The Business Perspective on Employers, Disability, and Vocational Rehabilitation

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The vocational rehabilitation (VR) profession has a legislative mandate to serve society by removing the employment barriers that workers with disabilities face. Despite the best efforts of dedicated professionals, as employment statistics have consistently demonstrated, these barriers have remained in place with staggering consequences for these potential workers. In a 1999 briefing paper, the American Civil Liberties Union characterized this group as "the poorest, least employed, and least educated minority in America" (American Civil Liberties Union, 1999, p. 1). And despite the fact that a Harris poll indicated that 79% of Americans with disabilities wanted to work, less than a third of those between the ages of 16 and 64 were employed (Harris & Associates, 1994).

Complex problems have complex solutions, which is why the profession was brought into being in the first place. Clearly, no simple answer to this problem is likely to emerge. Today, practitioners and researchers alike are forced to wrestle with the disturbing possibility that the models they have embraced are oversimplified, failing to adequately address the complexity of these problems. There is a pressing need for greater comprehension, for more complex and creative solutions to the problems of VR theory and craft. Practitioners begin by examining and questioning their time-honored practices and structures. They must be open to the very real possibility that these practices and structures have concealed barriers that required their attention and may have even created barriers where none need have existed.

In this chapter, we will take up what we consider to be one such blind spot: the conception of "the employer" traditionally understood in terms of an individual, whether a CEO, a department head, a supervisor, and so on. It is a conception that has garnered explicit attention and critique in the literature (Bissonnette, 1994; Gilbride & Stensrud, 1992; Habeck, Kress, Scully, & Kirchner, 1994; Millington, Butterworth, Fesko, & McCarthy, 1998). But we propose to go further here, arguing for a conception of "the employer" in terms of a structural heuristic, a dynamic interrelation of what we will call "management functions"—functions guided by and expressing the overarching motivation of business in a market economy: maximize profit, minimize cost. Our heuristic complicates, even confounds, traditional conceptions of the employer, and this, in turn, complicates and confounds traditional conceptions of VR. But it is our position that beyond the critical self-examination lie new possibilities for VR, new opportunities for success in its mission.

It is our intention to reaffirm placement as the fundamental value, the sine qua non of the VR profession, which perhaps seems oddly conservative. However, we wish to do so with the caveat that placement—being in the proper place—is essential to continued success in the work career of the individual and that the continued success of the individual contributes to the continuing success of the business. It is a relationship in which profiting from one another has the potential of supplanting a relationship in which one profits at the expense of the other. To view placement in this way, we must abandon the notion that employment is an event—the event of being hired or of returning to work—marking the point at which the task of the VR practitioner has run its course. We may see employment instead as an ongoing interplay of individual and organization that begins before selection takes place and continues through the entire career. Within this ongoing interplay, the role of the VR practitioner is recast as a facilitator of relations rather than of individuals, serving the process of employment on the part of both parties (Millington et al., 1998). Here success is built on a solid investment in relationships and evaluated in terms of long-term gains for business and workers alike rather than on quick returns.

Yet the mutual understanding that underlies such a cooperative relationship is confused when VR practitioners fail to consider the fundamental motivations of business within a market economy. Effectiveness of practitioners is, we posit, diminished when they do not access the various management functions that express those motivations within the context of business. In what follows, we will sketch out the beginnings of a structural heuristic of management functions as they relate to human resources. We point toward these functions as the medium of business partnership and innovation, as well as the locations of hidden barriers.

MOTIVATION AND THE MARKETPLACE

Maximizing profit and minimizing cost, two sides of the same coin, constitute the fundamental motivation of business venture in a market economy (Drucker, 1982; Williams, 1959). Businesses profit, amassing wealth, by acquiring and exploiting commodities (McConnell, 1981). This is accomplished by purchasing materials, equipment, and labor power at their lowest market cost (Braverman, 1982); using these commodities to create a product by the most efficient means manageable; and selling the product at the highest market price.

Simply put, the highest market price is determined in a given market niche by demand, supply, and competition, which keep the price of a given product in flux. A market niche consists of *consumers*, a group of persons or organizations with the motivation and means to purchase a particular product. *Demand* is the perceived need for the product within a market niche. The more intense the perceived product need is, the more consumers will pay for it, proportionally increasing the profit margin. *Supply*, the relative abundance or scarcity of the product in the market niche, moderates profit margin, as does competition. High demand and low supply are profit optimal for business. But any lucrative market niche will invariably attract competitors. Market share and profit margins shrink as competitors multiply. In addition, forces further beyond the control of business complicate matters and profit, as in so-called "acts of God," the shifting winds of politics, and the capricious whims of consumers.

When taken altogether, an atmosphere of economic unpredictability is created within a given market niche and the marketplace as a whole. Business operates in this world of happenstance, surviving by fending off competition, attracting customers, and coping with change. Business investment in the marketplace is a calculated risk in which profit is the prize, bankruptcy the punishment. Often only vaguely aware, if aware of it at all, it is into this chaotic economic world that the worker enters when entering the labor force.

Business Values

In pursuing its own ends, business, in turn, serves a variety of social needs such as responding to consumer demands for products and services, providing employment opportunities for members of the community, and, in the case of many businesses, giving to charities. However, the imperative to maximize profit while minimizing cost is not a moral imperative. The profit motive offers no inherent guidelines for socially responsible practices. Good corporate citizenship may be self-imposed when it reflects the values of the business leadership, but only law and consumer demand prescribe business behavior in the profit-taking game.

Perhaps the first thing the VR practitioner needs to realize about employers is that they do not necessarily share the VR profession values regarding disability. For business, cost and profit determine the relative market value of disability. Although it may be repugnant to some, the bottom line nevertheless remains the bottom line: The worker with a disability is a seller of labor competing with all other workers. Business will seek the best worker for the least expense. In the business's storefront, citizens with disabilities are seen by business as potential consumers of goods who, like all other consumers, may inhabit a number of market niches and, like no other consumers, have a market niche uniquely their own.

Disability, Labels, and the Bottom Line

There is always profit to be extracted from workers, disability not withstanding. But communicating the value of workers with disabilities to employers is often difficult. Much of the difficulty lies in the fact that the meaning of the term *disability* is context bound, understood in a technical sense by VR practitioners but in a very different sense by business. Strictly speaking, VR practitioners cannot point to any successful client placed in competitive employment and identify him or her as a "worker with a disability." Properly accommodated, successful workers are, by definition, simply workers. Unfortunately, there has been a certain laxness in the use of the language of disability. The politically correct label ". . . with a disability" follows the person into the workplace, and he or she becomes a worker with a disability, understood by VR practitioners as shorthand for "a worker with an impairment that is a potential work disability but who, if properly accommodated, is only a worker." Although this laxness may or may not cause difficulties within the context of the VR profession, it certainly causes difficulties when contexts are crossed.

The greatest obstacle when the label crosses into the workplace is the perceived expectation of unnecessary cost associated with disability. Herein lies one of the greatest dangers of the term *disability* itself. Within the business context, the term *disability* applied to a worker refers to an ongoing event, not a characteristic. "Work disability" plays out as a "work disruption" that denotes job performance limitations and connotes decreased productivity and increased cost (Thomason, Burton, & Hyatt, 1998).

Disability as Cost

As early as 1992, work-related injury costs were estimated at $16 billion (Baldwin & Johnson, 1998), today averaging $9,992 dollars per employee in health and productivity costs (Sarkis, 2000). Muscular–skeletal problems account for the greatest percentage of work disabilities. Back pain, the most expensive, costs businesses at least 38% more on the average than other work injuries (Baldwin & Johnson, 1998). Compensation claims for work-related distress and depression have been gradually rising (Druss, Rosenheck, & Sledge, 2000), up from 10% to 25% of all claims between 1982 and 1993. Businesses contend with increasing mental health costs both directly through compensation claims and indirectly through absenteeism, decreased productivity, and potential increase in waste and accidents.

The term *disability* also conjures up business fear of litigation. It is perhaps surprising to learn that of the 595 cases filed against employers under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) between 1992 and 1997, only 2.7% of the cases resulted in findings of discrimination on the part of the employer. In the balance of the cases, 48% found no discrimination, with the remaining cases being settled out of court. This may speak less to the issue of discrimination than to who is using the law (the majority of cases have been filed by people who were already employed and who acquired disabilities in midlife) and the way in which the law is being used. Nevertheless, the cost to employers in these cases (excluding legal expenses incurred) was in the neighborhood of $150.5 million, with $1.659 million being the largest single ADA settlement awarded (Aronson, 2000). The myth of disability litigation can be fearsome indeed.

Profit from Disability?

The most obvious connection between disability and profit is the customer with a disability. As consumers with an estimated $175 billion in discretionary income at their disposal (Heid, 2000), the disability community has begun to command the attention of many businesses (Jones, 2000), a market niche too lucrative to ignore. Far from being accommodations mandated by law, "talking" ATM machines (Ammenheuser, 2000), "accessible" photocopiers (Polk, 2000), and "electronic curb cuts" on Web sites (Zielinski, 2000) represent a new phenomenon in mainstream business. They are not accommodations in the customary sense; they are product innovations designed to make inroads into a new market niche (Cantwell, 2000; Weinstein, 2000). Civil rights are not only won in the courts; they are also won in the marketplace, where discretionary income is the measure of a niche's economic power and potential influence. Profit knows no stigma.

The relationship between disability and profit from the worker perspective is more obscure. Successful placement professionals are inclined to promote the functional capabilities of workers with disabilities and to avoid labeling whenever possible. Job applicants are instructed to disclose information concerning disability only when necessary and to do so in ways that proactively neutralize employment concerns in selection decisions. Marketing asset rather than disability is good strategy, but before we leave the issue of disability and profit, we must ask, Is there any direct employment value to the phenomenon of disability? Are there conditions under which workers may be more desirable because they have a disability? Even if we disallow tax breaks as an artificial enticement, the answer is, potentially, yes.

For businesses (and agencies) providing products to consumers with disabilities, it is possible that the consumers themselves may prefer their business contact to be a person with a disability (cf. Brearly, 1980; Nosek, Fuhrer, & Hughes, 1991). Any business seeking the consumer-with-a-disability niche may find value in the insights of workers and managers who share the disability experience. Who better to hire in product development, marketing, and sales?

Disability has added value from the perspective of social responsibility. As we have pointed out, business serves society and is often motivated to be seen as a good corporate citizen. Promoting the employment of workers with disabilities is good public relations, and it makes disability-friendly values explicit in the workplace. For instance, disability management strategies advocate these values via aggressive return-to-work programs. They communicate a positive message to all workers that, no matter where or how you acquired a disability, you remain a valued employee. The value of a positive social response to disability in the workplace is its potential for raising group morale by reducing the stigma of disability and the threat of disenfranchisement.

MANAGEMENT IN THE MARKETPLACE

Management fills the decision-making role that allows business to pursue profit through changing market conditions. Businesses trade in commodities and gather resources—managers put those resources to work making profit. There is a management role for each resource whether financial, physical, or human, regardless of the size and complexity of the organization. Each applies the same set of management functions to staff, plan, organize, control, and direct (Drucker, 1982) their resources to most efficient use. Human resource management is responsible for workforce productivity. Among the human resource responsibilities are the issues of disability in the workplace (Pransky, 2000; Schair, 2000). Thus human resource management is the organizational interface for VR professionals.

Staffing

Staffing is unique to the management of human resources. Staffing is the management of worker movement into and within the company, facilitated through selection, training and development, and support processes (Smith, 1983). This is the function most closely associated with what has become known in the VR literature as the *employer*, more correctly defined as the *employer role*. This is an important distinction that requires further explanation. The employer is not a person, per se, but a function of management. The employer is a representative of the business to whom the authority and responsibility of making employment decisions has been delegated. The employer is the CEO, owner–operator, department head, or supervisor. Each is a manager engaged in various aspects of selecting, training, and supporting workers. VR professionals may interface with any of these and call them the employer, though each has a different role to play in the management of human resources.

Employee Selection

Employers recruit, screen, and hire new workers to fill present or anticipated labor needs through the process of employee selection. Recruitment attracts a pool of potential applicants from which to choose. Recruiting strategies use various combinations of internal posting, external advertising, public events, professional recruiters, and informal word of mouth depending on the job and the target market of workers (Arthur, 1991; DeWolff, 1989). Good recruitment reaches its target market and provides enough job information to help applicants self-select (Wanous, 1980). Screening removes undesirable workers by assessing applicants in terms of negatively weighted criteria (Barron & Bishop, 1985; Granovetter, 1984) such as insufficient experience or credentials, job hopping, absenteeism, tardiness, gaps in employment history, reasons for leaving past employment, and past wage rates (Bills, 1990). Hiring ranks the remaining applicants on positively weighted criteria. Negotiating compensation concludes the hiring process.

Screening and hiring processes use interviews (Roberston, Gratton, &

Rout, 1990), biographical data review (Rothstein, Schmidt, Erwin, Owens, & Sparks, 1990), employment tests, personality assessments (Day & Silverman, 1989), and work samples (Hattrup & Schmitt, 1990) to gather decision-making information. Methods of assessment must be unbiased to be legal and must have predictive validity to be useful. Organizational research into selection methods has advanced the "point-to-point" validation theory (Asher & Sciarrino, 1974) as a unifying framework for criterion validation across selection methods (Smith & George, 1994). Literature suggests that all selection methods, properly administrated and designed, have the potential of providing predictive validity to the selection process (Smith & George, 1994).

However, researchers confront a disturbing discrepancy between academic findings and actual practice (Dakin & Armstrong, 1989). More often than not, untrained employers hire on the basis of a casual, unstructured interview. Personality tests and work samples are purchased and used with no defensible correlation with the job. Unscientific, unprofessional selection practice is devoid of real utility, needlessly expensive, and potentially litigious (Cascio & Morris, 1990; Raju, Burke, & Normand, 1990), yet they prevail.

Employee Orientation, Training, and Development

Management is responsible for the formal socialization of new workers, as well as improving their productivity and exploiting their talents in new job assignments. Orientation facilitates the new workers' arrival. The purpose of orientation is to reduce unnecessary cost (start-up, turnover, amount of supervision) and to provide a smooth transition by reducing employee anxiety and suppressing hazing activities (Bedian, 1989). Formal programs are used when large groups of employees are hired at the same time. They may include a welcome by top management, a presentation of the company's philosophy and history, a tour of the plant, and introductions to the job, supervisors, and peers.

Training develops an employee's knowledge skills and abilities for the purpose of improving present and future work performance (Bedian, 1989). Training improves productivity, increases quality, reduces waste, and minimizes accidents. Basic skills training teaches remedial language, math, and problem-solving skills as a foundation for advanced job-specific skills (Szabo, 1990). Job-specific skills are taught through on-the-job training, job rotation (Bedian, 1989), coaching (Knippen & Green, 1990), mentoring, and apprenticeship (Hanley-Maxwell & Millington, 1992). A growing disparity between the skill demands of existing jobs and the academic preparedness of new workers has increased the management investment in training (Haas, 1993).

Development links career development to the organization's plans for future HR needs by identifying, grooming, and exploiting in-house talent (Sartain & Baker, 1978). Employee self-assessment tools available through in-house career planning workshops, workbooks, or software help the motivated employee to self-select into development efforts. Employees may also seek help from contracted career counselors or begin career discussions directly with human resource management staff. Management may also employ assessment centers to select from internal recruits and maintain internal labor market information exchanges and job-matching systems through job posting, skills audits or inventories, and replacement or succession planning (Gutteridge, 1986).

Employee Support

Pressures, demands, and conflicts within the workplace (Davis, 1991) as well as problems outside the workplace can affect worker productivity. For many employers, the costs of employee selection, training, and development are high enough to make employee attrition (literally through leaving the company or figuratively through poor job performance) a serious economic concern. Support services prevent or correct employee barriers to optimal production.

Employment assistance programs (EAPs) are advanced components of human resource management systems (Roman, 1988). EAPs traditionally deal with issues of alcohol abuse but have subsumed the gamut of behavior–medical problems that cause work disruption (Roman, 1988), including psychiatric problems, family issues, and drug dependence. EAP goals include reducing absenteeism, turnover, and related costs (including morale); increasing productivity; removing management involvement in counseling; and providing due process for problematic employees. Services are usually coordinated in-house with referrals to appropriate professionals in the community.

Wellness programs were created to curb health costs (Blanchard & Tager, 1985), and they succeed where less integrated health promotion programs have failed. Wellness programs create awareness of pertinent health issues through health risk assessments of personnel and family members. Counseling, in-service, and educational materials are used to inform employees of health risks and how to avoid them. Programs are designed based on need and may include topics of physical fitness, nutritional counseling, stress management, smoking cessation, weight loss, cardiovascular fitness, blood pressure screening, prenatal care, and injury prevention.

Disability and Staffing

Staffing is the employer's gatekeeping function, and this overview reveals that there are many gates to be kept. Recruitment, screening, and hiring are the job acquisition gates. Orientation and training are the job-keeping gates. Development is the career advancement gate. Workers with disabilities may find barriers at each.

VR services must ensure that job seekers receive recruitment information that alerts them to job openings and allows them to select into applicant pools. Screening needs to be disability sensitive so as not to remove candidates with disabilities as "false positives" when accommodation removes the barrier. The full value of the accommodated worker must be expressed in hiring so employers can fairly rank the applicant.

Orientation is an opportunity for the employer not only to socialize the new worker but also to raise disability awareness among coworkers and orient them to a new experience. We ignore coworkers at the peril of the new employee, for they also have say in who is ultimately selected for the job (Channon, 1992; Schein, 1992). Inclusion in training is a prerequisite for tenure, but for workers with disabilities, inclusion alone may be insufficient (Smith, Povall, & Floyd, 1991). Where current training methods do not facilitate improved performance for workers with disabilities, alternative methods must be developed. Because of the unique challenges of disability in the workplace, managers may need to be proactive about the career development of such workers (Smith et al., 1991). Steps may need to be taken to ensure that workers with disabilities are aware of opportunities for advancement and are encouraged to compete. Gatekeeping is not a capricious activity; management is looking for added value. If workers with disabilities are not well employed in business, it may be that management lacks the vision to see the value or may lack the skill to harness it. These are organizational disabilities that the VR profession must also accommodate.

Support services deal directly with issues of work disability. Management efforts in cost containment include the prevention, accommodation, and compensation (Thomason et al., 1998) of work disability. The movement in business is toward an integrated approach to cost containment called disability management (DM). DM illustrates a dramatic change in the business approach to employee support:

> In DM, the problem of work-related injuries does not begin or end with the residual loss of function experienced by the injured worker. DM problems are systemic, defined by 'work disruptions' within the organization rather than disabilities within the individual. Work dis-

> ruptions . . . are perceived by managers as human resource problems related to the productivity of the workforce, the cost of production, and ultimately the economic health of the business. (Millington & Strauser, 1998, p. 262)

DM is an employer-directed alternative to ineffective insurance-based models. It uses interdisciplinary teams of internal (human resource) and external professionals, coordinated by a case manager, to provide proactive interventions at individual and environmental levels (Shrey & Lacerte, 1995). The VR profession contributes to the interdisciplinary team in case management, counseling, and placement activities (Berkowitz & Dean, 1998). Indeed, VR professionals sometimes fill their support role as employees of the business.

Staffing is the most critical management function to VR practitioners. If human resource management is the interface between VR services and business, then staffing defines the points of intervention. To fully appreciate the employer role (which is essential to the strategic delivery of VR services), the practitioner must understand that staffing is but one function in an indivisible system of management functions. Employers also plan, organize, control, and lead the human resource they manage.

Planning

Two considerations in this management function need to be differentiated: planning and the plan. Planning precedes all intentional activities of business, including the other management functions (Bedian, 1989). Any attempt to adapt or improve the processes or structures of business includes some level of formal planning that involves "the explicit evaluation of alternative courses of action, selection of one of the alternatives for execution, and formal communication of the decision to interested persons throughout the organization" (Emery, 1969, p. 108).

Planning starts from the top down. The goals of planning become more specific and concrete as they are operationalized through a hierarchy of subgoals. High-level planning tends to be global in its expected outcomes, more long term, and strategic (Child, 1972; Mintzberg, 1988) in implementation. These global outcomes are the synthesis of the subgoals of the next level of management down, which pertain to more specific, tactical, and time-limited goals. These goals, in turn, are further subdivided into increasingly specific goals until the planning process reaches the workers who produce and the consumers who buy the business product.

Planning may be accomplished in a variety of ways, depending on who has the authority to make plans (Vroom & Yetton, 1973), how information is used (Koopman & Pool, 1994), and how formalized and complex the planning process is (Hickson, Butler, Cray, Mallory, & Wilson, 1986). Planning can vary in terms of the centralization of planning authority, the amount and type of information gathered and used, and the level of formalization. Any combination of these qualities can describe a planning process, from the high-centralization, high-information, and high-formality approach of bureaucracies to planning as "organized chaos" (Koopman & Pool, 1994). It also is possible that one might find different planning approaches at work at different levels in the planning hierarchy.

Plans are the output of the planning process. The purpose of a formal plan is to bring about the instrumental behaviors that will lead to one or more predetermined outcomes. Each set of subgoals requires a plan to achieve them. Thus, any one plan in an organization should describe actions to be taken, quantify expected outcomes, and allow for communication and coordination across a network of plans that constitute the global strategy of the business (Emery, 1969). Standing plans dictate the day-to-day activities of an organization and are formalized in the policies, rules, regulations, and so on of the work unit. This allows management to dictate behavior to lower level management and workers economically in routine or high-volume activities. Single-use plans are implemented in nonroutine situations or when insufficient information exists to create a standing plan. A plan may be specific in its procedural instructions, leaving little room for the discretion of the worker, or it may be a simple declaration of a desired outcome, leaving the means of achieving it up to the worker.

Organizing

Managers structure and coordinate their resources to expedite plans. Managers group workers in meaningful patterns, specify worker responsibilities and authorities, and establish formal lines of communication between groups and individuals (Sartain & Baker, 1978) based on the dictates of the strategic plan of the organization (Chandler, 1981). Form attempts to follow function in organizing endeavors (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1985). Productive efficiency is the goal, but approaches to efficient organization differ.

We may first think of organization at the unit level. There are three approaches (Jelinek, Litterer, & Miles, 1981). The hierarchical approach to organizing breaks down large tasks into smaller and smaller component parts based on similarities. The work flow approach organizes units on the basis of where they fit in the production cycle rather than similarities of jobs. Autonomous work groups create units based on the interdependency of workers needed to complete a large task. Each approach has a different logic and results in a different structure overall. The degree of hierarchical control diminishes and intrinsic motivation increases as each approach is considered in turn.

Values of the business are reflected in organizing as well. Businesses that emphasize "human relations" will create structure that builds cohesion and morale among workers. Where organizational growth is key, business will stress innovation and opportunistic readiness in a flexible organizational structure. Productivity is a basic business value incorporated into structure by planning and goal setting. Businesses that value predictability and stability tend to emphasize information management and communication (Bedian, 1994). These approaches are thematic, not mutually exclusive. Good organizing often requires a blending of values.

Organizing at its most specific is job design. There are three basic approaches to job design: specialization, time and motion, and job enrichment. Specialization breaks large and complex tasks into increasingly smaller components, creating simpler jobs with fewer tasks repeated with greater frequency. Time and motion studies increase the efficiency of task procedures and develop objective standards for performance appraisal. Together, these approaches allow management to centralize authority over planning and control functions, increase productivity efficiency and thus profitability, and create a more equitable means to compensate workers based on output (Taylor, 1911). These "scientific" management methods have been vastly popular in business, if problematic. Their approach tends to disregard the human element of productivity, and they have unintended social (e.g., worker alienation), psychological (e.g., worker dissatisfaction), and physical (e.g., repetitive motion injury) costs that threaten long-run profitability (Walker & Guest, 1952). The overspecialization of work and loss of autonomy have created monotonous jobs with little intrinsic reward. Time and motion studies have created, rather than abated, alienation of workers from management. Job enlargement and job rotation are sometimes considered as alternatives but have little impact on the basic problems of specialization. Job enrichment reverses the trends of work specialization and time–motion study by enlarging the job around a natural work cycle, increasing worker control over process, and providing new lines of communication (i.e., feedback) between employers and workers as well as workers and consumers (Bedian, 1989; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The objective of all job design is economic efficiency in production (Jelinek et al., 1981). The challenge for business is to find balance between the science and the human in organizing.

Controlling

The control function of management serves the plan by (a) tracking and evaluating planned behavior against process and product standards (Sartain & Baker, 1978) and (b) providing the means to correct unsatisfactory behavior and reward satisfactory behavior at the group or individual level. The unit goals defined in the plan provide the basis for evaluation at each level. Goals are interpreted in terms of one or more performance indicators, and the actual unit performance is compared against these benchmarks. Control is exercised at the individual level through the use of performance appraisals. Performance appraisals are generally provided by the employee's supervisor (Drucker, 1982) and are used to make staffing decisions concerning salary, promotion, training, reassignment, retention, termination, layoffs, disciplinary actions, and so forth (Donaldson & Scannell, 1987; Hubbell, 1974).

There are five potential types of objective measures included in performance appraisals (Fisher, Schoenfeldt, & Shaw, 1999). Production measures compare quantity of output directly. This measure is most appropriate when production is repetitive, an average can be computed, and external factors do not impede the employee's ability to produce. A measure of dollar sales is most appropriate for sales jobs, of course. When comparing one salesperson to another, care must be taken to make an adjustment for the quality of the territories (e.g., rural vs. urban). Personnel data (e.g., absenteeism, reprimands, and accidents) may figure into evaluation as long as a clear relationship between personnel data and job effectiveness is identified. Performance tests using work samples or simulations are used when procedures are tightly prescribed (e.g., fighter pilots, telephone sales representatives). Managers are evaluated on business unit performance indicators such as return on equity, profit margin, and market share. When comparing manager performance, evaluations should make allowance for economic factors (Fisher et al., 1999).

Performance appraisal is subject to the same legal standards that protect workers from discrimination in employment selection. A good and safe performance appraisal is based on a job analysis and should be able to demonstrate that the content is job related, comprehensive, and free of extraneous variables. The criterion should be as objective and concise as possible. The scoring and rating processes should be standardized, universally applied, and based on direct observation.

Directing

It is not enough for a worker to have the skills to do the job if the worker is not properly motivated to be productive. The underachieving worker is a hidden cost potentially more harmful than absenteeism (Harnett, 2000) because the lack of commitment to production has a negative impact on individual and group performance. Management is challenged with shaping or directing employee behavior through motivational methods.

Business's preferred means of motivating individuals is incentive pay. Business understands its workforce as a meritocracy managed by the human resource department. Here, individuals in the workforce are compensated relative to their ranking based on performance appraisal outcomes. This is an effective way to increase motivation to an extent, but incentive pay is reduced in its effectiveness by individual differences (not all workers are motivated by money), characteristics of the organization, how workers perceive the management of incentive pay (fairness), and the human resource department's actual proficiency at implementing an incentive pay scheme.

Worker motivation has many roots. Individual differences, such as personal values, interests, and cognitive choice (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1980), are largely beyond the direct influence of management. So employers tend to deal with "proximal" factors (Kanfer, 1994) that are more closely associated with the work behavior. Employees respond positively to fair and equitable treatment, including participation in decision making and being informed of the reasons for policy decisions (Adams, 1965; Greenberg, 1982; Kanfer, Sawyer, Earley, & Lind, 1987). Goal setting, properly matched to the situation, facilitates greater productivity (Locke, 1968; Ross, 1985; Umstot, Bell, & Mitchell, 1973). Specific (Bryan & Locke, 1967) and appropriately challenging (Campbell & Ilgen, 1976) goals direct worker attention, initiate and sustain on-task behaviors, and engage the worker in strategic development (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). Feedback sustains motivation and has the ability to increase productivity and decrease absenteeism when linked with self-management (Latham & Frayne, 1989).

Leadership is the most ephemeral of management responsibilities. It is clear that supervisor behavior has a profound impact on worker performance and satisfaction, but there is no unifying theory of leadership to explain what is obviously a very complex dynamic. Instead, a loose confederation of theories has generated a patchwork of findings that view leadership from a variety of perspectives (Fiedler & House, 1994).

Attribution theory illustrates how labels can change workers' evaluations of their supervisors (Foti, Fraser, & Lord, 1982; Mitchell, Green, &

Wood, 1981). Cognitive resource theory (Fiedler, 1986) suggests that intelligent leaders are not always the best leaders. The contingency model (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987) suggests that a match between the supervisor and types of group motivation (task motivation vs. relationship motivation) is important. Charismatic and transformational theories suggest that leaders who communicate vision and sense of mission to subordinates can positively influence worker performance and satisfaction. Path goal theory suggests that effective leaders make the personal goals of the worker contingent on productivity goals (House, 1971). Personality theories suggest that a healthy need for social power is beneficial, but a self-serving need for personal power is counterproductive (McClelland & Burnham, 1979). All of these theories have developed some level of validity and utility over time, but when considered as a group they suggest that leadership is as much art as science.

Disability and the "Other" Management Functions

The placement of workers with disabilities is based on making a match between worker abilities (with or without accommodations) and essential functions of the job. This is a necessary but incomplete conceptualization of employment. Millington et al. (1998) defined *placement* as "any professional intervention that facilitates or supplements the naturally occurring employment selection process" (p. 379) to illustrate, in part, that placement takes place in a management context and that the management (employer) role must be considered in achieving a quality match that will persist over time. VR interventions directly serve the staffing function, but the employer is also described by planning, organizing, controlling, and directing behaviors aimed at workers.

Disability may be addressed directly and indirectly in a number of locations in the standing plan. Nondiscrimination hiring policies, job descriptions based on essential job functions, and evacuation procedures for people in wheelchairs are examples of issues in need of policy. There is likely to be a wide range in the number, quality, and degree of implementation of disability-directed policies across different businesses. VR practitioners with experience in ADA compliance can be of assistance to employers in policy review.

When job accommodations are required to make a placement, the worker has engaged the organizing function of management. It is interesting to note that employers have long been concerned with the effect of job design and productivity and have been willing to rearrange jobs and job functions in a variety of ways. We begin to realize that everyone is accommodated in their jobs and that accommodation is a natural extension of an existing management function.

Performance appraisals are the employer's control mechanism. Because they are used to make employment decisions, it is imperative that workers with disabilities have access to regularly scheduled performance appraisals and that the administration and interpretation of the performance appraisals be valid for workers with disabilities. It is also through the worker's performance appraisals that the quality of VR services may be evaluated. In establishing a working relationship with employers, the use of program evaluations may be helpful for improving services and accountability to the employer.

Leadership is a matter of personal style. The best leaders foster acceptance in the workplace for workers with disabilities. There are different ways this can be accomplished at different levels of leadership. Supervisors lead for production. They set achievable goals and help create an environment where goals can be met. They lead by equitable treatment and the value of the team. Upper management can lead by making employment of workers with disabilities part of the strategic plan and the values of the organization. Among their peers in the business community, business leaders can lead by example. Having implemented plans to hire large numbers of workers with disabilities, they share their success and values with others. Having influence on their own vendors, business leaders can leverage others to do the same.

MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT

To this point, we have discussed the market context and the management structures of business. In this section, we will discuss marketing as the process that brings market and business together. Broadly speaking, marketing may be defined as any activity in the marketplace taken by an individual or organization that is instrumental to creating an exchange relationship with another individual or organization (Holloway & Hancock, 1968). Buying and selling is the exchange—maximum profitability is the goal. Marketing defines the relationship between buyers and sellers and the meaning of maximum profitability.

The idea of marketing evolved as markets became more diverse and competitive. Until the 1950s, marketing was product oriented; the function was to stimulate consumer demand for existing products. The emphases were on advertising and sales. Marketing plans favored sales campaigns. The goal of business was increased sales volume. Marketing was limited in scope and relatively separate from the other business functions.

Marketing took on new meaning in the postwar years, when markets, and babies, boomed. Businesses began shifting the focus of marketing from the product to the consumer. The emphases of marketing broadened to include research and development, engineering, and production. The goal of business became profitability through marketing. Marketing became a strategy for marshalling resources across business functions, rather than a function itself. It became a philosophy of business rather than an adjunct of sales (Webster, 1994). Marketing and innovation thus became part of the strategic plan (Drucker, 1982). Through marketing (Sandhusen, 1987), management (a) gathers, analyzes, and disseminates market-based information concerning current product status and future trends in the market, as well as an accounting of internal strengths and weaknesses that mediate the business's abilities to capitalize on those market trends; (b) identifies opportunities for the expansion of market share and threats against the stability of current market share; (c) strategically plans for the proactive and reactive exploitation of market opportunities and defense against market threats through changes in the target markets, product offers, and structure of business; and (d) administers a system of controls to measure and report the effect of marketing efforts on the established organizational goals and to adjust strategy accordingly.

The Role of Innovation

As part of the strategic business plan, marketing is change management. It demands innovation as a response to customer feedback. Innovation is any change in business designed to, at least, maintain market share and, ideally, expand it. Innovation may mean a change in target markets. Business can expand market share by increasing the market penetration of current target market, adding new target markets, or shifting marketing efforts from one target market to another.

Marketing innovations can change the "offer" the business makes to its target markets. There are four components to the offer (Sandhusen, 1987): product, product price, product place, and product promotion. Management can manipulate these qualities to improve the desirability of the offer. Product innovations create new products and improve existing ones. Price innovations change the nature of purchase by adjusting price or by creating new financing arrangements. Place innovations change the where, when, and how of product delivery to customers. Indirect and direct promotion innovations change communication strategies for attracting customers. Indirect promotion is aimed at the market niche in a general way, as in public relations events and most advertising. Direct promotion is sales aimed at a specific consumer and involves changes in the way a sale is initiated, negotiated, and closed, as well as maintaining customer satisfaction (Sandhusen, 1987). Growth strategies are based on innovations in the target markets, the offer, or both (Webster, 1994).

Marketing has spurred innovation at a structural level in management. A marketing philosophy of business asserts that "structure follows strategy" (Webster, 1994): As markets and products change based on consumer value, so should the organization pursue continuous improvement of internal structures, processes, and resources (Walton, 1988). Marketing drives business planning and organizing by altering how decisions are made. There are three types of management decisions. Operational decisions dictate the allocation of resources within the organization. Administrative decisions dictate the process and physical structure of the organization. Strategic decisions are focused on the relationship between the business and the marketplace (i.e., what products to sell and what markets to enter). Businesses without a strong marketing foundation traditionally address problems of profitability operationally by changing the allocation of resources within the organization. If this fails, they implement administrative change by altering business process and structure. As a matter of last resort, they turn to strategic methods that consult consumers in their search for profit. Market-driven management reverses the order of decision making by anchoring plans in consumer research. Administrative and operational decisions follow. Thus, the structure and processes of production are subject to change to meet the needs of consumers.

Deming (1982) was the first major proponent of a market-driven approach to management. He developed a method of strategic internal innovation built on the idea of scientific management by introducing small sample statistics to quality control. His method of continuous quality improvement was customer driven and controlled by a mutual commitment of workers and management. The Deming approach linked the structures of business to market innovation. This new market-driven management thinking has spawned other models that view systematic change as a natural organizational function, such as total quality management (George & Weimerskirch, 1994) and the concept of a learning organization (Senge, 1990).

Marketing Implications for Vocational Rehabilitation

Marketing as a concept has influenced VR practice (Corthell & Boone, 1982; Fabian, Luecking, & Tilson, 1994; Gilbride, Stensrud, & Johnson, 1994) for years, but it remains to be fully integrated into the fabric of management. This is to be expected in a bureaucratic model exemplified by state–federal VR programs. Conceiving and implementing marketing beyond a sales approach is a foreign concept to an organization that is one step removed from the profit motive. Changes in target markets for state VR services have resulted from legislation that expanded the disability niche, not from an organizational drive to expand market share. The bureaucratic offer is slow to change because there is little incentive other than new legislation and budget cuts to do so. Management structures in bureaucracies are even more resistant to change simply because they are bureaucracies.

But change is coming because the profit motive cannot be denied. There is a bottom line for VR practice. The mandate has shifted from employability to employment outcomes. This change in mandate is more than a recommitment to employment on the part of the profession; it is a call from the public for results. Society expects outcomes. The VR profession can lay claim to moderate success over the years (Berkowitz, 1988), but the overall intransigence of employment statistics feeds an atmosphere of dissatisfaction. Eventually, agencies will have to prove their worth through expanded labor market share for workers with disabilities or be replaced by new structures.

Marketing philosophy is gaining inroads into VR service and management. VR has begun to recognize the employer as a target market. The antithetical "beg–place–pray" approach to placement (Fabian et al., 1994) is dying a natural market death. Agencies are using more "employer accounts" approaches that build business relationships with VR professionals. More service innovations are possible. Consider the skills and knowledge required of the placement professional: (a) awareness of employment trends in the local market; (b) knowledge of local business, job seekers, and the law; (c) management of a caseload of job seekers and a portfolio of employers; (d) assessment of jobs, employers, organizational cultures, and job seekers; (e) training abilities in job getting and keeping behaviors; (f) motivational skills with both employers and job seekers; and (g) ability to act as a referral source for employers and job seekers. The value of these skills to employers is unquestionable, but these are raw resources yet to be put to good use in the employer context. VR management structure must be willing to reinvent itself and its offer to employers before real best practices can take hold. In short, innovation is the key to meeting the employment outcome directives of the VR profession, and market-driven management is the best means to innovation.

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