



“Partnering for Success:
Maximizing Your Experience
With SCORE and Beyond

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Welcome & Purpose

- Speaker: Lorinda Gonzalez-Santana, owner of Remy's Consulting & Travel
- Explore how SCORE can support your entrepreneurial journey.
- Discuss the entrepreneurial journey and how having outside support can guide your path
- Tips and tricks for entrepreneurs with disabilities
- Ways mentors can support entrepreneurs with disabilities

The Entrepreneurial Journey

- The entrepreneurial journey is an exciting space to be in!
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- Becoming an entrepreneur is many times, a great way for individuals with disabilities to work with their situations and be even more productive than they would through a traditional 9 to 5
 - Deciding to be entrepreneur, can sometimes be a process, and many times starts with the following:
 - Starts with an idea
 - Fueled by passion
 - Strengthened by support
 - Sustained through community

My Journey: From Support to Self-Sufficiency

- As an entrepreneur for almost 20 years, my entrepreneurial journey started at the young age of 19
- I did not come from the family of business owners
- While I was in business school, the professor did not support entrepreneurship
- At the time, vocational rehab rehabilitation services did not support or understanding either
- I tried working 9 to 5 at the university, and found it to be very hard on my health
- Through my own independent research, I learned about entrepreneurship and decided immediately that it was my calling

Finding alternative support

- I began independent research to find alternative support to learn the fundamentals of becoming an entrepreneur
- In my search, I found SCORE and enrolled in workshops, two hours away on the bus!
- To this day, I remember my first SCORE workshop, which is one of the most enlightening professional development moments of my life
- 20 years later, I still receive mentorship!

Getting started with SCORE

- SCORE is one of the largest mentorship organizations in the United States
- They have over 10,000 volunteers, mixed between retired business executives, and entrepreneurs who are actively working
- These volunteers choose to give their time to support fellow entrepreneurs earlier on in their journey, for the sole purpose of giving back to the community
- Volunteers come from an array of backgrounds and experiences, and no two mentors are alike
- You can find the mentor on their website by filling out a form

How to Make the Most of SCORE

- Be prepared with questions and an open mind, and be ready for lots of homework!
- Be open to feedback and understand that the mentors are humans too, and the two-way communication is essential for a positive and progressive partnership
- There are many highly qualified volunteers as counselors. If the first one is an effect, don't be afraid to request a new one!
- You may not have the same mentor during your entire entrepreneurship journey. Just as we all have our individual strengths and weaknesses, so for mentors. Communicate your needs and be positive that you'll find a good match!
- Keep your mentor updated.

Partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation

- VR helps individuals with disabilities achieve self-employment goals.
 - Financial Assistance
 - Educational Assistance
 - Importance of Self-Advocacy
- Come into the conversation with your vocational rehabilitation counselor, knowing what your strengths and interests are, and be clear and communicating those to the best of your ability
- Being open and honest about your future and desire to be an entrepreneur is essential; understand that they are to help, and well sometimes we've had not so great experiences that doesn't mean that you're on entrepreneurship goals do not have value
- Advocate for yourself and your desires to be an entrepreneur. Provide researched topics that you can share with your counselor, so that you can engage in a fruitful conversation.

How vocational rehabilitation counselors can truly support their clients

Step one: educate yourself on entrepreneurship and how successful of a path towards true gain full employment. This can be for a person with a disability.

Step two: understand your clients and their unique challenges. Do not judge them based on limited ideas as to what is and is not “quality work”. Just because you may have found stability in a 9 to 5 does not mean that that is the best option for your clients.

Step three: Instead of looking at clients as a “case to close” remember that they are human beings worthy of living life independently, and that you can be either the key to their success or the reason for their failure

The Power of Mentorship

- Mentorship isn't about answers — it's about clarity and accountability.
- Listen more, be open to learn and ready to do homework!
- The BEST VR Counselors care for their clients and seek to acquire them with real support – not just fill their quota
- The best SCORE mentors meet the clients where they are and spend time understanding their unique needs, while at the same time, pushing them to achieving success

Building a Support System

- Everyone support system looks different
 - Family, friends, community
 - Even if you don't have entrepreneurs' in your circle, that doesn't mean you can't be the first. I was!
- SCORE mentors
- VR counselors
- Community resources
- Peer networks
- Consultants & coaches

THANK YOU!

Keep in touch!

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