Building an Inclusive Workforce: Demystifying Employment for People with Disabilities

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Did you know?

• An estimated 20% of the U.S. population are people with disabilities?
• Less than one-third of working age adults with disabilities are employed?
• People with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and to live in poverty than any other single demographic group in the United States today?
Did you know?

• Public benefit programs for people with disabilities, especially Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are not aimed at increasing assets and independence?

• More than any other population on a fixed income, services and policies do not hold the expectation of economic self-sufficiency?

• People with disabilities are the world’s largest minority group, and the only minority group that we can become a part of at any time?
Employment for People with Disabilities: YESTERDAY

✓ “Job Readiness”
✓ Job seeking process as an act of charity (“Give ‘em a go”)
✓ Low expectations (“realistic”)
  ✓ “People with disabilities should be spared the soft bigotry of low expectations”, Dr. Roy Grizzard, First Assistant Secretary of ODEP
✓ Focus on jobs, not careers
Employment for People with Disabilities: TODAY

✓ Presumption of employment – all means all
✓ Services versus programs
✓ No more asking “Do you want to work?” but instead “Where do you want to work?”
✓ Opportunity - Job shadowing, internships, volunteering, community involvement
✓ Working is the norm – not the exception
The question is not WHETHER a person can work, but WHERE
Diversity in the Workplace…Includes Disability
Unconscious Bias

- **Inferiority**: “second-class citizen.”
- **Pity**: feel sorry for the employee; may be patronizing as a result
- **Hero Worship**: consider an individual with a disability living independently to be “special”
- **Ignorance**: dismissed as incapable because of his or her disability
- **Spread Effect**: assume that the person’s disability affects his or her other senses
- **Stereotypes**: positive and negative generalizations about disabilities
- **Backlash**: believe the person is being given an unfair advantage because of his or her disability
- **Denial**: believe that hidden disabilities are not legitimate and do not require accommodations.
- **Fear**: afraid they will offend an employee with a disability by doing or saying the wrong thing and, as a result, will avoid the person.
Difference versus Disability

John Nash
Dr. Temple Grandin
Sir Richard Branson
Dr. Stephen Hawking
Learning Styles
(Multiple Intelligences)

• Linguistic
• Logical-Mathematical
• Spatial
• Bodily-Kinesthetic
• Musical
• Interpersonal
• Intrapersonal
• Naturalistic
The Power of Language...

- Perceptions
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Actions
# Paradigm Shift

## System versus Person-Centered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>System</th>
<th>PC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the problem?</td>
<td>The disability</td>
<td>Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where is the problem?</td>
<td>In the person</td>
<td>Environments</td>
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<td>Solution?</td>
<td>Identify/Classify</td>
<td>Educate/Empower</td>
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<td>Who is in charge?</td>
<td>Professional</td>
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<td>Information focus?</td>
<td>Deficits/”Cannots”</td>
<td>Strengths/Passion</td>
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<td>Outcome?</td>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Interdependency</td>
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Magic happens when we find a way to connect different words and learn from each other…see how we have different abilities to teach each other. – Shelley Moore
The Business Case

**Employees with Disabilities**
- Equal or better reliability and retention rates
- Equal or better safety records, job performance ratings, job assignment flexibility
- Require equal amounts of supervision

**Employers**
- Reduced costs due to less turnover and retraining
- Improved morale and productivity
- Employees with disabilities help companies fine-tune their products to meet the needs of people with disabilities

**Customers**
- 87% prefer businesses that employ people with disabilities
- 92% will return to support such businesses
- People with disabilities are 1/5 of U.S. population
Companies Leading the Way...Large
And Small...
A business is like a bee hive – lots of different roles are needed to make it work
Lean Principles

• A process improvement approach that focuses on the customer and seeks to identify “WASTE” and inefficient processes
5 s (sort, set, shine, standardize, sustain)

Between the numbers 1 to 50, three numbers are missing.
Which numbers are they?
Cut the Clutter, Stop the Chaos!

What is the Best Way to get the job done?
Look for Issues/Challenges

- Customer / employee complaints
- Log jams / backlogs / long lead times / waiting
- Unassigned, but critical tasks
- Burn-out or high turnover
- Managers or key staff pulled away from core tasks
- Workflow fluctuations
  - Rush times, crunch times, seasonal fluctuations, sporadic - but important tasks that are not getting done
Ways to improve processes & workflow

• Are there ways to make product faster?
• Are there ways to make product cheaper?
• Are there ways to increase the number of customers served or improve customer service?
• Are the customers (and staff) happy?

$.80 to keep a customer, $3.00 to make a new one
Look for “Waste”

**Wasted Talent**
- Identify who are the “surgeons” (aka highly paid or income-generating staff) Are they doing surgery?
- What are the *set-up* and *button-up* tasks for essential work?

**Wasted Time**
- Orders not processed because too busy taking new ones
- Machines/supplies not maintained- work stops

**Wasted Resources**
- Inventory- supplies never used or too much of what is needed
- Overproduction- 50 kits - we ordered 1,000.. expired, obsolete.
- Is the employer using temporary workers? Paying overtime?
Meet Stephen

What people said
- Cornelia de Lange syndrome
- Stutters
- Emotionally immature
- Gastric Esophageal reflux disorder
- Resistant/belligerent
- Perseverates
- Late – calls in sick
- Limited academics, 3rd grade math, 1st grade reading

What we discovered
- Adventurous, likes maps, finding places using GPS
- Follows the rules
- Collects patches
- Hard worker when motivated
- Emails friends, looks things up on the internet
- Loves “disasters”, monitors a police scanner
Customized Employment

• Customized employment is a universal strategy designed to personalize the employment relationship between an employer and employee to meet the needs of both.

• CE creates an individualized match between the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job seeker or employee and the identified business needs of an employer.

http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/CustomizedEmployment.htm
Customized Employment: A Universal Human Resources Best Practice

“We saw first-hand how customization fosters a workplace that is happier and more engaged, and how organizations achieve marketplace advantage through improved employee performance and productivity. Why? Because when jobs are customized to individuals...people’s work tasks become better aligned with their actual strengths.”

Customized Employment: A Universal HR Best Practice

“The great organizations of today and tomorrow capitalize on difference and they provide supporting structures to enable individuals to bring out their best at work.”

“Improving how people perform through customized work experiences could even be considered the “last” competitive advantage, one that’s thus far untapped.”

Different Ways of Hiring

A picture is worth a thousand words...Actions speak louder than words

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAFSbzzO5gc
Customizing Employment Opportunities

• Identifies needs of business that match the skills and interests of a job seeker

• Removes job seeker from the comparative process by focusing on tasks that could benefit the business

• Employer only has to decide if this individual can meet one or more unmet need.
Customizing Employment

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMzf8cPFTbs
Foster Inclusion and Respect
Focus on Ability and Value
Develop Community & Social Capital
Open Doors to Change

Walgreens
Customized Employment Works!
It Starts with One Person…

Your actions and attitudes are key to a successful work environment. From recruitment to retention, from policy to practice, it all starts with you.

The key to employing individuals with disabilities is creating an inclusive work environment that welcomes and values everyone’s contributions.
Resources

• Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
  https://askjan.org/toolkit/The-JAN-Workplace-Accommodation-Toolkit.cfm

• Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
  https://www.dol.gov/odep/media/newsroom/universal.htm

• Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities
Thank you!

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