

MISSOURI EMPLOYER RESOURCE GUIDE

*Help for Missouri Employers wishing to
hire workers with disabilities*



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P R E F A C E

This guide was developed by the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institute for Human Development. It is designed to serve as a comprehensive resource of information for Missouri employers who are committed to a diverse workforce which includes the employment of individuals with disabilities.

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INTRODUCTION

This resource guide is intended to provide a comprehensive source of relevant information about hiring workers with disabilities for Missouri employers. This guide is in response to a survey conducted by the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Institute for Human Development that indicated that there is a lack of resources to assist employers to meet the need for an inclusive workforce. This guide will equip employers with valuable and current information about recruitment, hiring, and promotion of people with disabilities.

WHO ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Employers increasingly recognize and value of a diverse workforce which includes people with disabilities. People with disability are the largest minority. There are almost 50 million American who report on the Census as having a disability (close to one in five Americans). Persons with a disability make up 18.7% of the adult population, but only about 30% of these are employed. Of those who are unemployed, two-thirds would like to work (N.O.D./Harris Poll, 2000). People with disabilities include a large range of challenges, including, but not limited to, physical limitations epilepsy, depression, and even cancer.

WHY HIRE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The National Organization on Disability has listed ten reasons to hire people with disabilities

- Gain access to a new and vital talent pool of workers.
- Employees with disabilities can ease concerns about labor supply.
- People with disabilities have equal or higher job performance ratings, higher retention rates and lower absenteeism.
- Employees with disabilities can relate better to customers with disabilities, who represent \$1 trillion in annual aggregate consumer spending.
- Diverse work groups can create better solutions to business challenges.
- People with disabilities are better educated than ever, and are proven to have met and/or exceeded challenges.
- A person with a disability motivates work groups and increases productivity.

- Companies that hire and accommodate people with disabilities in their workplaces can receive tax benefits.
- Employing people with disabilities is good for the individual, the business, and society. This is a “win-win-win” strategy.
- People with disabilities are motivated by the desire to give something back, and opportunities for personal growth, job flexibility, and social inclusion.
- It’s ability, not disability, which counts.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In a recent survey by the University of Missouri Kansas City Institute for Human Development, employers reported that few people with disabilities applied for jobs at their businesses. Some places to find skilled workers with disabilities include the following:

Public Agencies: There are some public agencies that provide vocational services to people with disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to Vocational Rehabilitation, and WorkForce Development offices through their career centers. The state, through its Department of Mental Health, funds employment specialists that place people with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation: <http://www.vr.dese.mo.gov>
Department of Mental Health: <http://www.dmh.mo.gov>
WorkForce Development: <http://www.ded.mo.gov/wfd>

VetSuccess: This program provides assistance to service-connected veterans with employment assistance. <http://www.vetsuccess.gov/about>

Disability Groups: There are a number of advocacy agencies for people with disabilities. These include Independent Living Centers, ADAPT, People First and the National Association for the Mentally Ill. See the resource section for details on each disability group.

INTERVIEWING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Some employers have asked questions about how to relate to persons with disabilities when they interview them. It is important to use “people first” language as a sign of respect. Some illustrative examples include:

Don't use

Handicapped (the)

The blind or the visually
Impaired

The disabled

Confined to a wheelchair or
wheelchair bound

Use

Say "person with a
disability."

Say "person who is blind,"
or "person with a vision
Impairment."

Say "people with
disabilities"

Say, "uses a wheelchair."

Note: You don't have to hire someone because of their disability. You can hire based on skills for the position, educational background, past experience, and other relevant criteria. Qualified applicants can:

- Perform the essential functions of a job;
- Satisfy your job requirements for educational background, employment experience, skills, licenses and any other standards that are job related; and
- Perform those tasks with or without reasonable accommodations.

For example, a position requiring communication on a two-way radio would exclude candidates who are profoundly deaf. In contrast, it would be reasonable to accommodate a person who has limited use of his/her hands with a headset rather than the traditional hand held radio.

Factors to consider when determining if a function is essential include:

- Can the work schedule be modified or become part-time?
- Can I reassign the employee to a vacant position?
- Can I adjust or modify examinations, training materials, or policies?

TAX INCENTIVES FOR EMPLOYERS

There are a number of tax incentives that could assist in training and hiring people with disabilities. Tax incentives are available to help subsidize wages or new employees and to cover the cost of making the business accessible for both employees and customers. Tax deductions are available to businesses for architectural or transportation adaptations to

accommodate both customers and employees with disabilities. Illustrative of this are:

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Welfare to Work Tax Credit
- Tax Credit for Access Improvements
- Tax Reduction for Barrier Removal

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The WOTC program provides employers with federal tax credits as an incentive for hiring members of targeted groups (including individuals with disabilities) who traditionally have difficulty finding jobs. A tax credit is provided during the first twelve months of employment for new hires who work at least a certain number of hours. There is a maximum tax credit for each individual hired. For new hires that leave before they have worked 400 hours, a partial credit is available. A tax credit for the summer youth target group is also available. For more information, look at the link at www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opplax/.

Welfare to Work Tax Credit

Employers can claim a tax credit with new hire. A different amount can be claimed for year one and year two. To qualify, new hires must be employed at least a certain period of time. Claims must be filed within the first two years of start date of the new employee to be eligible.

To find more information on how to apply go to following link. www.ded.mo.gov/WFD/Business%20Services/Financial%20Incentives/Welfare-to-Work%20Tax%20Credit%20Program.aspx

Tax Credit for Access Improvements

The tax credit, established under Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code, was created in 1990 specifically to help small businesses cover ADA-related “eligible access expenditures.” A business that for the previous tax year had either revenues of \$1,000,000 or less or 30 or fewer full-time workers may take advantage of this credit. The credit can be used to cover a variety of expenditures, including: provision of readers for customers or employees with visual disabilities, provision of sign language interpreters, purchase of adaptive equipment, production of accessible formats of printed materials (i.e., Braille, large print, audio tape, computer diskette), removal of architectural barriers in facilities or vehicles (alterations must comply with applicable accessibility standards) and fees for consulting services (under certain circumstances).

Tax Deduction for Barrier Removal

The tax deduction, established under Section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code, applies to a business may (including active ownership of an apartment building) of any size may use this deduction for the removal of architectural or transportation barriers. The renovations under Section 190 must comply with applicable accessibility standards. Small businesses can use these incentives in combination if the expenditures incurred qualify under both Section 44 and Section 190.

Example: A small business' use of both tax credit and tax deduction \$20,000 cost of access improvements (restroom, ramp, 3 doors widened)

- \$5,000 maximum credit.
- \$15,000 remaining for deduction.
- Employer makes hiring decisions.
- No restrictions on the number of qualified new individuals he/she can hire.
- Claim up to \$8,500/new hire in potential tax credits.
- Credits are applied to taxes due to IRS – unused credits may be carried over to next tax year.

From: "Opening Doors to Work" www.workabilityutah.org

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE TO WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

There are several types of assistance to workers with disabilities who begin with a business or state agency. These include the following:

On-the-Job Training (OJT): Sometimes companies are reimbursed for on-the-job training by a sponsored program. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation also can provide on-the-job training to eligible individuals who may require it to prepare for employment.

Supported Employment: Supported employment facilitates competitive work in integrated setting for individuals with the most severe disabilities. Based on the nature of the disability Supported Employment may coordinate job coach services and other supports such as assistive technology and specialized job training. For information, call Missouri Comprehensive Psychiatric Services (573) 751-8017 or the Missouri Division of MR/DD for local agency phone numbers.

ACCOMMODATIONS

You may make accommodations to the work place or schedules based on the needs of the worker with a disability. Here are some facts about accommodation:

- Workplace accommodations are usually not expensive. Seventy-one percent of workplace accommodations suggested by the Job Accommodation Network cost less than \$500.
- Sixty-nine percent of people with disabilities do not need special equipment to do their job effectively.
- Workplace accommodations can reduce workers' compensation and other insurance costs.
- Workplace accommodations can increase the pool of qualified employees.
- Workplace accommodations may be as simple as a rearrangement of equipment.
- Workplace accommodations can create opportunities for persons with functional limitations.

Some useful resources for accommodations include:

Missouri Assistive Technology Project: This is a hub for assistive technology resources in Missouri. 800-647-8557.or (816)373-9314

Job Accommodation Network (JAN): The Job Accommodation Network is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the ADA, and the employability of people with disabilities. JAN represents the most comprehensive resource for job accommodations available. (800) 526-7234.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for people with disabilities in all aspects of employment (for any employer with 15 or more employees), state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of a Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) phone relay system.

Employment (Title I) states: Business must provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities in all aspects of employment. Possible changes may include restructuring jobs, altering the layout of workstations, or modifying equipment. Employment aspects may

include the application process, hiring, wages, benefits, and all other aspects of employment. Medical examinations are highly regulated.

The employment provisions of the ADA apply to employers of 15 employees or more. Its public accommodations provisions apply to all sizes of business, regardless of number of employees. State and local governments are covered regardless of size.

An individual has a “disability” if he or she meets at least any one of the following tests:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

Major life activities include hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, caring for oneself, learning or working.

An individual must be qualified to perform the essential functions of a job, with or without reasonable accommodations.

Essential functions are critical tasks that an employee or applicant needs to be able to perform. An applicant or employee must satisfy the employer’s job requirements for educational background, employment experience, skills, licenses, and any other standards that are job related. And they must be able to perform those tasks with or without reasonable accommodations.

Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.

An employer does not have to give preference to a qualified applicant with a disability over other applicants. The employer is free to select the most qualified applicant available and to make decisions based on reasons unrelated to a disability.

From: “Opening Doors to Work” www.workabilityutah.org

DIVERSITY TRAINING

Some diversity training may assist the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into your workplace. Including workers with disabilities in the

training can be helpful. The most appropriate way to dispel myths about any group is to educate oneself about the particular group.

- Myth:** People with disabilities are a bad employment risk because they are unable to meet performance standards.
- Fact:** In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found 90% rated average or better in job performance compared to 95% for employees without disabilities.
- Myth:** It is very costly to provide accommodations for people with disabilities.
- Fact:** Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe.

A more detailed and complete listing is found in the appendix, entitled, *“Myths and Facts about People with Disabilities”*.

CONTACT INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC ADA REQUIREMENTS

On employment contact :

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

P.O. Box 7033

Lawrence, Kansas 66044

1-800-669-4000 (Voice) or 1-800-669-6820 (TDD)

On public accommodations and state and local government contact:

Department of Justice

Office on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Civil Rights Division

P.O. Box 66118

Washington, D.C. 20035-6118

1-202-514-0301 (voice) or 1-202-514-0381 (TDD)

United States Access Board

1111 18th Street, NW Suite 501

Washington, DC 20036

1-800-872-2253 (voice) or 1-800-993-2822 (TTY)

Department of Transportation

400 Seventh Street, SW

Washington, DC 20590

1-202-366-9305 or 1-202-755-7689 (TDD)

Federal Communications Commission

1919 M Street, NW

Washington, DC 20554

1-202-634-1837 or 1-202-632-1836 (TDD)

Americans with Disabilities Act & Accessible Information Technology Center (see General Resources and National Organizations)

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) (see General Resources and National Organizations)

Missouri Assistive Technology (see State of Missouri Resources)

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U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEO) (see Federal Resources)
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) (see General Resources and National Organizations)

STATE OF MISSOURI RESOURCES

Disability Spin: This web page provides a variety of disability related information, particularly around the Columbia Area, and is a place for information sharing and advocacy. <http://www.dspin.org>.

Governor's Council on Disability: This office focuses on creating a climate in which all Missourians with and without disabilities have equal access to employment opportunities. It promotes full participation of the nearly 1 million Missourians with disabilities in all aspects of community life by educating employers and employees of their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. 1-573-751-2600 or <http://www.gcd.ia.mo.gov>.

GreatHires.org: Great Hires, Missouri's Workforce Resource, is the official Workforce Resource website for the State of Missouri. For employers it provides a no-cost access to Missouri's largest hiring pool and broadest variety of skill sets, streamlined 5 step job posting process, with increased control over ones ability to ensure great matches. 1-888-728-JOBS or <http://www.greathires.org>.

Manpower: To enrich people's lives with quality employment opportunities and training, and to provide companies with quality Human Resources Solutions that help them increase productivity, improve efficiency and manage the bottom line. <http://www.us.manpower.com> 1-573-893-6050.

Missouri Assistive Technology: The Missouri Assistive Technology program mission is to increase access to technology for Missourians with all types of disabilities of all ages. www.at.mo.gov.

Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Councils: MACDDS is dedicated to the promotion of county initiatives in developmental disability services. <http://www.macdds.org>.

Missouri Business Leadership Network: The Missouri Business Leadership Network (MOBLN) champions opportunities to create productive and supportive partnerships among people with disabilities, private businesses, and governmental and community agencies. It provides its participating companies with training and resources they need to effectively hire, retrain, and market to people with disabilities. <http://www.mobln-gateway.org>.

Missouri Department of Mental Health/Division of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities: The Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities improves the lives of persons with developmental disabilities through programs and services to enable these persons to live independently and productively. <http://www.dmh.mo.gov/mrdd/mrddindex.htm> .

Missouri Development Disabilities Resource Center: Linking people to disability information, support networks and professional development opportunities. This center is an information and referral service provided by the University of Missouri – Kansas City Institute for Human Development (UMKC-IHD), and funded by the Missouri Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. <http://www.moddrc.com>.

Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: Is the state agency that champion high-quality services to persons with disabilities and advocates equity and access for all persons. It assists persons with disabilities by providing individualized support and services and businesses with the referral of persons with disabilities. Offices are located in most counties and are open during normal business hours. To locate the branch office closest to you www.vr.dese.mo.gov or 1-573-751-3251.

Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities: This federally funded council is mandated to plan, advocate for, and give advice concerning programs and services for persons with developmental disabilities that will increase their opportunities for independence, productivity, and integration into communities. <http://www.mpcdd.com> 1-800-500-7878 or 1-573-751-8611.

Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council: The purpose of the council is to gather and disseminate information, conduct studies and analyses, develop model policies, conduct training on issues, provide outreach to un-served and under-served populations and to work to expand and improve Independent Living services. It further serves to support the Centers for

Independent Living and advocate for disability rights and related issues. There are twenty-one centers within the state <http://mosilc.org/> or 1-573-751-3251.

One Stop Job Centers: The goal of the One-Stop is to provide businesses and job seekers with convenient access to employment, education, training, and information services in a localized area. There are thirty-two full service career centers in Missouri. http://www.greathires.org/cgi-bin/career_centers.cgi

People First: People First is a self-advocacy and self help organization formed by and run by and which exists for persons with developmental disabilities. The members of People First provide educational training relative to persons with a developmental disability. <http://www.missouripeoplefirst.org>.

The Missouri Bar – Business Law Resource Guide: A resource guide published by the Missouri Bar Association. This guide contains information on the ADA: Rules for the Workplace; Rights under the Missouri Workers' Compensation Law, Business Organizations and Bankruptcy 1-573-635-4128 or <http://mobar.com/pamphlet/ada.htm>

FEDERAL RESOURCES

DisabilityInfo.gov: A one-stop source of government information relevant to people with disabilities, their families, employers and service providers. Employers can specifically learn about sources for job candidates with disabilities, tax credits to offset the cost of accommodations, assistive technologies and more. <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=500>

Federal Employment of People with Disabilities: Find out how the U.S. government accommodates people with disabilities. <http://www.opm.gov/disability/index.asp>

National Council on Disability (NCD): An independent federal agency responsible for making recommendations to the President and Congress on issues affecting 54 million Americans with disabilities. <http://www.ncd.gov>

Social Security Administration, Ticket to Work Program: The Ticket to Work Program is a nationwide initiative administered by

the Social Security Administration designed to increase job training and employment choices for individuals with disabilities.

Employers that offer job training, vocational rehabilitation, support, retention or other types of job-related services and/or assistance for individuals with disabilities can become Employment Networks and are eligible for compensation for services.

www.yourtickettetwork.com.

The Access Board: The Access Board is an independent federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. It provides information, training and technical assistance on guidelines and standards; and, enforcing accessibility standards for federally-funded facilities. www.access-board.gov.

The Disability Rights Office (DRO): The Disability Rights Office addresses disability-related telecommunications matters, including telecommunications relay service (TRS) (Section 225), access to telecommunications equipment and services by persons with disabilities, access to emergency information, and closed captioning. It also provides expert advice and assistance, as required to other Bureaus and Offices, consumers, industry, and others on issues relevant to persons with disabilities.

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/>.

U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): This website provides information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities and transportation. www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP): ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment. ODEP supports the creation of expanded work options and meaningful employment, promotes economic opportunities and independence, encourages self-determination and supports the inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities.

www.dol.gov/odep/business/business.htm.

Workforce Recruitment Program: The Workforce Recruitment Program provides summer work experience, and in some cases full-time employment, for students with disabilities. The program

develops partnerships with other federal agencies and businesses. Each year, recruiters develop a database of approximately 1,500 qualified students that employers can use to recruit interns. www.dol.gov/odep/programs/program.htm

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): EEOC enforces Title I and Title V of the ADA, prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of disability in the private sector and state and local governments. The EEOC conducts a series of free workshops for small businesses on the ADA. These workshops include information on tax incentives and community resources. www.eeoc.gov or 1-800-669-4000 (voice), 1-800-669-6820 (TTY).

VetSuccess: The goal of this program is to assist veterans who have service-connected disabilities to become suitably employed and to maintain employment. Assessment of the veteran's interests, aptitudes, and abilities are provided. Employers are encouraged to list job vacancies with the agency. <http://www.vetsuccess.gov/about>

GENERAL RESOURCES AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ABILITY: ABILITY works with companies, government, and non-profits to employ people with disabilities <http://www.jobaccess.org/>

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD): AAPD, the largest national nonprofit cross-disability member organization in the United States, is dedicated to ensuring economic self-sufficiency and political empowerment for Americans with disabilities. AAPD works in coalition with other disability organizations for the full implementation and enforcement of disability nondiscrimination laws, particularly the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. www.aapd.com

Americans with Disabilities Act & Accessible Information Technology Center: The ADA & IT Technical Assistance Center (DBTACs) is a comprehensive resource for information on the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessible information technology <http://www.adaproject.org/>
1-800-949-4232 (V/TTY)

Association of People in Supported Employment: The network on employment is a membership organization formed in 1988 as the Association for Persons in Supported Employment to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities, services, and outcomes. www.apse.org

Disability Solutions: The mission of Disability Solutions is to provide in a widely accessible manner, free of charge, information that is useful, sensitive, and current to everyone concerned with people with disabilities. <http://www.disabilitysolutions.org/>

DRM Guide to Disability Resources: Disability Resources, Inc. is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization established to promote and improve awareness, availability and accessibility of information that can help people with disabilities live, learn, love work and play independently. The world's foremost gateway to disability resources on the Internet, featuring thousands of the best web sites conveniently arranged by subject or state. <http://www.disabilityresources.org/>

Employer Assistance Referral Network (EARN): EARN is a nationwide, cost-free referral and technical assistance service for employers. EARN connects employers who have job vacancies to employment service providers who have direct access to job-ready individuals with disabilities. EARN also provides technical assistance to assist employers in locating appropriate organizations and information as they seek to hire qualified candidates with disabilities. www.earnworks.com

Information Center For Individuals with Disabilities: The Information Center's mission is to provide a comprehensive source of information relevant to the needs of people with disabilities and their families. The Center is a nationally recognized repository of valuable information about disabilities and resources. <http://www.disability.net>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN): JAN is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, ADA and the employability of people with disabilities. <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu> or 1-800-526-7234 (voice/TTY).

National Collaborative on Work and Disability: The National Collaborative on Work and Disability (Youth) NCWD/Youth is a source for information about employment and youth with disabilities. <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/index.html>

National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) NCIL is a membership organization that advances the self-empowerment philosophy and advocates for the human rights of, and services for, people with disabilities to further their full integration and participation in society. www.ncil.org

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID): The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (RID) is a national membership organization of professionals who provide sign language interpreting/transliterating services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons. <http://www.rid.org/> , call 1-301-608-0050 (voice) or 1-703- 838-0459 (TTY)

The National Organization on Disability: The mission of the National Organization on Disability is to expand the participation and contribution of America's 54 million men, women and children with disabilities in all aspects of life by raising disability awareness through programs and information. Email: ability@nod.org or <http://www.nod.org/>

The Spectrum Organization Association, Inc.: Spectrum Employment Service is making a difference assisting people who have varying degrees of disability to find and maintain open employment. It assists employers on savings with advertising, interviewing time and with on the job training. www.spectrum.org.au/employment.htm

Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Workplace Supports: The RRTC on Workplace Supports identifies factors that enhance or inhibit businesses from tapping into a pool of potential employees with disabilities. It collects data and resources related to employment supports, a particular useful employment strategy for individuals with severe disabilities. The center's Web site contains valuable information on return-to-work strategies, effective disability management programs and financial tax credits to encourage hiring, retention and advancement of people with disabilities. www.worksupport.com or 1-804-828-1851 (voice), 1-804-828-2494 (TTY)

APPENDIX

Diverse Perspectives: People with Disabilities Fulfilling Your Business Goals

U.S. Department of Labor

Office of Disability Employment Policy

Diverse Perspectives: People with Disabilities Fulfilling Your Business Goals

By fostering a culture of diversity, or a capacity to appreciate and value individual differences, in all aspects of their operations, employers benefit from varied perspectives on how to confront business challenges and achieve success.

Although the term is most often used to refer to differences among individuals such as ethnicity, gender, age and religion, diversity actually encompasses the infinite range of individuals' unique attributes and experiences. As the nation's largest minority—comprising almost 50 million individuals—people with disabilities contribute to diversity, and businesses can enhance their competitive edge by taking steps to ensure they are integrated into their workforce and customer base.

In the Workforce:

Perhaps more than any other group of people, individuals with disabilities have the ability to adapt to different situations and circumstances. As employees, they add to the range of viewpoints businesses need to succeed, offering fresh ideas on how to solve problems, accomplish tasks and implement strategies. Hiring people with disabilities can positively impact a business's bottom line. Recruiting and retaining workers with disabilities is one strategy to counter the effects of the aging and shrinking workforce. This untapped labor pool can offer a source of skilled employees and can contribute to increasing retention and reducing turnover. In addition, tax incentives and technical assistance can assist with accommodations, which are often relatively easy and inexpensive to implement. To gain these benefits and others, employers should take steps to attract and retain employees with disabilities, such as:

- Seeking out qualified candidates with disabilities for job openings
- Establishing a system for educating all workers about the value people with disabilities bring to an organization
- Incorporating a disability focus into any diversity training program
- Ensuring that internal professional development programs are available to people with disabilities
- Providing employees with disabilities with candid and prompt feedback on their performance in the same manner as provided for individuals without disabilities

- Making certain that training and other off-site activities are accessible to employees with disabilities
- Taking advantage of tax credits and education resources to provide accommodations for both new employees with disabilities and employees returning to work following an illness or injury

In the Marketplace:

A business's commitment to diversity is also reflected in its customer base, and companies are beginning to recognize the value of people with disabilities as a target market. Organizations such as the National Organization on Disability estimate that Americans with disabilities represent more than \$200 billion in discretionary spending—not including their extended families and support networks, who are also a significant market segment. When deciding how to spend this money, individuals with disabilities have the same standards as all customers—they want quality products and services at competitive prices. To tap this market, businesses should take steps to ensure their marketing efforts convey that people with disabilities are valued as customers. Such steps may include:

- Incorporating people with disabilities into the business's marketing strategy
- Testing proposed marketing tactics among people with disabilities
- Implementing promotional tactics specifically targeted to people with disabilities
- Ensuring that communication channels for advertising and promotion reach people with disabilities
- Incorporating people with disabilities in advertising and other promotional activities
- Recognizing that the disability market is a diverse one in and of itself and that one size does not fit all
- Defining how and why the disability market needs the business's products and services
- Including people with disabilities in product development, keeping in mind that products created to meet the needs of people with disabilities often turn out to have widespread applicability
- Devising simple modifications to make existing products and services accessible to people with disabilities

Resources to Assist:

Building partnerships is critical to incorporating individuals with disabilities into diversity goals, and a number of resources are available to help employers in their efforts, including:

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

1-866-ODEP-DOL (1-866-633-7365) (V) or 1-877-889-5627 (TTY)

ODEP is a U.S. Department of Labor agency that provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities.

Employer Assistance and Recruiting Network (EARN)

1-866-EARN-NOW (1-866-327-6669) (V/TTY)

EARN is a free service that connects employers looking for quality employees with skilled job candidates. EARN, which is a service of ODEP, can also provide technical assistance on general disability employment-related issues.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

1-800-526-7234 (V/TTY)

JAN is a free consulting service from ODEP that provides individualized accommodation solutions and technical assistance regarding the ADA and other disability-related legislation. It also educates about self-employment options for individuals with disabilities.

State Governors' Committees on Employment of People with Disabilities

State committees on employment of people with disabilities can provide guidance to employers on how to recruit and retain qualified individuals with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

State VR agencies can help employers identify qualified, job-ready candidates with disabilities to fill their workforce needs.

Centers for Independent Living (CIL)

CIL are community-based, nonprofit organizations that improve opportunities for people with disabilities to live independently and productively.

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The Ten Commandments of Communication with People with Disabilities

1. Speak directly rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present.
2. Offer to shake hands when introduced. People with limited hand use or an artificial limb can usually shake hands and offering the left hand is an acceptable greeting.
3. Always identify yourself and others who may be with you when meeting someone with a visual disability. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking. When dining with a friend who has a visual disability, ask if you can describe what is on his or plate.
4. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instructions.
5. Treat adults as adults. Address people with disabilities by their first names only when extending that same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
6. Do not lean against or hang on someone's wheelchair. Bear in mind that people with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies. And so do people with guide dogs and help dogs. Never distract a work animal from their job without the owner's permission.
7. Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, or a nod of the head. Never pretend to understand; instead repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
8. Place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches.
9. Tap a person who has a hearing disability on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if the person can read your lips. If so, try to face the light source and keep hands, cigarettes and food away from your mouth when speaking. If a person is wearing a hearing aid, don't assume that they have the ability to discriminate your speaking voice. Never shout to a person. Just speak in a normal tone of voice.
10. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later" or "Did you hear about this?" that seems to relate to a person's disability.

Source: The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

Tips for Appropriate Language

- Acceptable: Person with a disability.
Unacceptable: Cripple, cripples – the image conveyed is of a twisted, deformed, useless body.
- Acceptable: Disability, a general term used for functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability, for example, to walk, hear, or lift. It may refer to a physical, mental, or sensory condition.
Unacceptable: Handicap, handicapped person, or handicapped.
- Acceptable: People with cerebral palsy, people with spinal cord injuries.
Unacceptable: Cerebral palsied, spinal cord injured, etc. Never identify people solely by their disability.
- Acceptable: Person who had a spinal cord injury, polio, a stroke, etc. or a person who has multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, etc.
Unacceptable: Victim. People with disabilities do not like to be perceived as victims for the rest of their lives, long after any victimization has occurred.
- Acceptable: Has a disability, has a condition of (spina bifida, etc.) or born without legs, etc.
Unacceptable: Defective, defect, deformed, vegetable. These words are offensive, dehumanizing, degrading and stigmatizing.
- Acceptable: Deafness/hearing impairment. Deafness refers to a person who has a total loss of hearing. Hearing impairment refers to a person who has a partial loss of hearing within a range from slight to severe. Hard of hearing describes a hearing-impaired person who communicates through speaking and spear-heading, and who usually has listening and hearing abilities adequate for ordinary telephone communication. Many people who are hard of hearing use a hearing aid.
Unacceptable: Deaf and Dumb is as bad as it sounds. The inability to hear or speak does not indicate intelligence.
- Acceptable: Person who has a mental or developmental disability.
Unacceptable: Retarded, moron, imbecile, or idiot. These are offensive to people who bear the label.

- Acceptable: Use a wheelchair or crutches; a wheelchair user; walks with crutches.
- Unacceptable: Confined/restricted to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound. Most people who use a wheelchair or mobility devices do not regard them as confining. They are viewed as liberating; a means of getting around.
- Acceptable: Able-bodied; able to walk, see, hear, etc.; people who are not disabled.
- Unacceptable: Healthy, when used to contrast with “disabled.” Healthy implies that the person with a disability is unhealthy. Many people with disabilities have excellent health.
- Acceptable: People who do not have a disability.
- Unacceptable: Normal. When used as the opposite of disabled, this implies that the person is abnormal. No one wants to be labeled as abnormal.
- Acceptable: A person who has (name of disability.) An example is a person who has multiple sclerosis.
- Unacceptable: Afflicted. A disability is not an affliction.

Source: City of Sacramento

Myths and Facts about People with Disabilities

Myths are roadblocks that interfere with the ability of persons with disabilities to have equality in employment. These roadblocks usually result from a lack of experience and interaction with persons with disabilities. This lack of familiarity has nourished negative attitudes concerning employment of persons with disabilities. Listed below are some common myths and the facts that tell the real story.

- MYTH:** *Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers compensation insurance rates.*
- FACT:** Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization’s accident experience, not on whether workers have disabilities.

MYTH: *Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.*

FACT: Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.

MYTH: *Persons with disabilities are inspirational, courageous, and brave for being able to overcome their disability.*

FACT: Persons with disabilities are simply carrying on normal activities of living when they drive to work, go grocery shopping, pay their bills, or compete in athletic events.

MYTH: *Persons with disabilities need to be protected from failing.*

FACT: Persons with disabilities have a right to participate in the full range of human experiences – including success and failure. Employers should have the same expectations of, and work requirements for, all employees.

MYTH: *Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards; thus making them a bad employment risk.*

FACT: In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found 90% rated average or better in job performance compared to 95% for employees without disabilities. A similar 1981 DuPont study which involved 2,745 employees with disabilities found that 92% of employees with disabilities rated average or better in job performance compared to 90% of employees without disabilities. The 1981 study results were comparable to DuPont's 1973 job performance study.

MYTH: *Persons with disabilities have problems getting to work.*

FACT: Persons with disabilities are capable of supplying their own transportation by choosing to walk, use a car pool, drive, take public transportation, or a cab. Their modes of transportation to work are as varied as those of other employees.

MYTH: *Persons who are deaf make ideal employees in noisy work environments.*

FACT: Loud noises of a certain vibratory nature can cause further harm to the auditory system. Persons who are deaf should be hired for all jobs that they have the skills and talents to perform. No persons with a disability should be prejudged regarding employment opportunities.

MYTH: *Considerable Expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities.*

FACT: Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the President's Committee's Job Accommodation Network have shown that 15% of accommodations cost nothing. 51% cost between \$1 and \$500, 12% cost between \$501 and \$1000, and 22% cost more than \$1000. Many times, vocational rehabilitation or other funding streams can be used for needed accommodations.

MYTH: *Employees with disabilities are more likely to have accidents on the job than employees without disabilities.*

FACT: In the 1990 DuPont study, the safety records for both groups were identical.

Source: The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

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