

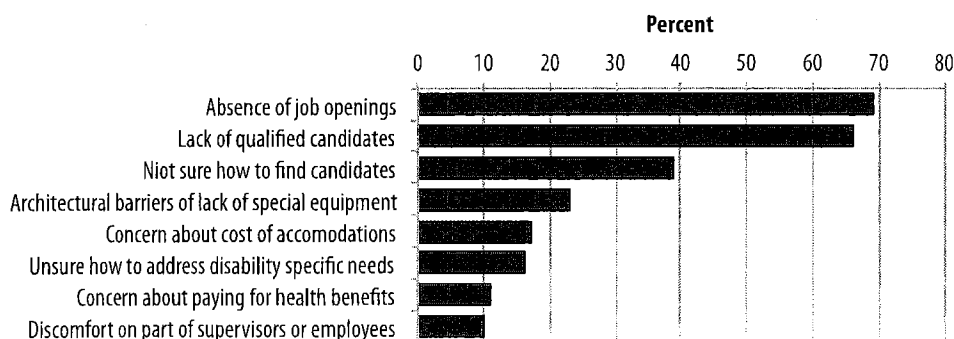
Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Employees with Disabilities: Making the Business Case

The Changing Demographic and Workplace Landscape

- The “graying office” trend continues, and the U.S population is increasing in average age.
 - » From 2010 to 2030, the number of Americans ages 65 and older will increase to 31.7 million (Purcell, 2009).
 - » Employers will soon need to **hire new workers** as experienced and skilled workers with institutional knowledge retire from the workforce (Lee & Mather, 2008).
 - » To address future hiring needs, businesses must **diversify their recruiting sources**.
 - » **Hiring individuals with disabilities** broadens a business’s talent pool.
- Total employment is projected to grow by 14.3% over the next decade, with 20.5 million new jobs.
 - » Occupations with the fastest job growth expected between 2010 and 2020 are health care, personal care and social assistance, and construction (Bureau of Labor Statistics).
 - » **17 of the 30 occupations** projected to have the **fastest growth** require some type of **postsecondary education at entry**.
 - » Those projected to have the **largest number of new jobs** typically require **high school or less**, no related work experience, and short- or moderate-term on-the-job training.
- **Diversified and inclusive workplaces** have been shown to have **higher levels of productivity** and higher levels of satisfaction among employees (Office of Disability Employment Policy).

Recruiting and Hiring New Employees

- After a shortage of job openings, the main reason employers haven’t hired more people with disabilities in the past three years is a perceived lack of qualified candidates



- Why do businesses hire people with disabilities?
 - » **Hiring qualified candidates, regardless of disability status, meets a business need.**
 - » **Many businesses recognize that diversity in the workforce includes disability status.**
 - » **Some employers feel it is the “right thing to do” and responds to their community.**
 - » **Employing people with disabilities increases the opportunity to gain a lasting customer base. Customers with disabilities and their families and friends are a trillion dollar market segment.**
- Employees with disabilities have **nearly identical job performance ratings** to employees without. The amount of supervision required is similar for both groups (DePaul, 2007).
 - » The **best strategies** for hiring people with disabilities are **typical hiring processes** modified only if necessary. Do not assume that every person with a disability needs a “program.”

- » **Employers report difficulty recruiting** qualified candidates with disabilities, yet **most employers do not use employment service providers** to identify candidates.
- Some employers express concern about the cost of accommodating an employee.
 - » **However, according to the Job Accommodation Network, “Data collected suggest that more than half of all accommodations cost nothing.”**
- Employers want more accurate information about accommodations and workplace strategies.
 - » **Most employers have hired a person with a disability in the last three years.** Surveys of employers report that **managers and executives estimate the percentage of employees with disabilities at 2%**, but most do not know for certain.
 - » People with disabilities are a diverse group. Many disabilities are non-apparent, and many people with disabilities require no special health care services.
 - » It is highly **likely that executives and managers are underestimating the prevalence** of disability within their workforce.

Retaining Workers

- 90% of Fortune 500 companies are establishing internal subgroups, such as Employee Resource Groups, to address the unique needs and issues of a diverse workforce.
 - » **Diversity and inclusion policies and training should include people with disabilities.**
- Creating an accessible workplace benefits not only employees with disabilities but also other employees who acquire a disability or workplace injury.
 - » **RAND reported that employer-driven return-to-work programs are cost effective and reduce absences for both temporary and permanent work-related disabilities.**

Future Directions and Opportunities

- The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation’s **National Employment Team (the NET) is a national “one company” approach to address the business needs for qualified candidates.**
- **Public sector employment of people with disabilities** is receiving increasing attention, with major initiatives to improve accessibility, accommodations, and retention.
- **Real-time labor market information strategies** to match job seekers with disabilities to current employer needs need to be adopted more broadly.
- **Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn** are beginning to play a significant role in the recruitment, management, and development of the workforce (Liska, 2012). Employers use social networks as a fast, cost-effective, and efficient way to find and recruit job candidates (Kluemper, Rosen, & Mossholder, 2012).
 - » This opens up many opportunities for employers to recruit and hire a diverse workforce of qualified candidates, including persons with disabilities.

The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) promotes the full inclusion of people with disabilities in every aspect of society. We do this through training, research, consultation, and clinical and employment services. Our projects increase disability inclusion throughout New England, across the United States, and internationally.

The ICI is a program of the University of Massachusetts Boston and Boston Children’s Hospital. We are part of the national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

www.communityinclusion.org • www.facebook.com/communityinclusion • www.twitter.com/ICInclusion

William Kiernan
617.287.4311 (voice)
william.kiernan@umb.edu

