

Part I:

Background Information

Picture Frame Restorer

BACKGROUND

Cathy, age 38, was diagnosed with Behcet's Syndrome, a form of arthritis that causes pain in her cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine, in addition to other symptoms such as chronic pain, headaches and some memory loss and confusion. She had a history of drug and alcohol abuse in addition to her disability and was residing at a halfway house when first referred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. While she had obtained her GED, her work history was minimal, with one-year employment as a clothing store manager and one-year experience developing photographs. After a period of work adjustment at Goodwill Industries, her vocational counselor, Joe Wilkins, placed her in a small shop specializing in the restoration of frames and pictures. Her position involved the restoration of expensive wooden frames and the constant standing and bending over the table caused a significant increase in pain, frequent absences, and general lack of consistent productivity.

The Center for Rehabilitation Technology was contacted to determine if work site modifications could be developed which would allow better body ergonomics as well as the ability for her to sit and stand as needed, while minimizing the lifting and moving of the picture frames.

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES

Based on a functional capacity assessment and observation on the job, it was determined Cathy was able to lift 25-30 pounds on an occasional basis. She could bend from the waist occasionally and it was noted an effort should be made to prevent frequent flexion of the neck and to maintain a negative lordotic curve in her spine. She should be able to alternately sit or stand in a physically correct position and take short breaks as needed to stretch and move around.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Cathy performs the frame restoration on wooden frames by first assessing the condition of the frame to determine if all the finish needs to be removed or if the frame can be touched up and refinished. Old stain and paint is removed by applying chemicals and removing the dissolved residue with cloth, steel wool and scrapers. Dents, scratches, and blemishes are filled in and lightly sanded. Once the frame is prepared, new stain, paint or gold leaf is applied. A restorer must lift the wooden frames, which can weigh up to 35 pounds, onto the work table and then continuously bend over the table to carry out the restoration as described.

Essential Functions of the Job

1. Lift frame onto the table.
2. Evaluate condition of the finish and determine correct procedure, based on customer specifications.

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3. Select proper chemical to remove the stain or paint, if necessary, or select the desired stain or paint if this removal is not indicated.
4. Apply chemicals and remove the dissolved chemicals with tools and equipment.
5. Fill in chips, nicks and scratches with wood filler and sand lightly.
6. Apply desired finish.

EMPLOYER CONSIDERATIONS

This is a small shop and the owner, Susan, was very flexible. However, she expected Cathy to work eight hours a day with a reasonable number of breaks. Increased stamina and ability to maintain a good pace would assure orders would be ready for pick up by the date promised. Quality was critical as these frames are typically expensive, wooden hand carved or made frames vs. the synthetic, machine made quality. As with most employers, reliability was important as frequent absences disrupted the work flow, requiring the owner to perform frame restoration instead of her usual duties of picture restoration, which is more highly skilled and time consuming.



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