Recruiting and Retaining Persons with Disabilities In British Columbia

What Every Employer Needs to Know

Leadership, partnership and action is the key to success . . .

you’re missing out on Untapped Resources

Persons with disabilities are a major source of human capital that is largely being overlooked in British Columbia. In fact, British Columbia employers who do not recruit persons with disabilities are eliminating almost 300,000 people from the provincial talent pool.

This oversight is often due to a misunderstanding about the capabilities and potential of persons with disabilities. Despite employers’ concerns, however, research shows that persons with disabilities are work-competent, reliable, and hard-working individuals. According to recent studies:

90% of persons with disabilities rated average or better on job performance than their non-disabled colleagues.

86% of persons with disabilities rated average or better on attendance.

98% of persons with disabilities rated average or better in work safety than their non-disabled colleagues.

90% of employers had no change in their insurance costs when they employed persons with disabilities.

Seven Key Components

A practical ‘how-to’ employer handbook is available that covers the above seven integral components to recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities. Read on to find out more about these components.

1. Getting Started

Assessing your work environment and building foundations are key to taking the first step in recruiting persons with disabilities.

2. Job Design

Writing inclusive job requirements that meet everyone’s needs will ensure that you are able to recruit the most talented employees possible.
3. Recruitment

Diversifying your recruitment tactics will help you to reach out to persons with disabilities.

4. Orientation

Being proactive in your workplace preparation will ensure that persons with disabilities have positive first experiences.

5. Employee Development

Implementing career development plans is essential to any employee’s success. Career planning and team building are important components of development.

6. Retention

Ensuring ongoing employee contribution to your workplace is founded in employer support.

7. Return to Work

Developing a Disability Management Program can help you to support your employees and protect your investment in them.

we did our Homework

The Minister’s Council research project provides unparalleled empirical evidence of the challenges employers face when recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities – as well as potential solutions.

This research depended greatly on corporate input and feedback from British Columbia employers including:

- a review of over 100 pieces of Canadian and international literature, reports, studies and data sources;
- a survey of over 500 British Columbia employers in all major sectors and regions;
- seven employer case studies;
- 15 key informant interviews of knowledgeable employers, academics, government and other stakeholders; and,
- focus groups involving 47 key stakeholders in each provincial region to present and validate the primary and secondary research findings.

a call to Action

British Columbia employers will need to fill more than one million new job openings by 2015. This is happening while employers also face increasing global competition to find and keep highly skilled, creative and motivated employees.
The challenge to find and keep employees is expected to deepen as our population ages and birthrates and immigration decline or plateau.

The resulting employee turnover costs companies valuable time and money. Research shows that the cost of replacing employees is 70%–200% of their salaries.

Despite concerns over retention, only 44% of the 290,880 employable persons with disabilities were actually employed in British Columbia in 2001.

“It is important to reflect the diversity of our community and it makes good business sense to capitalize on this. Diversity is a business imperative as it creates a positive workplace environment and expands our talent pool to access a particularly knowledgeable and skilled employee group who have a true desire to make a difference for our company and our customers.”

Linda Sinclair, Vice President
Service Delivery Western Canada, RBC Royal Bank

**the top Ten reasons to Hire persons with disabilities**

1. British Columbia employers are facing increasing challenges to find and keep skilled workers in a globally competitive market.

2. British Columbians with disabilities provide a talent pool of 300,000 working age persons.

3. Persons with disabilities represent $25 billion in spending power in Canada.

4. British Columbians with disabilities have virtually the same educational achievements as those without disabilities.

5. The job performance of persons with disabilities has proven to meet or exceed that of employees without disabilities.

6. The cost of many workplace accommodations is minimal.

7. Disability management and return-to-work programs are proactive, cost effective measures.

8. The reluctance to hire persons with disabilities is often based on myths, attitudes and a lack of information.

9. A diverse network of agencies and service providers are ready, willing and able to assist you in hiring and retaining persons with disabilities.

10. When you hire persons with disabilities, you build an inclusive, effective and productive work environment.
your business will Benefit

The benefits of hiring persons with disabilities are numerous. By tapping into this employment resource, employers can expect to find the following:

- knowledgeable and skilled employees. British Columbians with disabilities have virtually the same educational achievements as those without disabilities, including 34,000 with college diplomas, 30,000 with trade certificates, and 28,000 with university degrees;

- increased staff morale. Fostering a workplace where diversity and inclusiveness is encouraged creates a positive environment for all employees;

- increased visibility as a socially aware and active corporate citizen; and,

- an enhanced relationship with private and non-profit organizations in British Columbia that offer employer supports.

A Growing Consumer Market

The spending power of persons with disabilities is approximately $25 billion. By reflecting the characteristics of their consumers, companies will reap the benefits in productivity and sales.

take the Next Step

“In my experience, it is essential that employers recognize that everyone has limitations – most just need a chance to show what they can really do. When you focus on abilities and potential, you create an environment where that is likely to happen and everyone benefits.”

Bonnie Campbell, Vice President
Human Resources and Public Relations, Thrifty Foods

“Hiring persons with disabilities is a case where everyone wins. Employers can help to positively impact the lives of thousands of British Columbians who are looking for the opportunity to contribute, while persons with disabilities offer employers an expanded talent pool that they greatly need.”

Kevin Evans, Vice President
Western Canada – Retail Counsel of Canada

“Ultimately, the success of any company depends on the ability of its employers to recognize and recruit skilled people who will contribute to the long-term business goals that have been set out. Recognizing that persons with disabilities are a source of skill and creativity, will thus help a business to get the upper hand in a competitive market.”

Clint Mahlman, Vice President
Human Resources, London Drugs Limited
we have the Tools you need to succeed

Change requires leadership. To create an inclusive work environment where persons with disabilities are welcomed, supported and appreciated, employers need to become more familiar with potential challenges and solutions to recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities.

The Minister’s Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities has created valuable tools to support employers desiring to recruit and retain persons with disabilities.

a Website, www.workablesolutionsbc.ca
offers employers an exclusive site to post employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Employers can also use the website to access resources and important information which lists community agencies that work with employers and persons with disabilities.

the Employer Handbook
outlines how to turn potential recruitment and retention challenges into workable solutions, and is supplemented by an easy to use Quick Reference Guide. The Employer Handbook is available on the WorkAble Solutions website.

a Corporate Video
serves as a ‘call to action’ to employers to recruit and retain persons with disabilities, and features resources available to assist employers in making this commitment. The Corporate Video is available on the WorkAble Solutions website.

building lasting Partnerships with employers

Minister’s Council Mandate:

The Minister’s Council establishes key partnerships to increase the employment, employability and independence of persons with disabilities.

For more information: Visit the WorkAble Solutions website at: www.workablesolutionsbc.ca