

**Customized  
Employment:**  
*Partnering with  
business and creating  
opportunities*

**October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
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**TransCen**

MEANINGFUL WORK + COMMUNITY INCLUSION

# What Is Customized Employment?

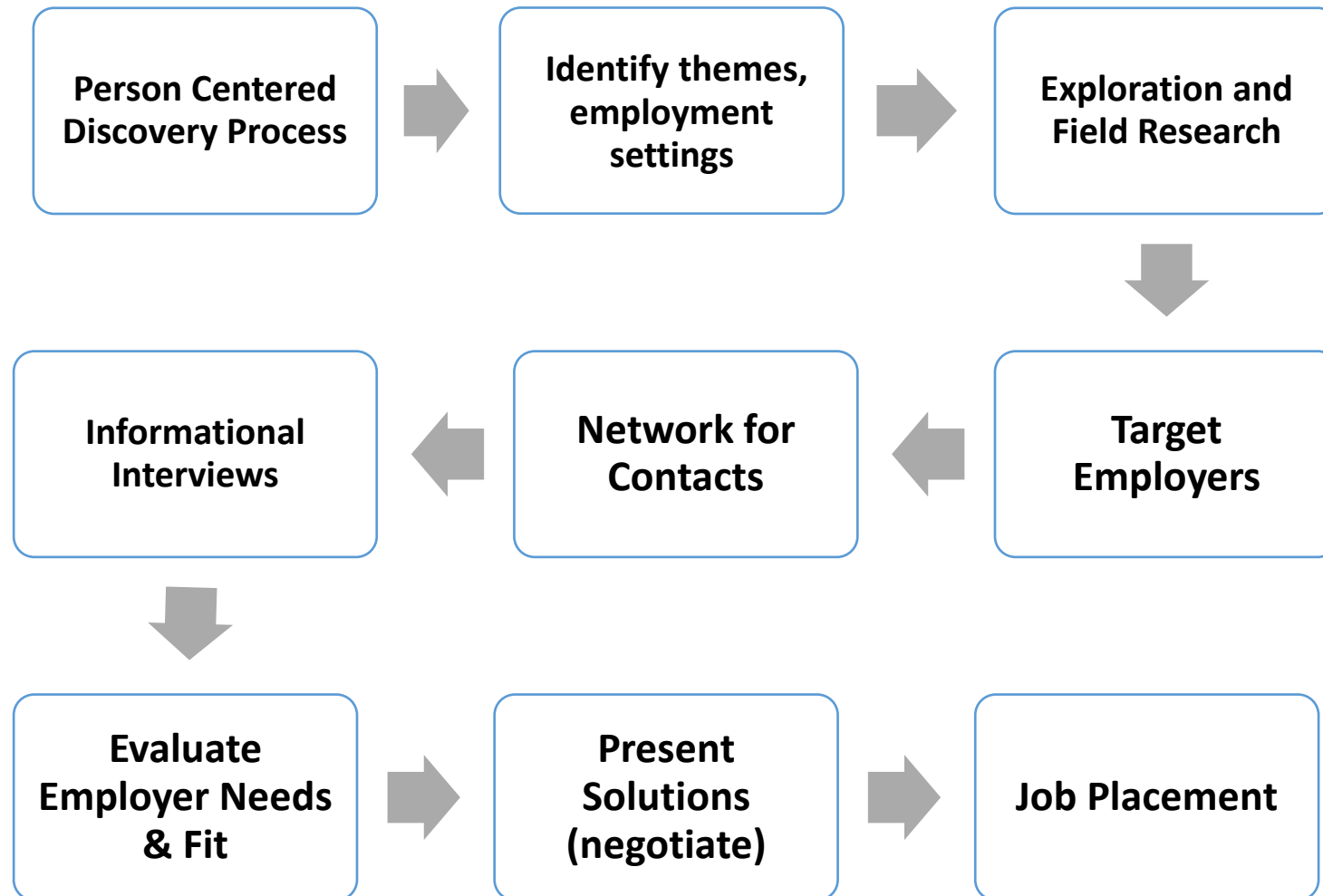
...an **individualized approach** to employment planning and job development – one person at a time--one employer at a time. It is about building new positions based on the **needs of an employer** and the **strengths of the job seeker**. It is an effective way to assist people with more significant disabilities to become contributing members of today's workforce.

US Department of Labor,  
Office of Disability and Employment Policy

**Customized Employment  
re-frames how we see job seekers with  
disabilities and how we approach and  
partner with employers..**

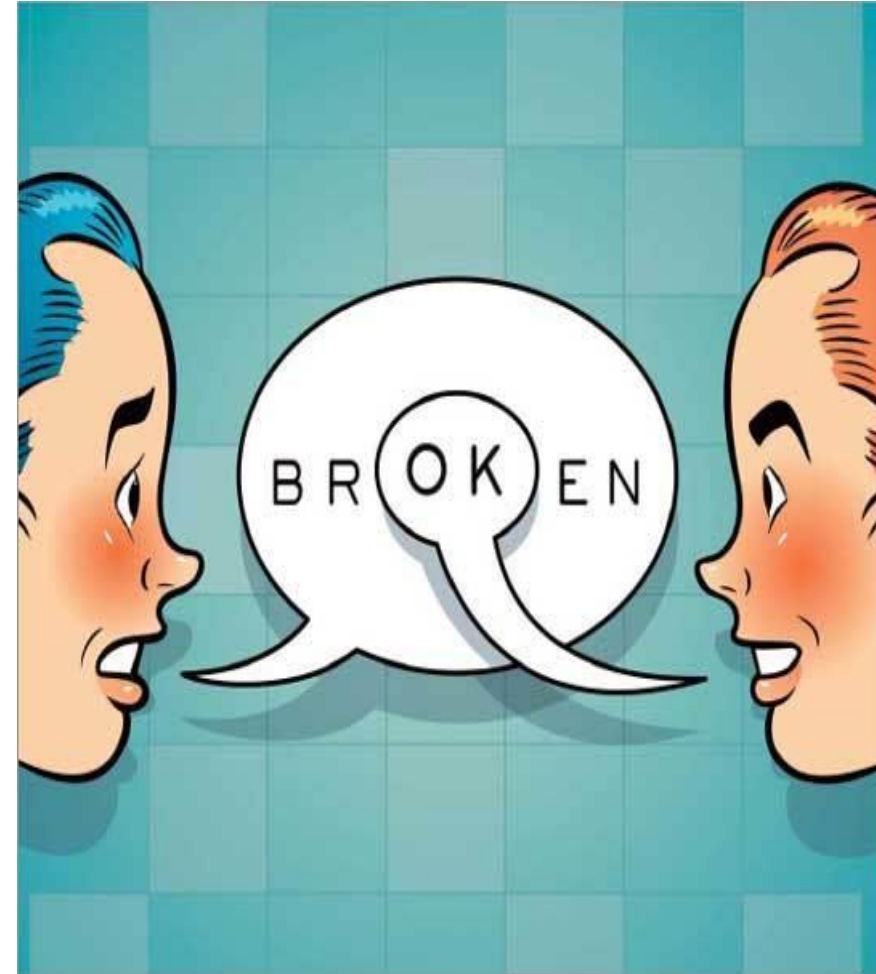


# Customized Employment Process



# CE: A Skills, Not Deficits, Approach

- Presumes all job seekers *are* ready to work
- Starts with a person-centered, discovery process
- Focuses on job seeker's strengths and preferences
- Profile is used to target businesses where job seeker's unique characteristics and skills will be seen as assets- and where disabilities will be minimized
- Shifts the conversation with employers away from "Disabilities" to "*adding value*"





# **People with Complex Disabilities can Work!**

***Meet Kip***

# Reframing KIP

## What Kip's file said:

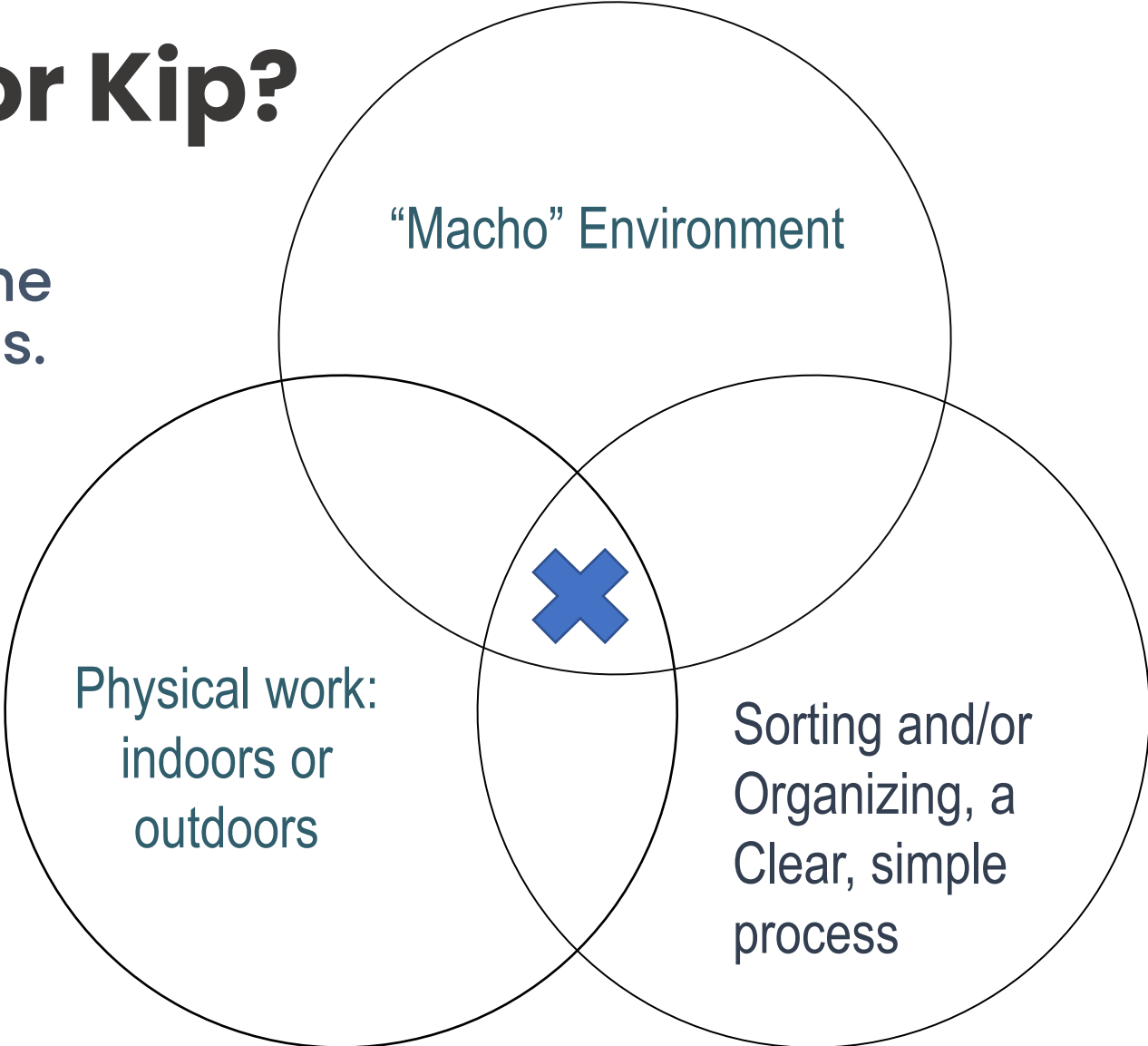
- Institutionalized for 15 years
- Non-verbal
- Aggressive behavior
- Autistic behaviors
- Hyperactive- can't focus
- No functional academic skills

## What we Discovered:

- Gets his message across- chatters and smiles when happy
- Physical guy
- Hard worker, good coordination, likes to move
- Can sort, match and organize things (basic)
- Loves the outdoors

# What's a good job for Kip?

VENN diagrams help us target employment settings based on the individual's unique characteristics.





# What did Kip and the Sausage Factory teach us?

- There is a job for everyone who wants one.
- Looking at the job seeker's skills and interests will lead us down the right path. (Look for "rays of light" – and employers who will value these)
- A solid understanding of an employer's needs and long-term, established relationships are critical.
- Employers hire motivated people who are excited about their business – and can help solve a problem.

# Employer Engagement

Reframing how we approach and partner with business

# Help Wanted

Company looking for individual with developmental disabilities, autism and/or history of aggressive behaviors. Extensive history of segregation preferred. Social challenges and anxiety, okay. Movie day, dance party on Fridays.

Call for an application.

# ***Customizing vs Job Carving***

## **Job Carving**

- Focuses on what someone CAN'T do
- Emphasizes need for accommodations and special treatment
- Difficult to sell
- Stigmatizes candidate and sends the wrong message

## **Customizing a job**

- Focuses on what someone CAN do
- Presents the Candidate as a "solution to problems"
- Makes sell easy
- Sends message of competence and value



# What do Employers Value?

- Motivated employees who are excited about their work.
- Candidates with skills sets that can add value to their workforce.
- Business solutions that improve the company's productivity and/or work processes.

# Employees Must Add Value to an Employer's Workforce

- **Hiring is a business decision**, not a social issue or charitable cause
- **Employment is a mutually beneficial relationship** – must be right for both parties
- **There is a job out there for everybody** – but it is about adding value – not charity!

# Identifying an Employer's Needs and Negotiating Positions

We must stop selling “disability” and start talking “customized business solutions”

# Marketing vs. Selling

Employment Consultants meet with employers to identify their needs, *not pitch our program services or a job seeker*





# Identify ways to streamline processes and improve workflow

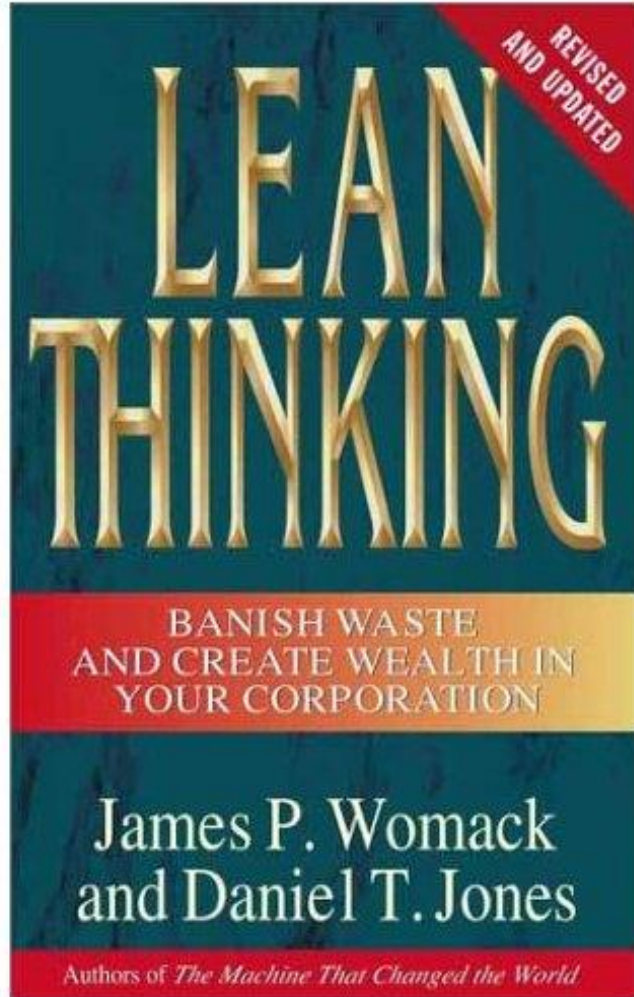
What is the product (or service)?

- Are there ways to make product faster or service better?
- Are there ways to make product cheaper or save money?
- Are there ways to increase the number of customers served or improve the customer experience?
- Are the customers (and staff) happy?
  - Costs \$.80 to keep a customer and \$3.00 to make a new one
  - Costs \$5-\$10k to hire and train a new employee

# Identify Issues/Challenges

- Customer /employee complaints
- Log jams/backlogs/long lead times/Waiting
- Unassigned, but critical tasks
- Burn-out or high turnover
- Managers or key staff pulled away from core tasks
- Workflow fluctuations
  - Rush times, crunch times, seasonal fluctuations, sporadic- but important tasks that are not getting done

# Lean Principles: A Job Developer's Toolkit



A process improvement approach that focuses on the customer and seeks to identify “WASTE” and inefficient processes

Learn to talk the language of business

# Is this a Good Prospect for your Candidate?



- Can your candidate address a need and add value?
- Is the environment right?
- Do the job tasks match your job seeker's interests and skills?
- Does this situation "fit like a glove"?

# If Yes, it's time to negotiate a Customized Position

We assist the employer to assess needs, analyze tasks and organize the new position.



**“Nothing beats showing me how  
you can make my life easier!”**

*A hiring manager who hired an individual  
through a customized arrangement*

# Advantages & Benefits for Employers

- Cost effective way to improve work flow and reduce waste
- Supports core staff so they are able to concentrate on key aspects of their positions
- Productive, dependable, loyal employees
- Reduces recruitment and training costs for support positions
- Diversifies the workforce
- Leverages resources of employment service to assist with orientation and training of the new employee.

# **A Customized Process**

Creating opportunities for Stephen



# Finding Jobs that “fit like a glove”



## Meet Stephen

# Reframing Stephen

## What his file said:

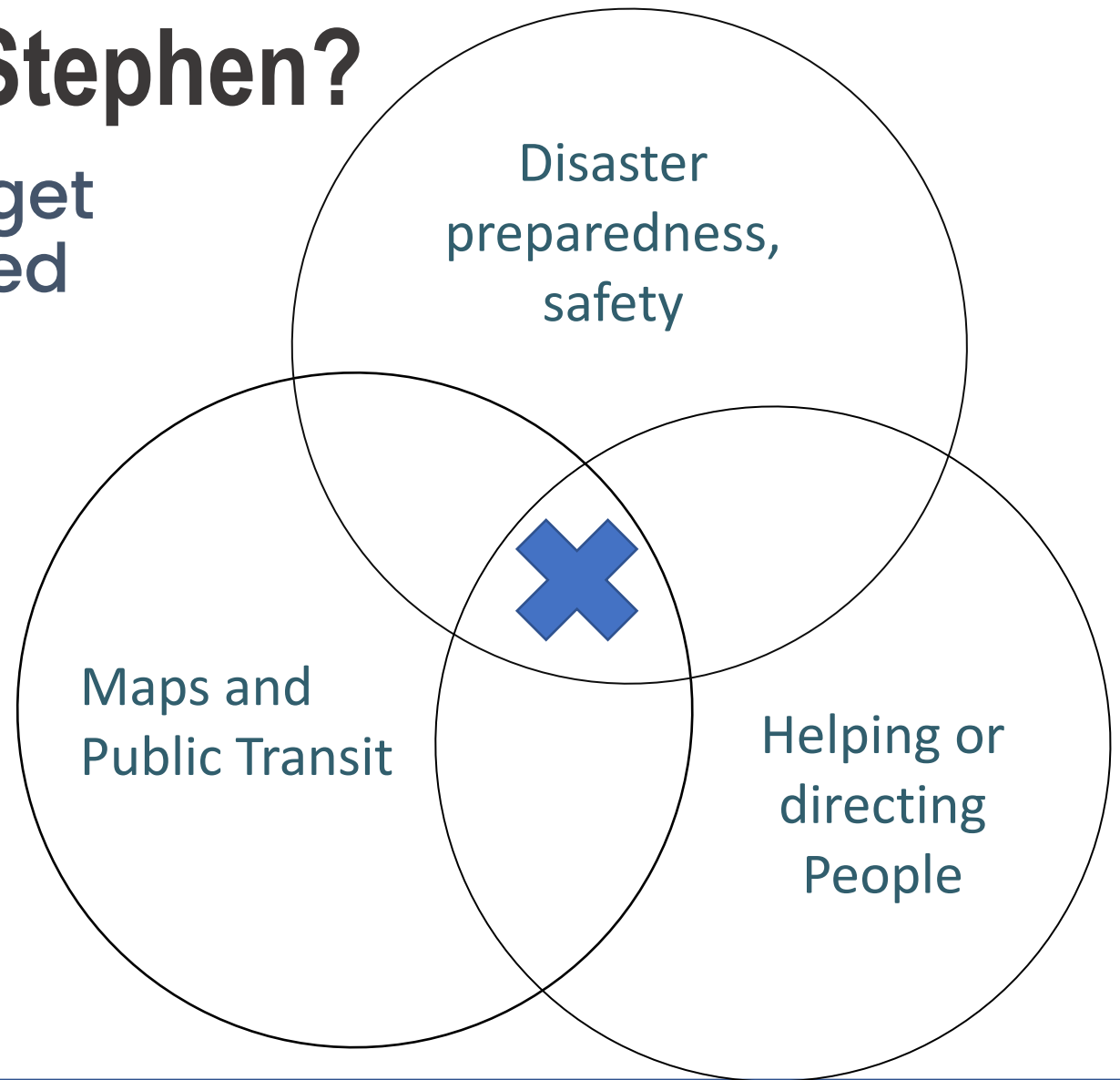
- Cornelia de Lange syndrome
- Stutters
- Emotionally immature
- Gastric Esophageal reflux disorder
- Resistant to new things
- Perseverates/OCD
- Late, attendance issues (esp. when anxious)
- Limited academics, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade reading comprehension

## What we discovered:

- Adventuresome, likes maps, finding places using GPS
- Follows the rules
- Collects patches
- Rides a bike
- VERY organized
- Hard worker (only when motivated)
- Emails friends, Loves “googling” the internet
- Loves “disasters”, monitors a police scanner

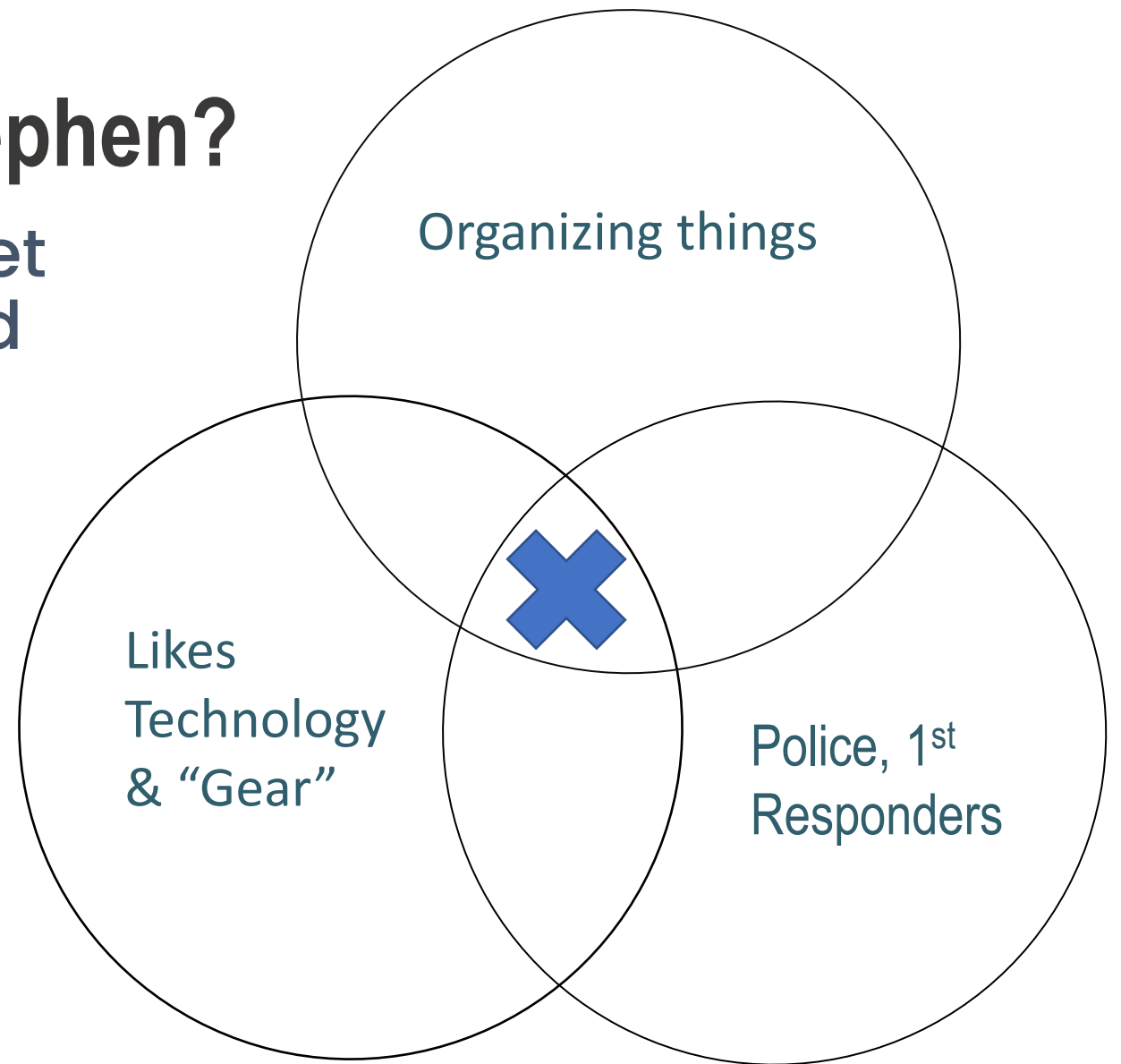
# What's a good job for Stephen?

Use VENN diagrams to target employment settings based on candidate's unique characteristics.



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### **Potential Task List**

#### **GALLS**

##### **Sales Floor**

- Restock and organize all tactical and medical gear
- Inventory and restock uniform racks
- Fold merchandise
- Run footwear for sales clerk
- Store maintenance; sweep, wipe, dust and take out the trash and recycle, clean windows and display cases

##### **Uniform Services**

- Pulls patches and uniform sizes for orders
- Iron and package completed uniforms
- Package and ship completed orders

##### **Back stock/Warehouse**

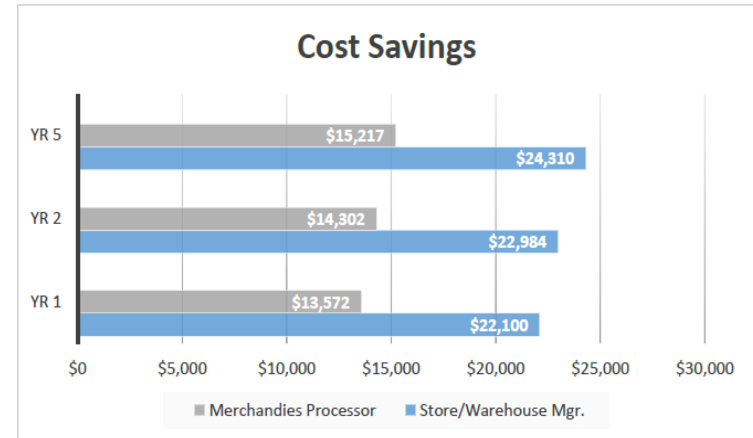
- Organize back stock
- Inventory products on the shelf
- Process incoming merchandise
- Generating shipping labels
- Sort and hang uniforms
- Process and ship online orders
- Break down cardboard boxes

# Presenting Your Candidate: Potential Task Lists

# Cost Savings Analysis

Cost Analysis: Merchandise Processor/20 hours per week

	YR 1 (50 wks)	YR 2 (4% COLA)	YR 5 (10% COLA)
<b>Store or Warehouse Manager</b>			
Hourly Rate: \$22.10      Weekly: \$442.00	\$22,100	\$22,984	\$24,310
<b>Merchandise Processor Position</b>			
Hourly Rate: \$13.75      Weekly: \$275.04	\$13,752	\$14,302	\$15,127



### Cost Savings

Year 1	\$8,528
Year 2	\$8,682
Year 5	\$9,093



# Stephen at



# “We’re not hiring” to “When can he start?”

- Stephen has skills and attributes the employer valued
- He is extremely interested in the business
  - “He’s one of us”
  - Minimizes disability
- Job developer identified needs and presented a cost effective, solution to the employer’s problems
- Job developer helped the employer to understand how to utilized Stephen’s skills and accommodate his disabilities



# Benefits of Customized Employment

- Enables us to place job seekers with more complex disabilities or more limited skill sets
- A creative, engaging, empowering process. A strength-based approach that helps individuals imagine the possibilities and see themselves as “workers”.
- Increases options- creates opportunities for job seekers with disabilities in any kind of business or industry
- Gets job developers out of the box- out of their comfort zone, away from the jobs we all know
- Improves retention and job satisfaction rates - Customized jobs “fit like a glove”

# For More Information:

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# About TransCen

TransCen, Inc. is a national organization offering web-based and in-person training for state agencies, school districts, provider organizations, and others interested in meaningful work and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

Learn more about our work:

[www.transcen.org](http://www.transcen.org)

Contact us at [inquiries@transcen.org](mailto:inquiries@transcen.org) for more information!

MEANINGFUL  
WORK

+

COMMUNITY  
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