Choosing a Career over a Job

The world of work has and is changing rapidly, yet when we look at employment services, the idea of supporting a career is somewhat foreign. That said, it's no surprise given that employment services are essentially a quick fix system designed to achieve outcomes rapidly and with a service horizon fixed on two years.

The people that the system supports have until recently been viewed as largely grist for the system. Careers have been left to the school system to support, but without a connection to the outside world, at best its an exercise in pointing kids in a direction rather than going along for the journey. It illustrates a disconnect at multiple levels and you'd be forgiven for thinking that careers are more an outcome of chance then any really design.

The Beach Center on Disability at Kansas University has a rich history in career planning research and practice for people with barriers. They've been working at improving the evidence base for transition services and have evolved career development to a new career design model. In their words, it is a "iterative process through which a person engages in activities related to their strengths and interests, self-reflects on those processes, and revises their career identity based on experience."

We are pleased to announce that CDERP have partnered with the Beach Center to share research and findings and develop the tools and resources necessary for the implementation of this evolutionary career design method, one that has a long history of practice evolution. The model is grounded in practice and well supported by evidence. We'll be using the new methodology in our pilot program with Oak Possability in Tasmania. We'll also talk about it at the Retreat.

Positive Behaviour Support and Employment

Behaviour Support has long been the step-child to employment plans and employer support. We know it's a good idea, but rarely is it a part of any employment process or post placement support. It is a well recognised part of lifestyle support and services that support people in the community.

Despite this evidence, it is rarely given a thought in employment, yet it could be and should be a vital part of any employer engagement and post placement support.

We are going to change that. At this years Retreat, Professor Keith McVilly (Scope Professor for Disability and Inclusion) will lead a discussion on Behaviour Support and highlight its importance in employment support planning and in my mind the creation of well informed natural workplace supports.

You'll get to hear about it and we'll discuss it in some detail and its potential to radically change how you talk about employment to your clients and employers.

One more reason why we always trust that the right people will come to our annual Retreat.
Innovation, Having Your Cake and Eating It Too!

I recently spoke at an employment conference which afforded me the opportunity to listen to other speakers talking about different aspects of employment services.

There is a recognition that employment services need to innovate and get ahead of the future of work. In a sense design their own future and work with employers to design new employment opportunities and services.

Overwhelmingly though there is resistance to the idea of investing in your future. Now I’m not saying that is the case for every provider, simply that most are waiting for something. It’s not uncommon for providers to simply state that they don’t invest in research and developing new ideas, but want new methods and practice given to them.

In the USA, providers are partnering and investing in their future. There is a considerable investment in the future of work. The NDIS is a game changer and provides impetus for providers to do something innovative. The Scheme will evolve employment in ways that existing employment regimes haven’t considered, in part driven by its participants who want something different, who want a whole of person approach to employment.

One of the aspects of future of work research around employers and providers highlights that investing in staff and clients is paramount to future success. Yet when it comes to investing in these areas, I suspect very few providers are investing what used to be considered the norm - about 4% of expenses on staff development. As for R & D, well who knows these days, but it won't be much.

This highlights that planning for the future is secondary to just getting through another week and meeting compliance needs. There is light at the end of the table in that there is a small number of providers across Australia who are investing in their future - one that they will control to develop processes and systems that meet the client and community expectations, along with providing employment and career opportunities not just for clients but their own employees. One aspect of the future of work research and current data highlights is our skills shortage, one that will impact on providers as demand for staff grows.

If you aren't investing in your future, then don't worry about it, as staff will seek personal development opportunities and a career elsewhere. Statistics and research highlight that personal develop is greater driver then salary expectations. Clients, well they'll seek out providers that offer something different and something that meets their needs. Clients are getting educated and with the NDIS driving the dream of choice and control they will seek out support from organisations that understand that its about a career journey, not a quick sprint to a basic job for life.

Can you have your cake and innovate as well? Yes, but not if you expect someone to give you a cake.

---

Measuring Quality and Impact

The image to the left is a glimpse of the outcome measure that we’ve been developing.

That measure - Personalised Inclusive Employment Outcome Measure (PIEOM) is underpinned by Social Quality Theory and Casual Agency Theory, ensuring that it has a sound evidence base underpinning it. As part of this year’s Retreat we'll give you a glimpse of it and take you through its underpinnings so that you will understand its potential to radically alter how we measure and indeed plan employment pathways for client.

When you add to the work that we are doing to evolve Discovery radically and the tools that we bringing to the table soon, then you can see what happens when innovation meets evidence.

Micro Credentialing and Certification

We have been hard at work developing pathways for staff development and will soon announce our program for 2020. We are developing with our education partners Certificate Four, PD and Masters pathways that will support the development of employment staff and provide a career learning pathway.

Our initial certification program will roll out early in 2020, while the PD and Masters pathway is expected to be operational by year end. With our partners, your organisation will be able to offer exciting pathways that will take them on a career journey with globally recognised qualifications and linkages.

All will be revealed shortly.