

## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING: A WIN FOR BOTH EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

**Personalized Paper Manufacturing Group** was in a bind: the Albuquerque-based maker of custom notepads, spiral notebooks, sticky notes, and receipt books was getting so successful that the company couldn't hire enough quality employees to keep up with its growth.

So in early 2022, Vice President and General Manager Jereme Metzger took a chance. Working with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR), he took on a participant in the agency's **On-the-Job Training (OJT)** Program. Since then, Personalized Paper Manufacturing hasn't looked back. **The partnership has worked out so well that Metzger has accepted four more trainees and has hired three permanently.**

OJT is a three-month process. The trainees start by practicing their interpersonal skills and getting to know the operation. As they get more comfortable, their workload and responsibility grow.

"Once we get the people here and they work with us, they tend to really flourish," Metzger says. "If people want a chance, let's give it a shot and see if we can make things work."

There is no risk for the employer. Candidates are provided with a stipend from NMDVR during the 90 days. Both the business and the trainee have the opportunity to see if the job is a good fit, and there is no obligation to hire the trainee at the end. **"There has been no better place to find quality people.** It may take time to train, but that's the case with everybody today."

For what's now North America's largest maker of custom stationery, it has been a good fit more often than not. "They're some of our best employees," he adds. "I've been very happy with the quality of candidates DVR sends me," says Metzger.

One new employee, **Jared Raborn, already oversees quality control.** "He's got great attention to detail," says Metzger. Since Jared has been in charge of reviewing each of the tens of thousands of items that get shipped every day, **errors have been reduced by a whopping 40 percent!** "He probably wasn't given too much of a chance to use his strengths before he came here."



*Jared Raborn oversees quality control at Personalized Paper Manufacturing*

Raborn is glad for the chance to work at Personalized Paper Manufacturing. **"I got an opportunity to showcase skills I don't get a chance to showcase often and do something I'm good at,"** the Rio Rancho resident says.

Raborn has autism spectrum disorder, which affects his ability to move quickly. He was always anxious in



*Former OJT program participant Jared Raborn (left) and Jereme Metzger*

previous jobs because his bosses didn't think he was working fast enough. "I was expected to move faster, so I couldn't pay attention to detail," he says. "Here, I can go the speed I'm comfortable with. I've always felt like I have a skill for attention to detail and here I'm allowed to do that."

Partnering with NMDVR on this program has been a boon for both the workers with disabilities and for the company. "It gets them in the door and gives them good quality experience. And it gets us quality employees," Metzger says, advising other businesses to take the leap that he did. **"It's worth your time. You're going to be surprised with their work ethic and abilities, and how thankful they are to be given a shot...It makes the world a little bit of a better place because people are willing to help other people."**

For information about participating in the On-the-Job Training Program as an employer, contact your nearest NMDVR office. There are two dozen locations all across New Mexico: [dvr.state.nm.us/locations/](http://dvr.state.nm.us/locations/). For more about Personalized Paper Manufacturing Group, visit [printpps.com/](http://printpps.com/).

*The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps eligible individuals with documented disabilities find suitable employment. Vocational rehabilitation is a voluntary program supporting people who want to work. With a long history of success and proven methodology for making the best fits, NMDVR is committed to helping participants thrive in their communities. For more information, visit [dvr.state.nm.us](http://dvr.state.nm.us) or call 505-954-8500.*

*The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2023, the total funds awarded is \$22,066,600. The remaining 21.3% is funded by state appropriations and transfers from the Commission for the Blind and Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.*

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