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## *Why Playing is Important to Succeeding in Vocational Pursuits*

Pursuing a meaningful and rewarding career is hard work. When you add to this many of the challenges that individuals with disabilities face, the journey can be daunting. One way to productively offset this for our Customers is to find ways to make the vocational rehabilitation journey fun as well as productive. Here are some ideas that may help:

1. **Nurture the Imagination:** As we age, we tend to forget what it was like to play. At the heart of play is being carefree and using our imagination. This is often the last thing on our Customer's minds when they meet with us for the first time. One way to overcome this is to start out by building upon what they can do versus what they can't. For self-employment, this means inviting them to respond to a series of questions including:
  - What is your favorite hobby?
  - What do you enjoy most about past work experiences?
  - If you could create your ideal career, what would it look like?

The objective is to facilitate a non-judgmental, creative process where the Customer opens to the possibilities and leaves behind perceived limitations.

2. **Facilitate Self-Discovery:** When a Customer embraces the possibilities of what *can* be, the vocational journey becomes more about self-discovery and less about a bureaucratic process. While we still have forms to fill out and processes to follow, we now have the added option of making it fun for all involved. To do this, add to the goal-setting and tracking components, a celebration component. This includes inviting Customers to write down 5 things each day they choose to celebrate and share them with you when you meet. You can also personalize this in ways that make sense to you and your Customer. For a Customer who was transitioning from a teaching career to a freelance career, we created a notebook to document and track her goals. Every time she reached or exceeded a goal, we'd place a colorful sticker on the page just like she did for her students.
3. **Validate Achievements:** While the end goal is to aid Customers in attaining their vocational objectives, which is a new job or the launch of a new business, find ways to formally validate their achievement. This includes providing them with a Certificate of Achievement suitable for framing. Make it fun by having your picture taken with them holding their certificate. Consider generating an internal memo to promote how another Customer succeeds with the help of the vocational rehabilitation system. This type of formal and tangible validation goes a long way!

The more we can make it fun for our Customers, the more fun we have in the process too (and avoid burnout). What ways can you introduce more play into your work where everyone benefits? Let us know at [info@kisbd.com](mailto:info@kisbd.com), subject line: *How More Play Leads to More Pay*.

For more information, visit: <http://www.buzvr.org/>

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