

# **Employees with Disabilities: Recruitment, Hiring and Training**

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**Burton Blatt Institute**  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

# Objectives

- Learn about the importance of accessibility in the recruitment, hiring and training of employees with disabilities
- Identify the people central to and the resources available for an effective recruitment strategy
- Understand the role of Vocational Services in the hiring and training of employees
- Identify best practices in the recruitment, hiring and training of employees with disabilities

# Does accessibility in recruitment, hiring and training of people with disabilities affect the bottom line?

- Diversity practices make good human resource practices
  - Cooperation
  - Respect
  - Clear lines of authority
  - Accommodations
  - Flexibility
- Better workplace environments can mean more motivated and productive workers
  - People feel valued
  - Fairness
  - Co-worker relationships
  - Loyalty

# Elements of Targeted Recruitment

- Most importantly, you want to ensure there are no barriers
- You are essentially crafting your job description
  - Listing all of the skills
  - Certifications
  - Components that an employee may bring to the workplace
  - Advertising it in a certain manner
  - Promoting certain aspects of your business

# Elements of Targeted Recruitment

- It is necessary to show that your organization is committed to inclusion and diversity
- Diversity Statement
  - Explicitly articulates all of the different groups
  - Shows the values of the company
- There needs to be a way for individuals to access the advertisement on the internet

# **Roles Management Personnel Have in Facilitating Effective Hiring and Training Opportunities**

- Need to actively engage in promoting diversity
- Have to be committed to creating an inclusive culture
  - Accessibility needs to become a priority
- Middle management needs to become invested in the process

# Peer Mentoring Groups

- Many companies have affinity groups, employee-resource groups, and business-resource groups
- Initially developed to create awareness within companies and created opportunities to be supportive of all employees
- These groups serve as a place where people can share information with each other, find someone they can talk to about their disability, and talk about situations they have encountered and how they have overcome them
- Peer mentoring groups can be used as a strategy to reach new markets
- Can be used as an effective recruitment tool

# Recommended Resources for Training Employees with Disabilities

- US Business Leadership Network; works closely with the Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN)
- National Employment Team
  - Assists businesses in getting direct access to a pool of qualified applicants
- Job Accommodation Network
  - Funded by the US Department of Labor, Office of Public Employment Policy
  - [www.askJan.org](http://www.askJan.org)
- Centers for Independent Living



# How Do Vocational Services Help Employers Hire and Train Employees with Disabilities?

- Purpose is to connect individuals with diverse disabilities to jobs
- Run business service programs
- Conduct partnerships with business associations
- Most effective work of the vocational rehabilitation agencies has been to make the case that there is really a business bottom line that could be achieved by hiring individuals with disabilities

# Hiring Incentives for Employers

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
  - Helps pay a portion of an employee's wage
  - Tax credit is up to 40% of the employee's first \$6,000 in wages, to a maximum of \$2,400
- Working Employee's Tax Credit (WETC)
  - The tax credit is up to 35% of the employee's first \$6,000 in wages during second year of employment up to a maximum of \$2,100
  - Employers are eligible for WETC independent of WOTC

# Challenges of Working with VR Agencies

- Time-limited nature of VR services
- Incentives for VR case closures
- High caseloads
- Expertise expectations
- Resource limitations

# What is the role of a diversity policy in the training, retention and advancement of employees with disabilities?

- Makes great bottom line sense
- Curb cuts were implemented through the advocacy of the disability community
- Reduces ambiguity
- Confirms inclusion as a standard company policy
- Justifies training costs
- Promotes 'Interactional Justice' as an employer value
  - Feeling that managers and colleagues behave fairly, reasonably and respectfully
- Peer support and affinity groups for employees with disabilities are adoptable structures for others who need other types of support

# Entrepreneurism

- Might be a viable option for individuals with disabilities because:
  - Choice
    - Many value a career as a small business owner over wage employment
  - Capability
    - Many have operated, or have worked and gained the skills needed to start a small business
  - Control
    - Many want a career where they are the person in control
  - Change
    - From the role of “client” or “consumer” to small business owner
- Has been introduced to veterans as well
  - Entrepreneurship Boot Camp at Syracuse University

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