

Disability Campaign.org

7 Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities

If you're an employer, you need employees to keep your company or organization in business. But are you looking at all labor markets? People with disabilities represent a talented, untapped labor market. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that although 7 out of 10 working-age people have a job, only 2 out of 10 people with disabilities and of working age are employed, leaving many qualified individuals with disabilities on the lookout for a job. As you seek to fill open positions, consider hiring qualified people with disabilities. When you hire a competent person with a disability, you'll bring benefits to your company's bottom line and benefits to your customers and community.

1. Most employers of people with disabilities report high work quality.

A study conducted by the Institute for Corporate Productivity revealed that 3 out of 4 employers surveyed ranked their employees with disabilities as good or very good on work quality, motivation, engagement, integration with co-workers, dependability, and attendance — and this isn't limited to small business. Carlos Slim, one of the richest men in the world whose companies hire people with disabilities, said in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, "I know they [employees with intellectual disabilities] are very dedicated workers and they are good for the morale of all of the company."



Image from thearcofmass.org

2. **You can increase your consumer market and revenue.** The disability community represents a trillion dollar market segment, with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reporting 1 in 5 adults living with a disability in the U.S. Just like other market segments, people with disabilities and their friends and family purchase products and services from companies that best meet their needs. By hiring people with disabilities, you are showing this market segment that you care about their needs, thus increasing your opportunity to widen your customer base and bring in extra revenue. In addition, hiring people with disabilities means you will be able to test proposed marketing tactics among people with disabilities.

3. **It can improve job morale and corporate culture.** By hiring people with disabilities, you are adding highly motivated people to the workforce and promoting an inclusive culture.



Image from thestar.com

Also, people enduring greater conflict can have a positive influence on those enduring lesser conflict and thus, employees with disabilities can be a motivation to their co-workers. This can help encourage employees to be more empathetic towards people undergoing hardships, including your customers.

4. **Your company's productivity can increase.** Employees with disabilities bring unique skills, experiences, and understanding that can enhance your products and services. Their knowledge of assistive technology and other innovations can help your company increase productivity. Remember, a job means a great deal for any individual, especially a person with a disability, as they face more barriers associated with job searching. This can translate into equal or higher job performance rates. Furthermore, people with disabilities make good team players as they are accustomed to working in collaboration with others, such as caregivers or physicians, to achieve a goal; they may do very well in positions that require partnerships and collaboration.

5. **It can help reduce employee turnover.**

Employees with disabilities are more likely to keep a longer tenure with a company, meaning your training and recruitment costs can be minimized. They also tend to seek stable and reliable work, and are thus less likely to resign and move on to another job.



Image from disability-smart.com

6. **It's easier than you think.** Perhaps you've thought hiring people with disabilities to be too complex or burdensome and have felt concern over issues such as the cost associated with accommodations. However, employees with disabilities are usually happy to work on creative solutions with you regarding reasonable accommodations or restructuring of job hours. What's more, the U.S. Department of Labor Job Accommodation Network reports that accommodations are usually low cost (less than \$500) and in half the cases, no cost was made to accommodate the employee's needs (e.g. dress code allowances, flexible scheduling, and telecommuting).

Furthermore, for every dollar invested in making an accommodation, it's estimated that companies earn an average return of \$28.69. Although at first it may seem these accommodations are only serving your employee, they can also benefit your workplace



Image from canberratimes.com.au

overall, reducing worker's compensation claims, and improving productivity and employee engagement. Your business may also be eligible for tax credits that help cover the cost of accommodations for employees with disabilities.

7. **You will be responding to government guidelines and initiatives.** Certain federal contractors are now required, as per Sec. 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, to hire 7 percent of people with disabilities. In addition, all employers must collect information about the disability status of employees and job applicants.



Some employers of people with disabilities can qualify for tax credits and others may obtain tax incentives to help make their place of business more accessible.

A robust workforce includes people of all abilities. By integrating people with disabilities into your pool of employees, you'll gain a competitive advantage, increase workplace diversity and productivity, improve your bottom line, have higher retention rates, and expand your market to new consumers. So what are you waiting for? Work towards ensuring that people with disabilities are included in your company's overall recruitment efforts. You can begin by making changes that establish internal policies that prioritize hiring people with disabilities; develop community linkages to conduct targeted outreach to attract qualified candidates with disabilities; start an internship program specifically for people with disabilities; and ensure accessible online job applications and materials. Recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting people with disabilities is possible — and it benefits businesses of all sizes, across all industries.

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