



Fitting Employment:

Making work that 'fits' into work that 'sticks'

By Taline Sethian, MA, RRP, MCVP

CAVEWAS Corner

Dear fellow colleagues and readers, here is our most recent contribution to CAVEWAS Corner.

As many of you know, CAVEWAS (Canadian Assessment, Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Society) is a member society of VRA Canada, serving in large part to represent and support the professional and developmental needs of vocational evaluators as well as professional rehab personnel specializing in work adjustment of injured workers and the like. In this section, you will find current and candid articles authored by CAVEWAS members, non-members (and future members alike) that will share, discuss, and communicate with you developments and changes affecting our membership. Amongst them issues of best practice, professional development and designation, as well as industry trends.

We hope you continue to find the content in this section stimulating, motivating, and informative and we encourage your ongoing participation and contributions.

Enjoy!

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If you are a CAVEWAS member and have any ideas, opinions or thoughts relevant to this section and you would like to share, discuss, and communicate them in the next issue, please contact: Jeff Cohen at jcohen@vocationalalternatives.com We also encourage you to join our group on LinkedIn.

"It is not more vacation that we need; it is more vocation."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

What is more important: finding work that is a quick fit or work that sticks? Speed versus sustainability is the delicate balance vocational testing tries to strike by getting clients back to work quickly and cost-effectively, and with a view to long-term employment. The goal is always to identify work options that are timely, safe, and sustainable. Of the two objectives, finding work that fits quickly is much more straightforward than finding work that sticks. By definition, vocational assessments are designed to evaluate individuals' work-related skills, academic levels, and transferrable skills to find job options that match their profile. But what does this tell us about whether the job options can be maintained by the client over time?

Although just as important as finding a suitable job option, determining the 'stickiness' of a particular job over time is much more challenging; especially when taking into account all the factors that impact longer-term employment retention.

Internal Versus External factors

The factors that influence the sustainability of a job can be categorized as individual characteristics and external indicators. External indicators concern mostly future labour market conditions that are beyond the control of the assessor or individual. Individual characteristics involve a client's motivation, personality profile, transferrable skills, functional/physical tolerances, and competencies. While a vocational assessment cannot influence the individual factors that can impact a person's long-term employment success, an effective evaluation can identify predictors that can influence employment longevity.

"An effective [vocational] evaluation can identify predictors that can influence employment longevity."

When you identify the personal characteristics of a client it becomes easier to find job options for which they will be better suited. In other words, a vocational assessment can be a strategic tool in identifying a strong personality-job fit that in turn creates a higher potential for a client's long-

term happiness and success at a job. If a person loves what they do, they are most likely to thrive in both the long- and short-term. The formula is simple: better job fit means more job satisfaction that leads to less turnover and greater retention.

One Test Does Not Fit All

Overall, the most successful outcomes occur when a client is "on board" with the plan of action. Vocational rehabilitation is not a one-test-fits-all process. The most effective vocational evaluations will look at the clients from a holistic perspective and identify jobs that closely parallel their profile, both right now and in terms of long-term goals. Even though they require different strategies, speed and sustainability of job options are both important to a successful and cost-effective vocational rehabilitation. The good news is that, with innovative and effective evaluation tactics, vocational assessments can identify occupations that are quick and will stick. ☺

References for this article available at vrcanada.com/media.php



Taline Sethian has been conducting various types of assessments since 2004. She has extensive experience providing rehabilitation supports and identifying suitable occupational options for clients with varying disabilities. Currently, she provides vocational assessments, as well as psycho-vocational assessments (in tandem with a psychologist) for AGS Rehab Solutions Inc.

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