

Business Concept Development and The Discovery Process

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Community Navigator Pilot Program



Creating
Communities
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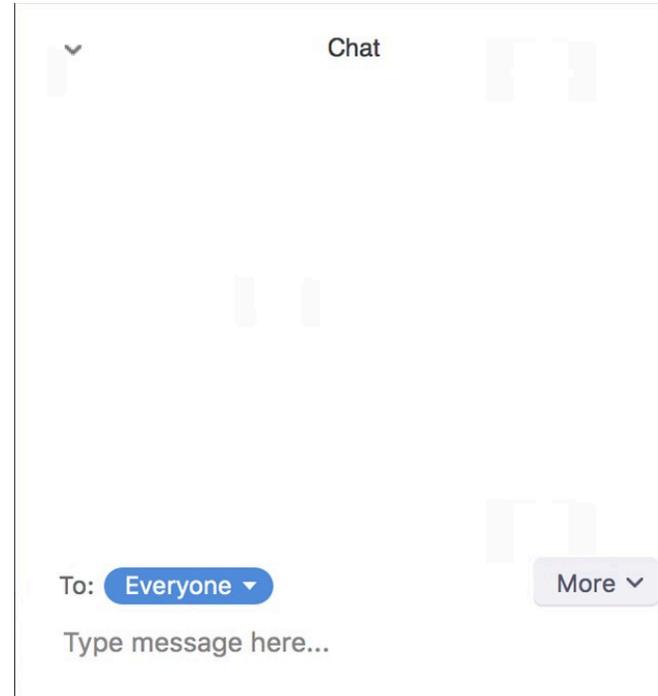
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Welcome!

- Introductions
- Join us in conversation!
 - Zoom chat
 - Cameras & Microphones
 - Recorded
- Self-Employment
- Q&A



Self-Employment

- Fast growing career option in the U.S.
- In December of 2021 there were 32.5 million small businesses in the U.S. That's 99.9% of all businesses!
- Most self-employed people operate the simplest type of business, a micro business with no employees.
 - 81% of businesses are micro businesses with no employees.



Why People Choose Self-Employment?

Three main reasons why people choose self-employment:

1. Nature of Industry
2. Opportunity
3. Benefits

- In 2021, 9.6% of people with disabilities had chosen to be self-employed for one or more of these reasons compared to 6.4% of people with no disability.



Self-Employment Benefits

Universal Benefits

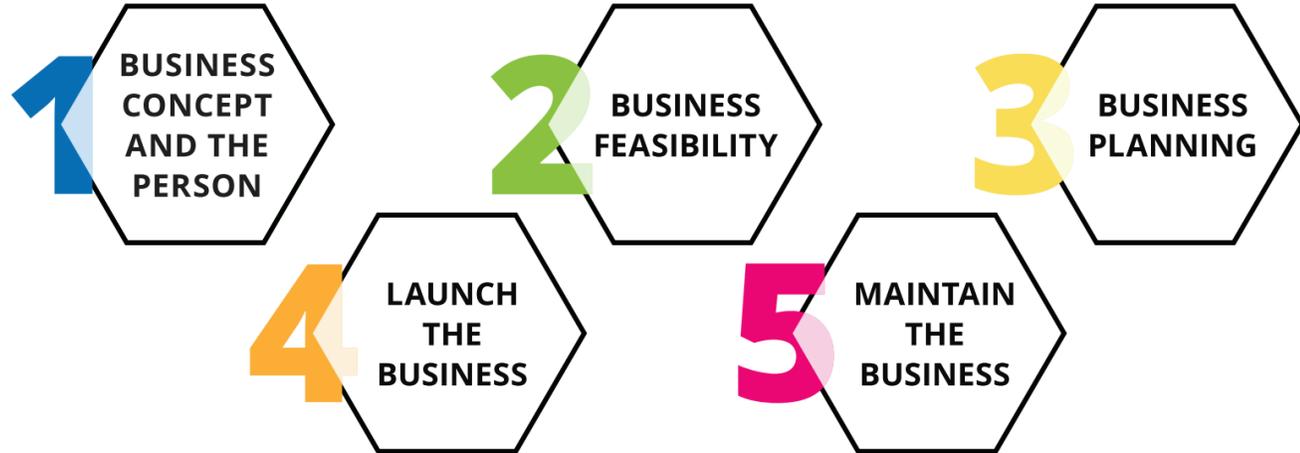
- Potential to work from home
- May lead to more money
- More flexibility with work schedule
- Potential to focus on tasks that fit strengths
- More control over work environment
- More autonomy performing work

Disability Specific Benefits

- Provides a way for people getting benefits to build wealth
- Potential to adjust schedule to accommodate stamina
- Ability to accommodate work environment

5 Core Steps of Self-Employment

1. Business Concept and the Person
2. Business Feasibility
3. Business Planning
4. Launch the Business
5. Maintain the Business



Business Concept and the Person



- Identify a business concept that *fits the person*.
- Draw on strengths and provide the opportunity to work to their full potential.
- Designing a business around the owner's strengths, conditions, and needs is one of the biggest benefits of self-employment for people with disabilities.
- Effectively identify strengths, interests, and conditions to brainstorm and determine fit.



Three-Legged Stool

1. Business concept must be a good fit
2. Business concept must be feasible
3. Support available

A great business that fits the person and has the potential to make substantial money won't work if the person doesn't have the support they need.



All business owners have support needs, not just business owners with disabilities.



Welcome to Discovery

- How do we identify and find that "fit?"
- The practice of Discovery
- A unique form of functional observation
- Discovery is a person-centered approach to get to know employment seekers on a very individualized way



Discovery Example

- Shawna has worked in restaurant jobs for several years (easy jobs to get, but hard to keep in part because of her disability, bipolar).
- Together you gather information about her strengths, interests, and conditions for employment from her past work, her home activities, her community activities, and discussions with family and friends.
- Three themes emerge: Sewing, education, writing
- After brainstorming ideas, the best match is a business doing alterations.

Why is Discovery Important?

- Strengths-based approach
- As you saw with Shawna, person-centered qualities identified during Discovery lead us to self-employment as the best employment outcome when it fits the person.
- Vocational themes
- Discovery can lead to self-employment



Discovery - Methods

- Facilitated Discovery
- [Group-Guided Discovery](#)
 - <https://leadcenter.org/resources/guided-group-discovery-resources-introduction-and-course-participant-workbook-and-facilitator-guide/>
- [Self-Discovery](#)
 - <https://leadcenter.org/resources/self-guided-discovery-facilitators-guide-helping-people-discover-their-own-path-to-employment/>



Stages of Discovery

1. Gathering information from home & neighborhood
2. Interview others
3. Skills & ecological fit
4. Review and emerging themes
5. Informational interviews and new experiences
6. Vocational themes (business concept development)
7. Descriptive narrative
8. Career development (business concept development)

Suggested Tips for Discovery

1. Create a team
2. Start with known/familiar information (the person's home, previous work, people who know the person well, etc.)
3. Then plan activities/experiences that demonstrate skills and performance and gather new information
4. Seek to establish three vocational themes
5. Develop a solid profile statement
6. Make Discovery a project



Vocational Themes: Example

- These are not job descriptions.
- Think more broadly.
- This leads to a richer series of activities in relevant environments.

Vocational theme: Aviation

Instead of "wants to refuel airplanes" think more broadly. In this case think *aviation*. By exploring the broader field of aviation, using both Informational Interviews and short work-experiences, a world of possible tasks and environments is opened.



Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an informal conversation with someone working in or running a business in an area that interests the person who will provide information and advice.

Informational interviews will help explore potential business ideas further to:

1. Learn more about the potential market
2. Gather information related to feasibility, funding, and financing; and
3. Make sure that they would be a good fit for the person.



Informational Interviews: Useful Research

- First-hand advice
- Suggestions
- Encouragement
- Barriers
- Challenges
- Realistic vision



How to do an Informational Interview

- Open-ended questions
- Smooth listening
- Dignity and respect



Informational Interview: Open-Ended Questions

- Tell me about your business?
- Why did you start this?
- What led you to this biz?
- How has business changed in the past?
- How has tech impacted your biz?
- Who are your competitors?
- What makes you unique?
- Tell me about your customers?



Securing an Informational Interview

- The goal of an informational interview is to learn, connect, and build relationships
- Social Capital
- Authentic introductions
- Shared passion and interests
- Small businesses
- Know your availability



Example: Vocational theme is automotive



Securing an Informational Interview: Script

“Hi there! My name is Ciara. Are you (owner name)? It’s so nice to meet you! I have heard and read incredible reviews about your shop. I’m here for something a bit different, although, I do know exactly where to go the next time I need my car detailed. You are the expert in this field and in our community - I’m working with someone who loves learning about cars. Since you’re the expert, would you be open to us stopping by next week to spend time with you learning the in’s and out’s of being one of the best in the field? (Client name) is extremely detail-oriented, knows an impressive amount of facts about vintage vehicles, and has a great collection of repair and detailing tools similar to what I see here!”

Time to Brainstorm

- Creativity is key
- The 6 W's

What are the products or services that the business will offer?

Which unique features their product or service will they promote?

Who is the potential customer and competition?

How much will it cost to start and run the business?

Where might this product or service be sold?

Why does the person want to start this business?

Why (and how) is this business idea a good fit for them?



Sparking a Concept Development Brainstorm Session

Here are some questions to consider to spark a concept development brainstorming session:

- What are the skills and interests that were evidenced during Discovery?
- Can you describe the characteristics of your product or service?
- Are you aware of any weakness in existing products that you may be able to address through this new product or service?
- Can you adapt, modify, or improve on existing products or services with your idea?
- Can you identify a need for a service or product that no one else provides?

Clearly States Business Concept

Completion of Discovery and Business Concept Development will lead the person and their team to expand a clearly stated business concept such as

1= I want to own my own business

2= I want to own my own baking business

3 = I want to own a business that bakes and sells cupcakes and other specialty desserts

4 = My home-based business will make and sell cupcakes and specialty desserts using all natural ingredients

Business Concept Refinement Chart

- Once a business concept has been identified that fits the person's strengths and conditions for employment, reflect and refine.
- See Business Concept Refinement Chart:
 - Business idea, possible names, why this idea, basic details about the business idea, etc.



Business Concept Refinement Chart

My business idea is:		
Possible names for my company are:	Name A:	Name B:
I like this business idea because:	Reason A:	Reason B:
This business makes sense for me to own because:	Reason A:	Reason B:
My business will provide the following services/products:	Service A:	Service A:



Discovery Resources

- The Discovery Employment Team: connections, brainstorming, experience.



Three-Legged Stool

1. Must be a good fit
2. Must be feasible
3. Support available

The concept of the Three-Legged Stool is something we need to keep in mind when working our way through Discovery and Business Concept Development.



Session Summary

- Self-Employment is a fast-growing career option
- The practice of Discovery is person-centered
- Discovery can be conducted through group or self-led practices that can serve as an alternative method to lead to successful self-employment
- Business Concept Development requires research and brainstorming
- It's critical that the work and the environment fit the persons strengths and conditions for employment
- Use concept development to brainstorm and refine the creative ideas sparked during Discovery and Informational interviews



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Community Navigator Pilot Program Goals

Support Entrepreneurs and Small Business owners with disabilities at any point of the Business Life-Cycle.

Reduce barriers accessing needed programs to recover, grow, or start a business.

Increase coordination of the DMV area ecosystem of entrepreneurial support organizations to be responsive and accessible to the needs of entrepreneurs and small business owners with disabilities.

The ecosystem includes; financial assistance, access to capital, contracting and procurement assistance, marketing and communications, operations, management and business development, legal assistance preferred contracting status

For more information contact our Community Navigator:

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Let's Chat!

Thank you for attending today's webinar! Questions?
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