

EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE



Around one in five Australians has some form of disability according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2012.

A disability may be generally defined as a condition which may restrict a person's mental, sensory, or mobility functions to undertake or perform a task in the same way as a person who does not have a disability. It does not mean that a person with disability is unable to perform all the important requirements of a job.

In a competitive labour market, it is prudent to maximise your pool of potential employees. This includes people with disability who can bring a range of skills to the workplace. Engaging a worker with disability can provide your workplace with a motivated employee who has a committed work ethic, is productive and provides good quality work.

Employing someone with disability makes good business sense. Studies show that people with disability are:

- likely to take fewer days off, take less sick leave and remain in a job longer than other workers;
- likely to perform as well as other employees; and
- no more likely to be injured in the workplace than other employees.

Employing people with disability also builds strong and lasting relationships among your staff, customers and the community by promoting workplace diversity in your business.

Creating an inclusive and accessible workplace

An inclusive workplace is one in which the work environment is physically, technologically and attitudinally accessible. Creating an accessible work environment will promote higher productivity among your staff, including people with disability, by reducing barriers that can prevent people from working to their potential.

To create an inclusive and accessible workplace, focus on these four key steps:

1. commit;
2. educate;
3. prepare; and
4. support.

One of your first steps in creating this environment should be to lead by example and actively promote and commit to an inclusive and accessible workplace.

Your next step should be to educate and train everyone in your business on how to work with people with disability. Promote positive attitudes amongst your staff toward people with disability and ensure everyone in the workplace is treated equitably and fairly. This will enhance communication, teamwork and morale in your business.

Prepare your workplace environment and ensure that it is accessible. Think ahead about any modifications to the physical environment, rosters, work practices and processes. For example, can your workplace accommodate wheel chairs or can the phone system enable aids to hearing?

Remember to support new employees in your workplace including those with disability by providing relevant training or mentoring.

Expanding your workforce

When recruiting, it's important to focus on employing from the largest and most competitive pool, based on qualifications, skills, knowledge and abilities to fulfil a role. To do this make sure you are including people with disability in that pool. The disability a person has may be quite irrelevant to the kind of work he or she is required to do. People with disability can be employed in a range of industries and roles.

You can expand the pool you recruit from by advertising in a wider variety of places including through community organisations and newsletters rather than just online. Ensure your job advertisements make it clear that people with disability are encouraged to apply for positions.

Financial support

There is financial support available for businesses that employ a person with disability.

This includes:

- financial assistance for workplace modifications and a range of Commonwealth Government wage subsidies.

For more information visit jobaccess.gov.au.

- the Western Australian Payroll Tax Exemption Scheme.

For more information visit finance.wa.gov.au.

- support when employing apprentices with disability.

For more information visit:

australianapprenticeships.gov.au.

For further information and advice on employing a person with disability please visit disability.wa.gov.au.



For information, resources and practical tools to help you plan, attract, develop and retain a skilled workforce, visit workplace-essentials.dtwd.wa.gov.au.



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