

DCIF Project –Career Development Tool

3: Determining Advancement Opportunities for Workers with Disabilities

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Tags

Who is this for?

High Priority:

- Direct Line managers

Practical Information:

- **DEI** and HR Professionals

What guidance does it provide?

- How to identify opportunities for employees with disabilities to advance or realign in their career goals
- Understanding myths and negative stereotypes about the performance of workers with disabilities

Take home points

- When working with employees on job analyses, help identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies that are required of a worker to complete their essential job requirements, develop selection and promotion criteria and inform on compensation decisions
- The most effective technique when collecting information for a job analysis is to obtain it through direct observation, open-ended questionnaires, structured questionnaires, interviews, work logs
- If you are seeking to fill vacancies, look to promote workers with disabilities into management and leadership positions internally before searching externally. Remember, not everyone is looking for upward progression. Workers may be looking for new activities, greater challenges, more balance, or flexibility

Career Planning with Workers with Disabilities

All workers have career aspirations and goals. Supervisors should discuss career expectations with each member of their team, including an evaluation of the worker's interests, talents, and skills in relation to the requirements of available jobs. If a worker's career goals seem unachievable, the supervisor should provide constructive feedback and try to reach an agreement with the worker on appropriate goals and the path to achieving them. However, the supervisor should not assume an employee's disability will be a barrier.

"When people develop new skills, they gain greater confidence. That can lead to new and exciting directions in their career." – Alan Richardson, RBC Senior Executive

Conducting Job Analyses Together

If one of your workers informs you that they would like to advance their career within the company, and will be actively seeking internal opportunities to grow, what do you do? A **job analysis** may come in handy here, as it:¹

- Identifies the knowledge, skills, and competencies that are required of a worker to complete their essential job requirements
- Helps an employer develop selection and promotion criteria
- Can be used to develop performance standards and processes needed to train and develop workers
- Informs compensation decisions

Job analysis *should not be conflated with performance evaluation – it is the job that is being assessed, not the person.*

When conducting a **job analysis** consider:²

Essential Job Requirements

- Identify all the **bona fide occupational requirements**
- Assess the frequency, duration, effort, complexity, etc. of each requirement

Conditions for Work

- Determine environmental conditions that may impact a worker (e.g., noise, lighting, scents, distractions, etc.)
- Think about the social or interpersonal conditions that may be required for work (e.g., providing services to customers, high level of collaboration with colleagues, managing partnerships, etc.)

Tools and Equipment

- Identify the supports available for the worker (e.g., such as supervision or mentorship, team support, the availability of workplace accommodations, training, education, etc.)

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

- Analyze the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform essential job requirements

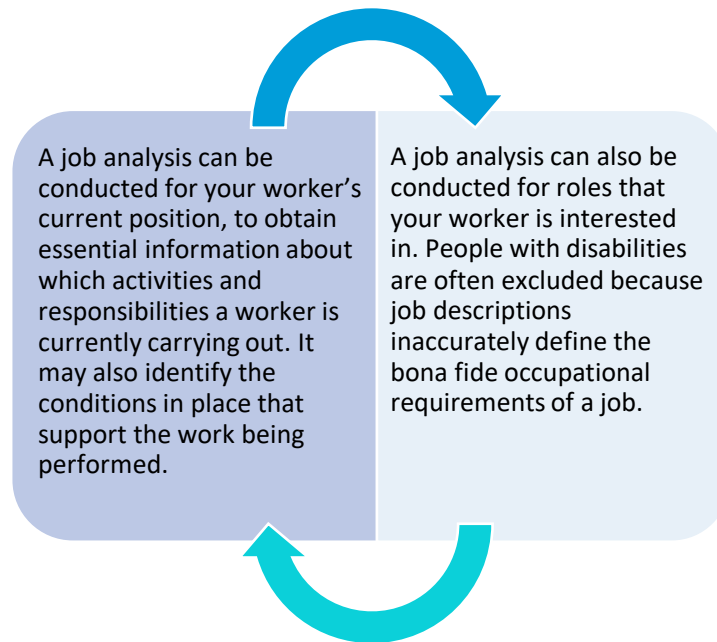
Specific Requirements

- Think through any additional requirements such as the job structure (e.g., shift work, flexible hours, on call, etc.)

The most effective technique when collecting information for a job analysis is to obtain it through direct observation as well as other measurement tools such as:

- Open-ended questionnaires
- Structured questionnaires

- Interviews
- Work logs¹



Pop Up: You may find that a worker's core job tasks have evolved over time. If they have taken on new responsibilities, amend the job description, as well as their compensation, to recognize the value they are bringing to your organization.

Using **job analysis** data, employers can develop or modify job descriptions and specifications. Job analysis also has two critical uses in relation to compensation for employees with disabilities. First, it can help establish similarities and differences in job content, and second, it helps determine the internal equity and relative worth of job roles. **Job analysis** information can also be used as a basis for selecting or developing employment assessments that measure the most critical tasks.

1. **Identify and Evaluate tasks** – develop a comprehensive list of tasks which define the job role.
2. **Identify and evaluate competencies** – a competency is a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviour, and other characteristics that an individual needs in order to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.
3. **Evaluate the links between tasks and competencies** – this step demonstrates that there is a clear relationship between the tasks performed on the job and the competencies required to perform them.³

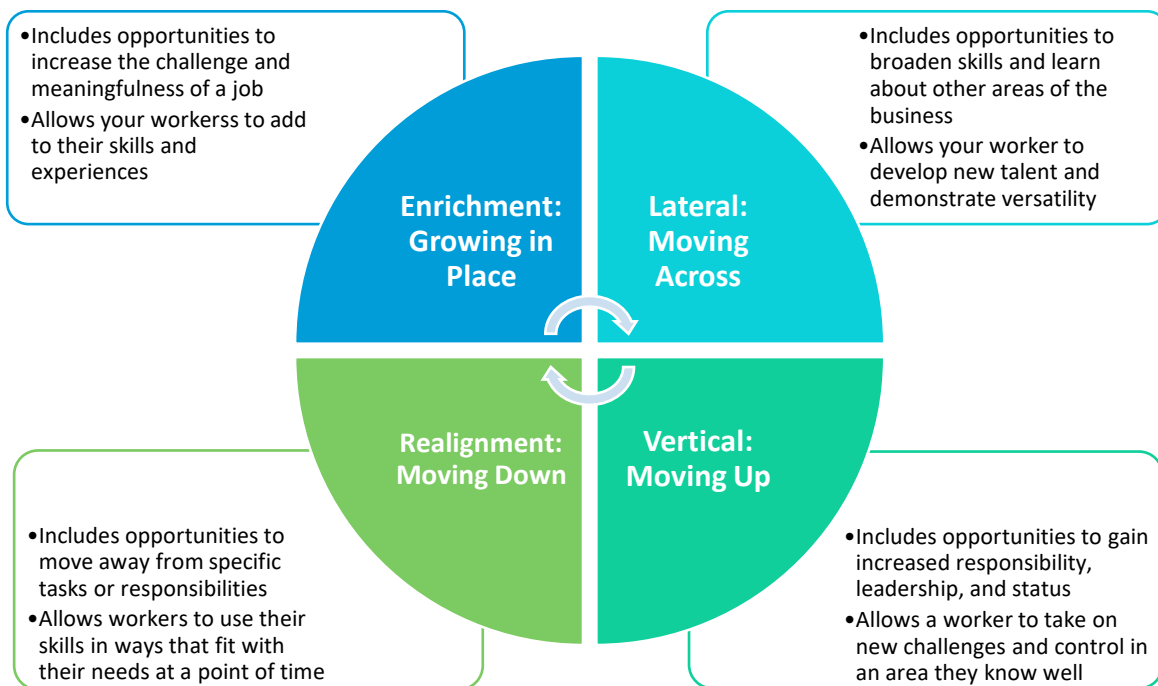
“Helping employees find that kind of purpose, passion and fulfillment has always been top-of-mind at RBC, but in today's environment, it's become paramount.” – Alan Richardson, RBC Senior Executive

Exploring Avenues for Career Development

Managers have the responsibility to ensure that workers with disabilities have the same opportunity as other employees to participate in career development programs and opportunities.

“Employers at many organizations have highlighted that people with disabilities demonstrate high degree of innovation and creativity in the workplace.”⁴

When thinking about career advancement, managers may be quick to jump to topics such as promotion. If you are seeking to fill vacancies, look to promote workers with disabilities into management and leadership positions internally before searching externally. On the flip side, recognize that workers can find job satisfaction and career success through a wide range of opportunities. Not everyone is looking for upward progression. Workers may be looking for new activities, greater challenges, more balance, or flexibility.⁵



“When people grow and develop new skill sets, they gain greater confidence in themselves and the work they do. That, in turn, can lead them into new and exciting directions.” - Alan Richardson, RBC Senior Executive

Tackling Misconceptions about Career Advancement for Workers with Disabilities

Stereotypes and false assumptions about disability in the workplace can lead to bias in decision-making, discrimination, and marginalization of workers with disabilities, preventing them from succeeding in the workplace. Review these misconceptions about career advancement for workers with disabilities, and actively apply any key learnings to your workplace:

“If I ask a worker with a disability about their career, they’ll think I want them to leave.”

Like all people strategies, you need to plan your approach first by:

- Communicating the business case for career development to all your workers, including those with disabilities.
- Fully integrating career development in the other systems in your workplace.

- Developing your workers' understanding and skills in career development as you go – don't just bring it up during performance management conversations.

“If I develop a worker's career potential, they will leave. Workers with disabilities have a higher turnover and absenteeism rate than employees without disabilities.”

When you invest in your workers, they are more likely to feel loyal and motivated and stay, because:

- Seeing workmates grow lifts staff morale and commitment.
- You are likely to enhance your reputation as an employer of choice among jobseekers and workers with disabilities
- By not investing in your worker, you actually increase the risk of losing them – either due to a lack of engagement, or because the worker seeks out an organization that sees the value in career development for employees with disabilities.
- Workers with disabilities are not absent any more frequently than other employees, and on average have a lower rate of absenteeism.

“My business is too small to invest in career development opportunities for workers with disabilities. If I give them more responsibilities, workers with disabilities will cause Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) rates to increase.”

Career development helps keep staff in any sized business engaged and productive because:

- You don't necessarily need to be able to offer promotion or upward movement to support growth among workers with disabilities – think more broadly about how you can advance their skills and abilities.
- You get the benefit of more empowered and competent employees.
- It doesn't need to cost a lot. Tap into industry offerings such as workshops, resources, and training offered by organizations in your field; organize employee resource groups; develop a staff mentoring program, host lunch and learns, etc.
- Employers' insurance rates are determined by the health and safety risk of your type of business, the size of your payroll, and your company's health and safety record.
- The WSIB cannot increase your premiums because you have hired someone with a disability.

“Workers with disabilities don't want career development, they are happy with their jobs.”

Disability should never stand in the way of a person's career potential or ambition because:

- Like any other worker, people with disabilities need to feel engaged in order to stay interested and invested at work.
- Workers with disabilities must be treated the same as other employees in terms of expectations, opportunities, and workplace standards.
- Career development fosters skill growth within your existing workforce.
- Engaged and skilled workers increase your business opportunities.

References

- ¹ Society of Human Resource Management (n.d.). *Performing Job Analysis*. Toolkits. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/performingjobanalysis.aspx>
- ² Employ Abilities (n.d.). *Job Analysis for Hiring People with Disabilities*. <https://employabilities.ab.ca/job-analysis-hiring-people-disabilities/>
- ³ The Conference Board of Canada (2015). *Employers' Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People with Disabilities (2nd ed.)*. https://www.conferenceboard.ca/docs/default-source/pdf_downloads/7159_accessibilitytoolkit-2015_rpt.pdf?sfvrsn=a98e7013_2&pdf=toolkit
- ⁴ Lindsay, S., Cagliostro, E., Albarico, M., Mortaji, N., & Karon, L. (2018). A systematic review of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 1-22.
- ⁵ Careers NZ (n.d.). *Introducing Career Development: Toolkit*. Government of New Zealand. <https://www.careers.govt.nz/assets/pages/docs/introducing-career-development-toolkit.pdf>