Department of Labor, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Social Security Administration. He directed Georgia's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Doug is on the faculty of the [Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia](#), and a [Senior Consultant with Griffin-Hammis](#). For the last seven years, Doug has provided training and technical assistance to Georgia's DBHDD supported employment providers. He is a Subject Matter Expert with several states to restructure their employment supports to include evidence-based supported employment, customized employment, and self-employment. He is the Project Director for Georgia's Training and Technical Assistance Center for Employment funded by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities: [Advancing Employment](#).

As an author, Doug has published seven books and is a regular contributor to the [SUN Magazine](#), where he publishes essays on labor, health and disability.



# Linking Accommodations to Customized Employment

- Under [Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA), a reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done during the hiring process. These modifications enable an individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity not only to get a job, but successfully perform their job tasks to the same extent as people without disabilities.
- The ADA requires reasonable accommodations as they relate to three aspects of employment: 1) ensuring equal opportunity in the application process; 2) enabling a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job; and 3) making it possible for an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.



# What is Customized Employment?

***Customized employment*** is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based on an individualized match between the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate and the identified business needs of an employer. Customized Employment utilizes an individualized approach to employment planning and job development — one person at a time . . . one employer at a time.



# Customized employment often takes the form of:

- **Task reassignment:** Some of the job tasks of incumbent workers are reassigned to a new employee. This reassignment allows the incumbent worker to focus on the critical functions of his/her job (i.e., primary job responsibilities) and complete more of the central work of the job. Task reassignment typically takes the form of job creation, whereby a new job description is negotiated based on current, unmet workplace needs.
- **Job carving:** An existing job description is modified — containing one or more, but not all, of the tasks from the original job description.
- **Job sharing:** Two or more people share the tasks and responsibilities of a job based on each other's strengths.
- **Self-employment**, although less common, is becoming more established as a form of customized employment. Self-employment allows for an individual to receive assistance in the creation of an independently owned small business (typically a micro enterprise, under five employees) based on the strengths and dreams of an individual and the unmet needs of a local market while incorporating the individualized planning and support strategies needed for success.



# Why Customize to accommodate?

- ADA
- More inclusive, more productive workplaces
- DEI initiatives
- Workforce demands
- Social mission can become operationalized
- Neurodiversity promotes a different approach to problem solving
- Finally, it's not about the money, unless it's about the money, and it's always about the money!



# Real jobs return \$3,016 per year to taxpayers

- **New Study Explores Cost Efficiency of Supported Employment throughout US**  
In a newly released study published in the TASH journal, *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, supported employees returned an average monthly net benefit to taxpayers of \$251 (or an annual net benefit of \$3,016.08 per supported employee) and generated a benefit–cost ratio of \$1.46 for every dollar spent. The comprehensive research looked at all 231,204 supported employees funded by vocational rehabilitation throughout the entire United States from 2002 to 2007.
- This remarkable finding extrapolates to over **\$1.5 billion dollars in cost benefits** from supported employment if applied to the total number of US individuals with disabilities served in segregated day placements. However, the author notes that supported employment wages still lag, and that the service "will need to secure positions in the community that "pay above minimum wage and allow supported employees to earn a livable wage."

Cimera, R. (2010). Supported Employment's Cost-Efficiency to Taxpayers: 2002 to 2007, *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, Vol. 34, No. 2., pp. 13-20.



# Power of Purchasing for Households

The Nielsen Consumer and Shopper Analytics team found that 5.5% of U.S. households have a member with intellectual disabilities, representing **\$31 billion** in buying power annually. The team also found that 7.1% additional households have an immediate family member (parent or child) with intellectual disabilities who lives outside the household, and they have \$35 billion in buying power. Combined, this group has **\$68 billion** in collective annual buying power, indicating that it's a robust and important group in the U.S. consumer market. *July 24, 2017.*





May 15, 2020

# National Investors call for Workplace Disability Inclusion Investor Group Representing **\$1 Trillion** Appeals to Companies; Highlights Financial Benefits of Embracing an Open and Diverse Workforce

In their joint statement, the investors called for companies to adopt policies for:

- Setting goals for **hiring people with disabilities** and tracking progress in meeting those goals;
- Public support from a senior executive for creating a disability-focused employee resource group that fosters a supportive network; and
- Including people with disabilities in their corporate diversity and inclusion statements.



# Employer Focus Groups: National Scope

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

- For small employers, the value of Customized Employment is in being creative and utilizing flexible approaches that perform work that meets the unmet needs of an employer.
- For both large and small employers, Customized Employment provides value in that it creates positions that perform tasks freeing up time for existing employees, thus allowing them to focus on core priority duties.
- To employers, the terms Customized Employment and Supported Employment are interchangeable and largely irrelevant to them. Larger employers, in particular, would prefer to think of what they are doing as “job customization.”
- Customization can occur before or after the hire as employers learn about and better understand the capacity of the worker and identify other unmet needs be done by the worker.

# More from Employer Focus Groups

**Employers indicated several key factors for community rehabilitation providers to consider in effectively engaging employers:**

- Knowing the business, including its products, services, and customers. Doing research beforehand and coming to the initial meeting with this information.
- Understanding and addressing the needs of the business (versus the need of the provider to place an individual on the job).
- Listening to the employer more than talking/selling to the employer.
- Being creative and flexible in how to meet the needs of the employer and effectively utilizing the skills and interests of employee.
- Being passionate about the work of finding employment of individuals with disabilities.
- Being responsive and available to the employer when needs/issues arise.

# Thank you and some sources:

- <https://askjan.org/topics/customized.cfm>
- [www.Advancingemployment.com](http://www.Advancingemployment.com)
- [https://leadcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CE\\_Info\\_Brief\\_Employer\\_Perspective\\_0.pdf](https://leadcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CE_Info_Brief_Employer_Perspective_0.pdf)

***Now, we will give away two books to the first two people to answer a question and text it to: 770-896-5812 😊***