
Job Matching Series, Part III: The Matching Process

Lesson Summary

The pressure to swiftly assist individuals to find and accept the job of their dreams can result in mismatches between the worker and the job that can ultimately result in job losses. Careful matching can resolve many problems, but the question is, how close must the match be? This lesson reviews a process called discrepancy analysis for resolving mismatches.

Learning Objectives

- Reinforce the concept the careful job matching is critical to success.
- Introduce the use of “Preferences and Conditions” to the matching process.
- Learn to use Discrepancy Analysis to search for problem resolutions.
- Review resources for resolving mismatching issues.
- Explain how job matching can, and cannot, deal with challenging behaviors.

The Ideal Participant

- Currently makes job development calls on local business community.
- Works with individuals with significant barriers to employment.
- Wants to do everything possible to help participants acquire great jobs.
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Prep activities and time required

- 10-20 minutes, including reading the lesson, making copies of handout exercises, and organizing
- All handouts are ready to use

Lesson length, other requirements

- 30-40 minutes. Can be adjusted by modifying or removing exercises, lecture.
- Does not require whiteboard or PowerPoint.

Other related lessons

- Job Analysis
- Job Seeker Profile

Why worry about job matching?

Good matching can reduce the need for job coaching support.

Job coaches sometimes are tasked with making a square peg fit into a round hole. When the match is well done, the need for extensive training or “repair” work is minimal.

Workers who are well matched to the job usually want to keep it.

Motivation can play a significant role in job retention. For individuals who do not have a history of moving easily from one job to another, a “good job” takes on extra value.

Matching reduces disability issues. If the job seeker is well matched to the job, the disability becomes less visible.

Disability is really only an issue when it interferes with the worker’s ability to perform required tasks. For individuals with significant disabilities, careful matching that takes advantage of niche strengths and abilities.

Workers who are unhappy with their job, and happen to be poor advocates for themselves, often use behaviors to escape.



People vote with their feet, . . . or with their behavior. For someone who has difficulty expressing their discomfort, displeasure, confusion, or boredom, challenging behaviors provide a proven means of communication regarding the worker’s feelings about the job match.

Even if the job developer talks the job seeker into accepting a job that conflicts with his/her desires, agreements like that do not hold up well.

Well meaning job developers may talk the job seeker into taking the job, but agreements based on convenience or pressure don’t last. What happens next?

A new worker can be well matched to a job that still requires him/her to learn new skills, take some risks, and/or struggle a bit to master the position’s requirements. A job that is too easily mastered can be quickly boring.

Matching doesn’t necessarily mean that the job seeker accepts a position that he/she can handle with no effort. Jobs that are too easy do not stay engaging.

Job Matching: Job Seeker Preferences and Conditions

If your role is to represent the individual to potential employers, or to help prepare the person to do his/her own interviews, you would be wise to spend time on one final topic before marching out to look for a new job.

Preferences

Every one of us has our own sense of the characteristics of an ideal job. “Preferences” and “Conditions” sort out which of those characteristics are negotiable and which are not. Items that are *preferred* in a potential job represent goals for the job developer, but a position that does not contain every preferred characteristic might still be acceptable. Often such a job is weighed by its “pros” and “cons”.

Conditions

These are not negotiable. They should represent critical characteristics that must be in place to make a potential position acceptable. Compromising on a condition often leads to trouble later on when the newly employed worker realizes that she should have stuck with her initial demands, rather than agreeing to let the condition go.

The balance between preferences and conditions is an important one. On one hand, too many conditions may make it almost impossible to find a suitable job opening. Too few conditions may lead to an unhappy worker who wants a new job.

Preferences are commonly expressed by job seekers. What might be some typical examples?

While any aspect of a potential job might be conditional, what would be some examples of job characteristics that be expected to be *conditional*?

How might you approach working with a job seeker who wants to make every feature of a prospective job conditional?

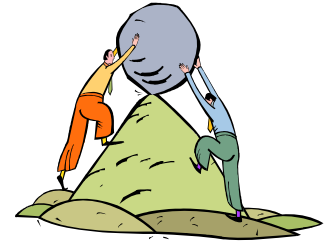
Discrepancy Analysis: Resolving Mismatches

The match between the Job Seeker and the Job is rarely perfect. Discrepancy Analysis is about carefully working out those differences. When the process is complete, the matching decision should be clear.

Answering these questions defines the job match

- *What exactly does the job require that brings up the mismatch?*

Start with strong, unambiguous facts about the job's requirements and characteristics. Sloppy work by the Job Developer at this point can cause a lot of grief later on.



- *In what way does the requirement conflict with the Job Seeker's stated interests or abilities?*

It may be necessary to clarify with the Job Seeker exactly what he/she wants or will do.



- *Is the conflict on a topic that the Job Seeker has already stated a Preference or a Condition?*

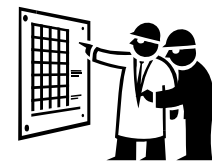
Preferences are negotiable. Presenting information to the Job Seeker can give him/her control over whether to compromise or not. Conditions, by definition, are not negotiable.

- *Is there any room to work with the employer to change the job description??*

Some mismatches can be resolved through job restructuring or other strategies that modify the requirements of the job. If so, perhaps restructuring will make the problem go away.

- *Could a needed accommodation be worked out? Might assistive technology provide needed support?*

Perhaps a modification that allows the essential tasks to be completed would resolve the problem.



- *Would it be helpful to the Job Seeker to observe, sample or try out a task and/or work environment? Will hands-on experience help the Job Seeker make a more informed decision?*

For some Job Seekers, concerns can be resolved through more hands-on experience. A task or situation that was thought to be unacceptable may turn out to be much more acceptable when experienced in person.

Discrepancy Analysis: Resolving Mismatches, *continued*

- *Would typical training and/or support resolve an initial (Day One) mismatch?*

It would not be unusual to need extra support for the new worker to learn and/or come up to speed. If the amount needed fits within “normal” levels of support that either your agency or the employer might be expected to provide, then there is not a significant mismatch.

Exercise: Using the Discrepancy Analysis Process

In this exercise, work in pairs to figure out what you could do to determine if the issue was resolvable or not. Remember, the match may depend on working this out.



Once you've figured out what you could do, go back to the preceding page and label your approach (or approaches), e.g., "work with the employer to restructure the job".

- 1) **Benny** loves the idea of working in a medical supply store. He is sure he can handle the process of computer-based requests for supplies, and he thinks he can deal with most of the customers who come into the store. However, Benny is very, very worried about talking to customers with heavy Asian accents. He wonders if he might misunderstand what they ask for. He doesn't want to make a mistake that could jeopardize someone's health.

- 2) **Melinda's** person-centered planning meeting identified work in a photo lab as an ideal job, so finding a position with duties that seem to match her abilities and interests was exciting. After she visited the lab, Melinda thought the workers there were "not friendly" and she is now hesitant to pursue the job. Melinda has an intellectual disability and doesn't make friends very easily.



- 3) **Paul** had set a goal of working in a sports store, so your ability to find a position at the Big 5 Sports store doing the sort of restocking work he had requested made you feel good. Now Paul has gone with you to meet the store manager and learn about the specific tasks in this position. While the store manager has not yet offered the position, you have a positive feeling about how things are going.

Paul's reaction to the visit to Big 5 was to say, "It wasn't quite what I had expected." He is unsure whether to pursue this opportunity.

Exercise: Using the Discrepancy Analysis Process, pg.2

- 4) **Alicia** always wanted to work in a newspaper office, and her skills at commercial art make her a good candidate for an available position working with the production of new advertisements for business customers. Her use of a



wheelchair, the result of an auto accident, is not much of a factor in performing the work. However, Alicia also has brain damage due to the accident, and she has trouble dealing with distractions in her work environment. The ad department is an open room with a lot of commotion and visual stimuli. It is a difficult setting for Alicia to work at her best.

- 5) **Ralph** wants you to help him return to work after a nine-year hiatus from employment due to a significant mental illness. He has focused on working in a pet store, and has all of the needed skills and abilities to run a cash register, deal with credit cards, answer most customer questions, restock, and handle animals. No problem, right? Well . . . Ralph is someone who understands the power of *conditions*, and he has imposed a number of them. Thus, to be acceptable a job offer must be for:

- No more than 30 hours, but at least 24 hours/week
- Within 20 minutes commuting time
- No job requirements for handling any unpleasant creatures, such as rats or snakes
- No job requirements that include “low-man-on-the-totem-pole” tasks. Ralph is 31 years old and wants his job to be like those of his peer age group.

You have found a pet store that may have a position, but it doesn’t meet all of Ralph’s conditions. What are you going to do?

- 6) **Samantha** says that she wants a job that starts in the late morning or early afternoon because she likes to sleep in late. But she really doesn’t want to work into the evenings since she’d miss seeing her friends. You’ve found a position that otherwise matches her requirements and interests, starting at 11:30 am and finishing at 6:00 pm. It looks like a good match, with the one . . . small . . . exception that the employer reserves the right to call her to come in at 9:00 am in “rare circumstances” when two or more other employees have called in sick or are otherwise unavailable.

Job Matching and Challenging Behaviors



One of the great misconceptions of job matching and challenging behavior is that it's all about settings. The concept goes like this: if Tony has difficulties working around people, we need to find him a worksite with few people. Thus Tony might just do best in a job that has almost no contact with others, that way, he'll not offend anyone.



This approach assumes that Tony's behavior is based on the presence of other individuals who are the "targets" of his actions. So if he's not around people then he will be less likely to get into trouble, right?

A better, more productive way of looking at behavior is to remember that people use behavior to communicate what they want. Positive behavior support theory teaches us that challenging behavior often serves a function for the person. So, going back to Tony, it is possible that he was using the behavior to get out of an unpleasant situation, or to keep someone away who scared him, or to get home where he could shoot baskets. We don't know why Tony acted the way he did until we know more about the function the behavior served.

Placing Tony in an isolated setting may – or may not – be a good idea. If he still wants to get home to shoot baskets, an isolated work setting is no better than one with lots of co-workers.

Job matching makes sense when it is used to put Tony in a job that he truly loves. If you can discover what makes him excited, and offer the opportunity to get paid for doing it, Tony may just surprise you and sharply reduce his behavior.

For individuals with challenging behaviors, work hard at matching the job seeker with a position that he/she will like a lot, rather than one that simply minimizes the opportunity for getting into trouble. Assume that the more he/she values the job, the less likely he/she will be to use challenging behaviors.

Can you think of an individual who currently presents challenging behaviors and is hoping to become employed? If so, how would the lesson on this page apply to his or her situation?

30 Minute Lesson: Feedback Form

Please let us know what you think of this product, so we can continue to better meet your training needs. Fax or mail to Laurie Ford at 6912 220th SW, Suite 105, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043; Fax (425) 774-9303

Topic of Lesson _____

- Facilitator Version
- Participant Version
- Non-Facilitated Group Version
- Self-Study Version

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the relevancy of these materials to your job _____
(1 is worst, 5 is best)
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the positive impact of these materials on your professional skills, knowledge, and abilities (1 is worst, 5 is best) _____
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the positive impact of these materials on your organization (1 is worst, 5 is best) _____
4. What was the most useful part of the lesson?
5. What was the least useful part of the lesson?
6. How could this lesson be improved?
7. What additional topics would you like to see in a 30 Minute Lesson?