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Why and How to Recruit Employees with Disabilities

By: Ed Carter

Are you inadvertently limiting your pool of talented job applicants? If you haven't taken steps to attract employees with disabilities, you may be missing out on team members who are an excellent fit for your business. In addition to broadening your talent pool, you could also [improve the culture of diversity](#) within your business place and generate a positive reputation in your community. Your business community should reflect the neighborhoods around you, and [Disability Rights WV explains](#) how.

Get an EIN

An employer identification number (EIN) is essential for any business or organization that hires employees. Not only is an [EIN required by the Internal Revenue Service](#), it also can help protect your business from identity theft, provide you with a cash flow tracking system, and serve as an

important tool in establishing credit. By obtaining an employer ID number, you ensure accurate filing of tax documents and information related to wages and taxes paid to your employees so that they receive the proper wage credits each year.

Develop an Accommodating Workplace

The first step is creating a workplace with the accommodations, tools, and resources necessary for a [welcoming culture of inclusion](#). Some obvious changes may include ramps and handrails along stairways and Braille lettering on signs; these are steps your business may already have taken to comply with state and federal guidelines. For additional relevant information, work with advocacy groups and get feedback from employees.

Foster Communication and Positive Change

While you're focusing on creating an inclusive workplace for those with disabilities, consider implementing the following tips from experts regarding fostering communication and creating a welcoming workplace for all of your employees:

- Build rapport with employees
- Increase your emotional intelligence
- Be an example of positivity and acceptance
- Cultivate trust in the workplace
- Be open to feedback

Update Your Website and Technology

Another step in creating an inclusive workplace means upgrading your website. Watch out for problem areas, such as color-reliant applications, keyboard-bound navigation, and videos without captions. [People interact with technology](#) in many ways, so your accommodations must be researched and deliberate. Any of your technology should work with assistive devices.

Provide Employee Training and Development

Prepare your employees to accept those with disabilities. Reach out to [advocacy and workforce development organizations](#) for training, including:

- State Vocational Rehabilitation
- Center for Independent Living
- State Apprenticeship Agencies
- Ticket to Work

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion is an [excellent resource for putting together](#) internship and employment programs.

Bring Bias Awareness to Employees

It's also important to [provide unconscious bias training](#). According to a 2017 study, more than 66 percent of workers with disabilities were impacted by negative bias. Common myths and misconceptions are a factor:

- Accommodations are too expensive.
- Inclusion initiatives don't benefit the whole company.
- Employees with disabilities require too much training.
- Individuals with disabilities won't meet performance standards.

These incorrect assumptions and others put all of your employees and your business at a disadvantage. Ongoing training, development, and career advancement opportunities benefit your entire company.

You can even implement incentive programs to get your employees to participate in cultural awareness programs and skills-based training sessions. A small gift card can do a lot to motivate people to learn more about DEI and other important work-related topics. And there are programs that automate the process for you so that [using this solution to distribute virtual cards](#) is incredibly easy. Just set a metric (like attending 2 hours worth of training) and a reward (i.e. a \$10 gift card to one of these businesses). You may be surprised by the results!

Update Recruitment Documents

Your job listing and paperwork must reflect your inclusive culture. [Recruitment strategies and documents](#) can provide a written explanation of how your business is set up for employees with disabilities and the benefits to potential employees. They should also contain a statement of intent regarding your inclusive culture.

Post Inclusive Job Listings

Make sure your open positions are advertised at job service and workforce employment centers, as well as college and other school career centers. [Offer internship opportunities to workers](#) with disabilities and ask employees to refer others within their circles. When applicants respond to job listings, use the blind resume and interview method to reduce bias as candidates are screened.

Implement Inclusive Practices for Success

A diverse and inclusive workforce provides many benefits to businesses. Healthy work environments full of employees with a wide variety of experience and skills perform better. So, if you're ready to embrace the benefits of truly inclusive hiring practices, implement these steps and see how your company grows!

If you want to better understand the rights of your employees with disabilities, or if you are a person with a disability who believes their rights have been violated, [contact Disability Rights of West Virginia \(DRWV\)](#) today!