

DOING IT THE COMPANY WAY: EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES ON WORKPLACE SUPPORTS

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Significant advances in the identification and application of accommodations and supports have enabled people with various disabilities to succeed in the workplace. Such advances include an array of technologies and methodologies, including, but not limited to, assistive devices, alternative and augmentative communication strategies, architectural modifications, telecommuting, re-structured job assignments, mentors and coaches, flexed time and other scheduling accommodations, and employee assistance and other employer human resource management programs. These advances, along with legal protections from discrimination available through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), have created an environment in which job seekers with disabilities can better promote their job qualifications and advocate for necessary accommodations.

In fact, the successes of people with disabilities who are strategically supported in the workplace are well documented. Key among these supports are those afforded by rapidly advancing assistive technology. Augmentative communication supports, including a range of specific computer aided devices as well as email communication, for example, have provided much wider access to workplaces for people with communication disabilities (Costen, 1988; Zielinski, 2000). Behrmann and Shepis (1994) report that, with assistive technology that is designed and applied directly in the workplace, workers with significant mobility disabilities experience improved

employment access and success. In many other instances, workers with disabilities who have significant accommodation needs are supported in the accomplishment of a variety of work tasks through the application of complex computer adaptations (e.g. Inge, Wehman, Strobel, Powell & Todd, 1998; Fisher, 1999).

In addition to technology-related supports, specially trained and assigned job coaches have assisted people requiring a high level of support achieve success in the workplace (Wehman, 2001). Pre-existing internal workplace supports, such as co-worker mentors, have also contributed to successful work performance by persons with high support and accommodation needs (Rogan, Banks & Howard, 2000; Mank, Cioffi & Yovanoff, 1997; DiLeo, Luecking & Hathaway, 1995). Additional empirical studies and a host of anecdotal accounts illustrate a range of workplace supports that contribute to successful job performance (e.g., Ford, 1995; Stineman, 1998; Sunoo, 2001; Targett, West & Anglin, 2001).

Such accommodations and supports are often readily obtained, even in challenging circumstances. For example, for people with significant disabilities who were successful in their jobs, Unger (1999) found that almost all necessary accommodations were available in the employment environment and/or facilitated by disability employment agency staff. In addition, Unger reported that many

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workplace accommodations provided by employers go beyond the legal concept of “reasonable accommodation” as presented in the ADA, suggesting that employers are willing and able to implement a variety of workplace supports for people with disabilities, provided there is incentive and technical assistance for them to do so. In fact, Magill (1997) reports that accommodations made for employees with disabilities often are adopted effectively for other workers, contributing to greater productivity for the company overall.

Advances and availability of employment supports, however, have not necessarily resulted in higher employment rates and increased job advancement for people with disabilities as an aggregate group. Indeed, people with disabilities continue to experience a host of barriers to employment and careers, as evidenced by: low rates of post school employment for former special education recipients and other working age adults (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996; Louis Harris and Associates, 1998); disproportionate numbers of people with disabilities living below the poverty line, with high rates of SSI/SSDI dependence for youth and adults with disabilities (National Council on Disability, 2000); few opportunities to enter high paying careers involving science, technology and other professional areas (Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2001); and high rates of job failure (Butterworth, 1998).

Ironically, in a climate of expanding knowledge of workplace support and accommodation, and therefore theoretically better employment opportunities, unemployment remains a reality for too many people with disabilities who are seeking employment. To what factors can this dilemma be attributed? Are too many people with disabilities not ready for the workplace because of limited occupational preparation, as some suggest (Whiting, 2000)? Or, are too many workplaces unready for people with disabilities? The reasons likely lie as much in the latter circumstance as in the former. In fact, keys to readying workplaces for individual workers with disabilities and to implementing effective workplace supports might best be found

by examining employers’ perceptions of disability and workplace accommodations. This paper considers many of these relevant employer perspectives. It also examines general organization development (OD) influences on human resource management by employers, specific employer perceptions of hiring and accommodating people with disabilities, and the implications of these influences and perceptions for employment advocacy/self-advocacy as well as for the identification and implementation of workplace supports for people with disabilities.

OD Influences on Employee Recruitment, Management, and Retention

Before examining employers’ specific views on managing disability in the workplace, it is instructive to focus first on organization development theory and practice as it relates to general human resources management.

Organization development refers to a specific field of business and human resource management that addresses the management of change. Organization development has been defined as “a series of planned processes by which human resources are identified, utilized, and developed in ways that strengthen organizational effectiveness by increasing problem-solving capabilities and planning” (Rothwell, Sullivan & McLean, 1995, p.7).

Prominent among OD perspectives is the notion that change is constant. That is, successful companies recognize that they must continually manage shifting conditions, markets, human resources, and competition. Change implies movement toward goals using new and adjusted processes and movement away from present conditions, beliefs, or attitudes (Rothwell, et al., 1995).

Healthy organizations are thus presumed to be those that generate quality products and services by continually addressing and, as needed, making adjustments to internal quality areas—including job design, employee selection and management, employee role clarification, work flow dynamics,

and supervisory communication—in order to promote optimal performance. Companies that fail to manage these internal quality areas often experience employee turnover and retention problems, not to mention decreased outputs and, therefore, decreased profits (Drinen, 2001). Thus, according to Rothwell et al., OD approaches typically direct companies to define their missions and desired output, clarify the roles of employees in relation to desired output, and continually gauge the results.

Relationships between human resource management and successfully managing change are deemed to be intrinsically linked to overall company organizational activities and goals. Ultimately, company operating strategies, especially the management of employees, are fundamentally linked with company success and profit. As illustrated in **Figure 1** (see page 12), the first three links in what is called the Service-Profit Chain (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1996) relate to employee issues. In this chain company revenue, growth, and profitability are linked to internal service quality and employee management in a continuous cycle of internal and external quality outputs.

The Service-Profit Chain represents the fundamental OD perspective that change should be expected and encouraged. Whenever any of the links in the Service-Profit Chain are weak, that is, contributing to less than optimum company performance, then intervention is needed. In OD nomenclature, intervention refers to an effort that requires intentional entry into an ongoing system for the purpose of introducing or creating change (Rothwell, et al., 1995). It is not surprising then that much OD intervention is focused on individual employee performance. Common employee-focused OD interventions include coaching, training, performance appraisal systems, job analysis and descriptions, and process improvement.

Each of these interventions, not coincidentally, is similar to or has parallels in the field of disability

employment services. These parallels are depicted in **Table 1** (see page 13). A case study later in this paper illustrates how OD consultation (which in this instance featured a specific assessment of human resources processes and subsequent interventions) resulted in both improved company outputs and a workplace more inclusive of people with disabilities. Conceptually and in practice, this effort drew heavily on the parallels between the fields of OD/Human Resources Development and disability employment.

Simply put, successful companies get the most out of their employees, and doing so requires processes, interventions, and supports that exploit individuals' strengths. In the absence of these processes and supports, any employee is likely to experience difficulty in the workplace. For people with workplace barriers, including those with disabilities, there is an even greater likelihood that they will struggle without the internal company systems and supports that contribute to optimal company operation. In fact, one might ask how likely is it that people with disabilities will be considered at all for positions in companies where, in addition to less than optimal processes and supports, there are conflicting perceptions about employee roles. Another question might be: How do employer perceptions about disability affect hiring and operations decisions? To answer these questions, and to determine their relevance, it is useful now to examine the literature on employee perceptions of disability.

Employer Perspectives of Disability in the Workplace

Historically, employers have demonstrated conflicting views about and approaches to disability in the workplace. For example, Hernandez (2000) reviewed 37 studies of employer attitudes concerning the hiring and accommodation of workers with disabilities. This review found that employers consistently expressed generally positive attitudes toward workers with disabilities, and generally affirmative and humane views about disability. Corporate responsibility to the larger

community is often invoked when companies articulate a policy about workers with disabilities.

However, employers' attitudes toward disability tend to be more negative when disability is more specifically defined and when specific disabilities are identified. For example, workers with physical disabilities are viewed more positively than workers with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities. Yet, when appropriate supports are provided, employers express positive attitudes toward workers with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities. Affirming earlier reviews, Hernandez found that employers with prior positive contact hold consistently favorable attitudes toward workers with disabilities, regardless of disability label. Overall, however, the review concluded that employers' expressed willingness to hire applicants with disabilities still exceeds their actual hiring, although this gap is narrowing.

Employers are often unaware of, or naïve about, the availability of people with disabilities as a supplemental labor pool (Fabian, Luecking & Tilson, 1994). When they are aware of disability resources, there often is confusion due to fragmentation of disability-related information or perceptions of not having the experience and resources to adequately support their employment (Butterworth & Pitt-Catsouphes, 1997). That is, employers may express a willingness to hire people with disabilities, but are typically at a loss as to how to identify workplace supports and accommodations that might be necessary.

One study conducted by the National Supported Employment Consortium examined focus group responses of two distinct groups of employers from two distinct geographic regions of the country (Luecking, 2000). These focus groups were intended to obtain employer perspectives on hiring workers with disabilities, openness to workplace supports and accommodations, and associated recommendations for organizations engaged in supporting applicants with disabilities, especially those with limited work histories and/or limited work skills.

One focus group in Tennessee consisted of employers with little experience in hiring workers with disabilities; another group in Washington state consisted of employers with considerable such experience. Employers in both groups clearly expressed their need to recruit and retain workers with specific skills or the ability to acquire these skills.

Many companies with vacant positions, particularly those that required computer and technical skills, were not inclined to consider applicants with disabilities without the requisite skills, unless the applicants offered something to an employer besides a straight worker-to-job match.

For example, alternative and specific task assignment to a worker with a disability, sometimes called "job carving" by disability employment specialists, often makes it possible for other employees to accomplish more, thus contributing to an overall increase in company outputs. Assigning a person with a disability to deliver documents from one company department to another, thus allowing other workers to remain at their posts to complete more complicated tasks, is an example of such an arrangement.

A clear, common message from the participants of both focus groups was that the presence or absence of disability was not a primary concern when making hiring decisions. Rather, the chief concern was matching – not simply the matching of an individual applicant to an available job, but the matching of a person to a specific company need.

A revealing clue how this impacts workplace supports was provided by several employers who said that, especially in labor-short economic circumstances, companies want to look at the person and determine the possibilities, that is, match the person to a situation, not merely to a job. The study concluded that employers, under the right conditions and with available and competent assistance, are willing to develop new and augmentative approaches to meet human resource

recruitment and retention needs, including hiring persons who require extensive initial training and follow-up support. The major caveat expressed was that the benefits that would accrue to the company from the ongoing availability of that support must be continually emphasized.

That disability employment specialists often miss this latter point was illustrated in yet another focus group study that compared the responses and opinions of employers with those of employment specialists and job seekers with disabilities (Fabian, Luecking & Tilson, 1995). Participants in three separate groups – consisting of employers who had successfully hired people with disabilities, disability employment specialists, and people with disabilities, respectively – were asked the same question: what factors contribute to successful employment of people with disabilities? Overwhelmingly, people with disabilities and disability employment specialists identified such “soft” factors as employers’ understanding attitudes and flexible approach to accommodations. By contrast, employers pointed to quality service from employment specialists and competence in particular workers as contributing factors to successful employment. In other words, they were satisfied when the needs of their enterprise were the ultimate focus. These contrasting views provide further evidence that disability is not the primary concern when employers make hiring decisions.

These findings also suggest the need for refocused employment advocacy. Instead of advocacy and methodology, which has historically concentrated on aspects of disability and related accommodations, there may be heretofore-unrealized benefit when such advocacy is conducted in the context of the employers’ enterprises and organizational processes. Such benefits are examined in the following case studies, one that illustrates company-wide human resource management circumstances improving as a result of universal workplace support changes, and one that demonstrates how an individual advocated for supports on the job in the context of the company’s need.

Case Study: Corporate Coaching for Recruitment and Retention

TRW Koyo is a large company that manufactures automobile parts in its plant in Venore, TN. Employee retention has been among TRW Koyo’s human resource challenges due to a tight labor market in its recruitment area. In addition to recruitment challenges, there was considerable employee turnover in the first year of employment. Compounding the situation were experienced employees leaving the company for other jobs, creating problems meeting production goals.

TRW Koyo asked a team from the Workplace Supports Project of the University of Tennessee to conduct a comprehensive assessment of its human resources activities and to recommend interventions to improve them. TRW Koyo also wanted to increase the applicant pool to include more people with disabilities. The assessment was based on the organization development intervention model of Rothwell, et al. (1995) and included interviews with company leaders, focus group sessions with employees, and review of employment data such as hiring and turnover statistics and employee demographics.

As a result of the assessment, a program of company-wide interventions was recommended and subsequently implemented. The company established a mentor and job coach program to support new employees, especially those that were struggling on the job. Specific members of work teams were trained to mentor and coach new team members to support new workers. A corporate Job Coach position was established to facilitate the assignment of new employees to work teams, train and support employee mentors, provide intervention to under-performing employees, and facilitate transfer of employees to other teams when necessary. In addition, the company installed a system of conducting team leader training and team leader assignments so that new employees were better assimilated into work teams and so that leaders were evaluated on team performance toward meeting production goals.

In effect, these interventions were designed to influence the first link of the Service-Profit Chain (again, see Figure 1), that is, internal service quality. Workplace design and employee development processes (i.e., the mentor/coaching system) were implemented to support employees and improve employee satisfaction (second link), thus improving employee retention and productivity (third link), thus contributing to and strengthening all of the links down the chain.

Company human resource goals to reduce new hire turnovers, retain employees beyond the first year, and reduce turnover of experienced workers are being realized as a result of these interventions. Also, several new positions have been created and filled by persons with disabilities who are represented by a local employment service organization. This type of in-depth corporate consultation model represents an effort that benefits the company beyond the typical relationship it might have with a disability employment service organization, where potential job candidates are occasionally presented for hiring consideration for posted positions. Rather, it promotes the inclusion and support of people with disabilities by helping the company address much broader human resource issues.

The adoption of a job coaching intervention for all new employees creates an inclusive and supportive environment for people with disabilities who might benefit from that type of support. People with disabilities can therefore benefit from workplace support activities that are designed for all workers: they are generic to the entire workplace, and they are non-stigmatizing to people with disabilities since these activities are inherent to and naturally occur in company human resource processes. This also represents an effective combination and application of OD and disability employment interventions as outlined in Table 1.

Case Study: Workplace Supports as Value-Added to the Company

The previous case study example illustrates systemic and intensive intervention applied company-wide. How does the relationship between workplace supports and OD apply on the individual job seeker/employee level? An individual with whom the author is acquainted was provided extensive job search preparation by his special education teacher that focused on three areas: self-knowledge, including understanding his disability and its manifestations, personal and functional strengths, and accommodations needed for his learning style; knowledge of specific occupational areas and specific jobs; and self-advocacy, especially as it related to presenting strengths and skills to employers and identifying and requesting accommodations (Luecking, 1997). Because of his desire to work in some aspect of the communications industry, his preparations included several visits to local television and radio stations. Various jobs were explored during these visits and subsequently discussed with his teacher. Based on his experience during this process he was ready when the time came for a real job interview to confidently tell the employer about his ability to perform the tasks of an archivist at a television station's library.

During the interview, he asserted that his encyclopedic knowledge of television shows would make his job easier and lead to high productivity and quality of work. He added that he would need to ask his supervisor to provide instructions in writing due to an oral processing disability. With this small accommodation, he informed the station manager, he thought he could do the job quickly, thus making him available to help out with other tasks, such as helping with transcription in the case of a backlog.

By recognizing his strengths and by clearly understanding what accommodations would be necessary for workplace success, he emphasized that he had the skills needed by the employer and that, with accommodation, he could even take on more tasks. The message to the employer included

information on his disability, but was framed in the context of how accommodating him would ultimately benefit the employer's operation. In effect, he was offering to improve the employer's job and workplace design.

In the context of the Service-Profit Chain in Figure 1, he essentially was suggesting that his presence would contribute to internal service quality, thus adding to its external service value, customer satisfaction, and so on down the chain to company profitability. This example illustrates how negotiating supports and accommodations can result in a positive outcome for both the employee and employer. Both of the preceding case studies have strong implications for employment advocacy/self-advocacy and the identification and application of workplace supports for workers with disabilities.

New Directions for Employment Advocacy and Support

In spite of significant advances both in workplace supports methodology and in legal protections from discrimination, the high rates of unemployment for youth and adults with disabilities persist. Perhaps it is time to augment traditional approaches to employment self-advocacy and job development with more business-focused strategies. At the same time, it might also be advantageous to re-tool approaches to identifying and applying workplace supports and accommodations. We have seen that employers often willingly exceed the legal mandates for reasonable accommodation under circumstances when there is available competent assistance to do so.

We have also seen that companies prosper when organizational processes are addressed and enhanced as a result of both universally and individually designed workplace supports and accommodations. One must assume, then, that the persistently low rates of employment for people with disabilities are certainly not due to inherent or pervasive unemployability.

These unfortunate circumstances also cannot be attributed simply to inadequate employment

preparation, since many people with disabilities are well trained and prepared for workforce entry, yet still remain unemployed. Rather, key reasons for this circumstance may be found in the degree to which workplaces are prepared for people with disabilities. That is, how well prepared job seekers with disabilities are - and by extension their representatives in secondary and postsecondary programs - to help companies in this preparation. As seen in the previously illustrated case studies, an important prerequisite to this preparation is knowledge of company organizational processes and skill in enhancing them through specific workplace supports and accommodations. Implications for both job seekers and secondary and postsecondary programs are examined below.

Self-advocacy for Employment and Workplace Supports

Relevant research supports the notion that company hiring decisions are less likely to be influenced by the presence or absence of disability than by potential contribution by a job candidate to the company, especially when it is clear that value is being added to the employer's enterprise (Magill, 1997; Unger, 1999; Hernandez, 2000; Luecking, 2000). This has significant implications for individual job searches, identification of supports and accommodations, and managing job tasks. Combining self-awareness of strengths and support needs with knowledge of company operations can significantly enhance the pursuit of the right job and concomitant advocacy for accommodations, as in the case of the young man at the television station who promoted his productivity along with presenting his need for accommodation.

Additionally, Bolles and Brown (2001) advise job seekers with disabilities that they do not have to limit their job search to jobs that are ostensibly available. Rather, when there are support and accommodation needs that are not typical in workplaces, the search should be for an employer who needs particular talents that the job seeker possesses. Again, Luecking (2000) reports of employers plainly stating a willingness to look at company needs as they relate to a particular

applicant's skills rather than seek to fill the strict requirements of a posted or identified position. In the context of the Service-Profit Chain, this means that job seekers must be fully prepared to show a prospective employer how the internal quality (i.e., workplace design and job design) is positively affected by their presence, and how this will result in improvement of productivity and therefore the external quality of the company outputs.

Reinforcing this notion, Bolles and Brown further suggest that applicants with disabilities explain how accommodations often add to innovation and productivity for other workers in the company. For example, company units have achieved increased data entry productivity for all workers by adopting computer-keyboarding shortcuts that were originally implemented for someone with a mobility disability to enable faster keyboarding.

For the most part, according to Bolles and Brown, all employees redesign or modify their jobs so as to highlight their abilities and get around their limitations. Companies respect this fact and, in the OD context, it is one way that change in job tasks and job designs is a constant – rarely do two people do the same job in the same exact way. Adjustments are made regularly for all workers. It is therefore reasonable for people with disabilities to identify how specific workplace supports, including re-designed tasks or job processes, will add value to the larger company environment.

These concepts suggest several important directions for advocating for and implementing employment and workplace supports. Building job seeker self-awareness is crucial. Each job candidate should be fully prepared to identify strengths, skills, and accommodation requirements. Disclosure of disability is a personal choice during a job application process. However, employers are not obligated to provide accommodations without being informed about the need for them.

With or without specific reference to disability, it is helpful for a discussion to take place about relevant accommodations or alternative methods for

completing work. Employers frequently arrange accommodations such as job restructuring, job sharing, and alternative methods of providing instruction and training to non-disabled workers. If such accommodations facilitate employee productivity, they are readily made. Thus, it is especially useful to present the need for accommodation in such a way that emphasizes the benefit to the company rather than the disability.

Implications for Secondary and Postsecondary Programs

Much empirical research underscores the importance of employment experiences as either integral or adjunctive to secondary and postsecondary education curriculum (e.g., Colley & Jamison, 1999). Additionally, these experiences also serve to identify needed workplace support options as individuals with disabilities pursue employment. Additionally, there can be considerable value to employers who hire youth with disabilities under conditions where there is adequate support both to the youth and to their operation.

Luecking and Fabian (2000) found, for example, that 77% of youth who completed a standardized work-based internship program in high school, regardless of the nature or severity of disability, were offered ongoing employment by their host companies. This strongly suggests that once these youth are on the job and workplace supports are effectively in place, the employers clearly value the contribution the youth are making to the companies' enterprise. It also suggests that education and employment programs are in a position to offer their expertise to employers in new ways. Their specialized knowledge about accommodations and job analysis can be very valuable to employers.

Of course, the success of such programs is predicated on solid relationships with the companies providing these opportunities so that they are able to identify how to provide, adapt, and/or incorporate necessary supports in their workplaces. How can such employer relationships be duplicated and expanded by secondary and

postsecondary programs? Naturally, these programs will perform the same interventions outlined in Table 1; that is, coaching, training, job analysis, etc. As we have seen, however, these interventions have potentially greater impact if they are also applied in the additional context of organization development. Cohen and Walker (2001) offer behavioral competencies of effective OD consultants. These competencies can apply to education and employment professionals looking to build relationships with companies while assisting youth to find jobs. OD consultants who possess these competencies can also help companies implement mutually beneficial workplace supports.

Using the Cohen and Walker framework, the ability of education professionals to add value to a company's human resources processes requires:

- **Business acumen:** the ability to identify “return on investment” for companies who work with the program and hire youth it represents, for example, noting how the company might improve production when implementing various workplace supports;
- **Analytical skills:** the ability to identify an employer problem and offer a solution, for example, showing how accommodating one worker with a disability might result in adaptation for all employees across the board so that all are more productive;
- **Change management:** OD is predominantly about change – change in processes, job designs, workplace designs, internal and external outputs, etc.; for example, education professionals should be available to help manage any changes that might occur as a result of the implementation of workplace supports;
- **Strategic planning:** educators might offer to perform organizational assessment and determine what is important along the “service-profit chain,” and how certain aspects are amenable to modification and

ultimately the inclusion of a worker who requires supports and accommodations;

- **Influencing/persuading:** the identification of workplace supports interventions that also contribute to improvement of companies' operational and organizational processes are easier to “sell” to companies than vague and confusing explanations of what is meant by “disability;” and
- **Courage:** talking to and engaging people outside of their usual comfort zone, and learning to speak in the language of those who do think differently, takes some initial courage on the part of education professionals, but as these contacts occur more often, interacting with employers becomes more comfortable and productive.

Conclusion

Workplace supports are as much an issue of organization development as they are about employer attitude toward disability. As described above, there may be considerable advantage to using an organization development approach to establishing workplace supports for people with disabilities.

Organization development is a useful construct for achieving accessible workplace processes so that people who experience workplace barriers, especially those with disabilities, can be effectively supported and accommodated.

In fact, employer attitudes toward disability are less significant when making hiring decisions than other factors, especially when job seekers, educators, and employment professionals become adept at identifying workplace supports that also contribute to the improvement of companies' operational and organizational processes. Relationships with companies have the potential to yield supportive workplace opportunities for people with disabilities when they are developed through the implementation of OD interventions, with their

significant parallels to disability employment methodology.

When all is said and done, the bottom line for companies is the bottom line. Employee management and profitability are deeply intertwined. Whether employment advocacy and the identification/implementation of workplace supports is pursued for particular individuals or for a general company-wide initiative, as was the case with TRW Koyo, it behooves anyone concerned with finding employment to become more familiar with the circumstances of those who provide the jobs.

This article provides a context both for framing individual workplace and job supports and for developing more in-depth company relationships that will lead to more job opportunities for people with disabilities. When identifying, advocating for, and implementing workplace supports it is constructive to do so within the framework of company organizational processes as much as in the context of individual support requirements. A more universally accessible workplace is often the practical result.

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Figure 1. The Links in the Service-Profit Chain

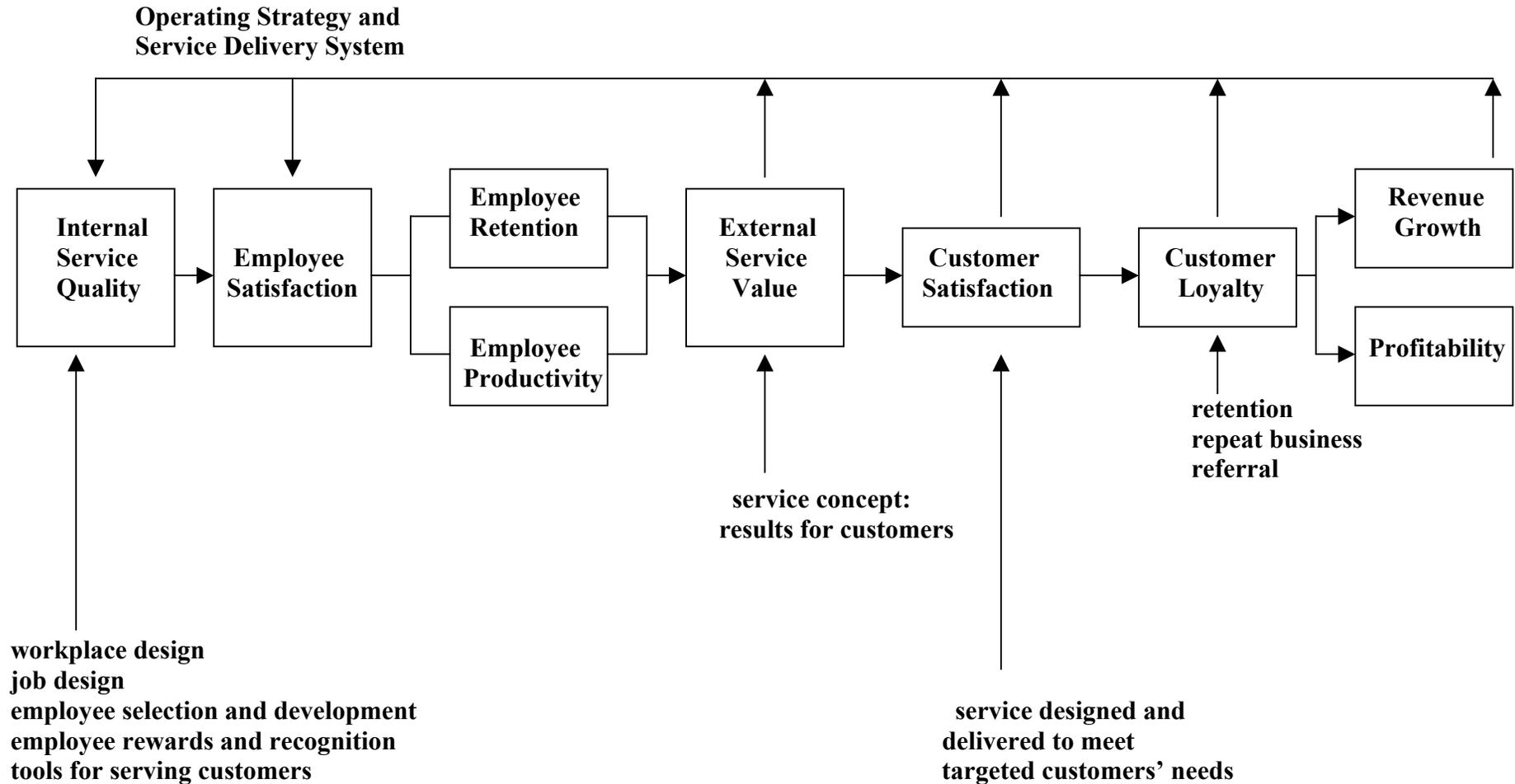


Table 1.

| Comparison of Organization Development (OD) and Disability Employment Interventions | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intervention | OD Context | Disability Employment Context |
| Coaching | Formalized helping relationship in which individuals receive guidance related to work and/or interpersonal problems. | Formalized helping relationship, often supported by government funding, in which individuals receive guidance for learning work tasks and adjusting to work circumstances. |
| Training | Intervention that provides individuals with knowledge, skills or attitudes that may be applied immediately to the job. | Preparation that provides individuals with knowledge, skills, or attitudes that may be applied to a projected or current job – often applied in the direct context of the workplace. |
| Performance Appraisal Systems | Methods for changing or improving measurement of employee performance and to provide feedback for performance. | Formalized or structured methods of providing feedback on work performance to reinforce learning of tasks. Also often used to set vocational objectives and identify needed supports. |
| Job Analysis and Descriptions | Means for analyzing and subsequently formalizing duties performed by job incumbents, and changed to reflect improved output expectations. | Structured approach to sequencing incumbent job tasks for the purpose of training workers and/or redesigning tasks for more effective learning and performance. |
| Process Improvement | Approach to change the way in which processes (and jobs) are performed to make them more effective and efficient. | Re-design of jobs and tasks so that individuals may more effectively perform them. Often a way to accommodate workers who may have difficulty with one or more aspects of task performance. |
| <p>Note: Adapted from W. Rothwell, R. Sullivan, & G. McLean (1995, pp. 62-63). <i>Practicing Organization Development</i>. San Diego: Pfeiffer & Company.</p> | | |