



Photographed: Paul Sawka,
employee of the Canadian Down
Syndrome Society since 2012.

See the Possibilities

Inclusive Employment Awareness Package

Part of the National Inclusive Employment Initiative

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS), through the National Inclusive Employment Initiative, seeks to work with Canadian companies to hire highly marginalized workers – adults with developmental disabilities.

The project is focused on education, relationship-building between local service providers and employers, education, human resource policy change within companies, and disseminating “how-to” resources for employers and self-advocates (adults with developmental disabilities) seeking employment.

CDSS would like to collaborate with companies, at no cost, and demonstrate the strong economic rationale and return for hiring marginalized workers, based on empirical data and real case examples of successes.



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The National Inclusive Employment Initiative

The National Inclusive Employment Initiative aims to:

1. Develop relationships with local service providers to support employment of persons with developmental disabilities, liaising between local service providers and the companies.
2. Provide one-on-one consultation process with companies, HR teams' to expand policies for inclusive and supported employment through various avenues such as selection process, positional needs analysis, existing role functions with redesign for greater productivity in the workplace. This does result in the successful, long-term hiring of workers with developmental disabilities.
3. Broaden employer education about developmental disabilities and inclusive employment.
4. Facilitate direct employer education through small in-person workshops. The workshops would be co-facilitated by an employed self-advocate and offer links to skilled service providers specializing in this demographic.
5. Publish "how-to" resources to self-advocates who are seeking employment across the country and offer lessons learned for Canadian employers seeking to hire workers with developmental disabilities.



*Photographed:
Ruth Joseph, employee of
Boston Pizza since 2006.*

The goal of the National Inclusive Employment Initiative is to expand opportunities for people with disabilities to contribute to society through meaningful employment.

Disability in the Workforce

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) defines disability as: "... an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."



*Photographed:
Matthew MacNeil, employee
of Sobeys since 2013.*

Put simply, disability can be defined as the relationship between a person's impairment and their environment.

Some job-seeker groups experience difficulty in securing employment due to perceived gaps in their employable skills, qualifications, or experience. Others are effectively 'screened out' during recruitment processes on the basis of their gender, race, ethnicity, language, age, or disability. Labour market participation for these groups is affected by the human resource practices of

employers, as well as the nature of support they may receive to address perceived 'employability' gaps.

In contrast, 'inclusive employment' can be defined as all efforts that promote fair and equitable access to decent employment, ensuring satisfactory pay and conditions, career prospects, and opportunities for social integration (John van Kooy, 2015).

In this package, CDSS aim to demonstrate the advantages and increase your tools for influencing more inclusive employment practices.

Where to Begin

In practice, there are significant business benefits to reevaluating your hiring process and hiring people with developmental disabilities. Consider some of the direct and indirect costs associated with filling vacant positions and managing staff.



Video: [Business & Disability: Walgreens - A Warehouse of Wonders](#) posted by the [International Labour Organization](#)

Direct Costs

Know the reasons and costs of filling a position: training and induction, reasons for why it occurs, which positions are more prone to turnover and why, and how often you find yourself refilling the position. The average dollar value of an employee's turnover can be approximately \$5,436 for an entry level position (CLC Recruiting: rIQ Benchmarking Centre, 2012).

One way to reduce the above costs is by considering hiring a person with a disability. For instance, a person with a disability often will demonstrate both a commitment and dedication to work for a suitable role. They often have a need to succeed at work and participate in their community as a fully-fledged coworker.

People with disabilities are just like the people in your existing workforce, but they bring with them a strong motivation to achieve at what they do.

Indirect Costs

Absenteeism due to job dissatisfaction is a major hidden cost. It shows up in your company's cost of production, service, and/or operation. On the other hand, people with Down syndrome often like showing up, doing their job and engaging with coworkers. They understand that the working week is the working week.



Article: [Hotel Centered Around Workers With Special Needs Set To Open by Disabilities Scoop](#)

Searching for New Employees

The search for new employees can be difficult. From receiving resumes, to the interview process, to the moment you hire someone, employers add filters based on what they think they need to find a suitable staff person.

These filters can be specific - past experience, education, references. But these filters can also be societal and almost invisible - often subconsciously, candidates with special needs, developmental disabilities, and/or visible differences are eliminated from the hiring process. This is all in an effort to find the best person for the job - or so the theory goes.

Now the assumption is not that business is doing something wrong. Good corporate governance means it should abide by all statutory regulations in their employment practices involving equal opportunity. Often, it does. The area that does require reflection, is whether your process contains hidden filtering even from the application stage. You most likely have good procedures and practices in place with good staff managing it, but there are ways to improve it once you know what hidden filters look like and just how they work.

How to Begin

Seeing the ability in a workforce that includes people with Down syndrome or other disabilities can bring positive opportunities to your workforce. Inclusive employment brings a new perspective to the value you invest in staff, what they bring to the job, and how they engage with each other and your customer base. Below are two examples from employers.



Article: [Employees with disabilities can have a positive impact on profitability by Mark Wafer](#)

Mark Wafer: Tim Hortons:

“In fact, including workers with disabilities in real jobs with equal pay tends to have a direct and positive impact on a business’s profitability. Workers with disabilities are more productive, work more safely, stay longer, require less supervision, are more innovative and have less absenteeism.” (The Globe and Mail, 2016).

Tony Roma’s Restaurant Chain

David Murphy, Managing Partner of Tony Roma’s

Red Deer, believes that employers are missing out on hiring talented local people. David has hired more than 40 people with developmental disabilities over the years including eight of his current restaurant staff.

With these two examples, the employers have identified specific employment outcomes of the positions they are wishing to fill, which are not based on emotional obligations but instead,



Video: [Employer recommends hiring people with disabilities](#)

economic reasons. The hospitality sector has always experienced high staff turnover and with that comes additional recruitment costs and training. Though it sounds like a silver bullet fix, it's more a sound business choice. There is vast amount of empirical data supporting the noticeable downward trend of staff turnover from this segment of the employable population.



Video: [Teen with Down syndrome makes big impact at part-time job by FOX 4 News - Dallas-Fort Worth](#)

As drawn from the Government of Canada studies, with particular reference to [Rethinking Disability in the Private Sector](#) (2013), many positives are brought up, including how work opportunities can be viewed and how very few restrictions really, of which most importantly is industry. It also demonstrates the value of the approach of going back to basics at looking at job functions and seeing how roles can become more accessible.

Companies see savings to be made through positional review and shedding either redundant activities, or non-core functions from highly skilled roles. An example of this is the equipment hire sector, where service technicians are cleaning and restocking equipment as part of their duties, detracting from their core functions of servicing.

Simply put they are washing expensive labour hours down the drain, for a function which can be combined with other activities in a role which is not only cheaper in wages, but builds a better productivity output from all.

It is also demonstrated in other sectors, where presentation and public profile of the product is paramount to the sale of the item. Customer service by a staff member who is enthusiastic can positively impact the bottom line.

Tools to Begin With

There are many options which clear the way to begin, of which many are already held at your disposal in the form of your human resources management team and employment service providers who specialize in employment for people with disabilities. These providers will be able to present suitable applicants for a range of roles and ensure that pre-employment qualifications or certificates are in place. They will also be able to advise on various funding or support available to assist your new staff person with transition to work and work plans, and be able provide ongoing support where needed.

[The Canadian Down Syndrome Society would also like to extend our hand to your organization to assist in the building of these types of networks through workshops and face-to-face meetings.](#)

We are not charging for this service or expecting a donation. We are simply seeking to open up dialogue and help you explore this avenue of staffing resource.

There is also an extensive collection of toolkits for inclusive employment which don't actually change your current policies, but help to support the spirit and nature of those policies. A great example is [The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association's Taking Action - Hiring and retaining employees with disabilities](#), which approaches the filter barriers of current employment process with completed examples that are great to apply in your current practices.

These toolkits are created due to identified limitations with a lot of current processes. These processes can have an unintentional pre-selection outcome which excludes many groups from actively engaging or applying for work.

Online Toolkits

- [Taking Action: An HR Guide - Hiring and retaining employees with disabilities by Canadian Manufacturers and Export](#)
- [Employers' Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People With Disabilities, 2nd Edition by Conference Board of Canada](#)
- [Toolkit for Hiring Managers/HR Professionals by the Public Service Commission of Nova Scotia](#)
- [Hiring Practices: Accommodation start with you by Inclusion NL](#)
- [Create an Inclusive Workplace by PEIHRToolkit](#)
- [Guide to Hiring Persons with Disabilities for Saskatchewan Employers by North East Community Partners for Inclusion](#)
- [HR Policies & Employment Legislation by the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector \(HR Council\)](#)
- [Why Hire Employees With Disabilities? by Ability First](#)

Further Examples

The series of links below, demonstrate that through the consideration of broadening the approach of diverse employment practices, there are many success stories. A continuing theme throughout is that success is not defined by the industry sector or job, but simply by a desire and ability of seeing the potential in a person with a disability. What makes it easy for a business can be accounted for on the profit and loss statement of each month and also realized in a change in culture which is reflected by how it performs and with whom.

- [People with Developmental Disabilities WORK by Dan Cleberg \(video\)](#)
- [Melbourne Cup dream comes true for strapper 'Stevie' Payne from ABC News Service \(article\)](#)



Video: [Madeline Stuart NYFW by NowThis Media](#) posted by [Madeline Stuart](#)

- [Family First: Raising a special-needs child has brought challenges and joy to Darryl Sutter from LA Kings](#) (article)
- [The Employer View on the Business Value of Hiring People with Developmental Disabilities](#) by WiSeMovies (video)
- [Restaurant Owner Tim Harris: “I Have Down Syndrome. I Am Awesome.”](#) by SmileTV (video)
- [Madeline Stuart NYFW](#) by NowThis Media posted by [Madeline Stuart](#) (video)
- [Why I hired a workforce no one else would | Randy Lewis](#) | TEDxNaperville by TEDx Talks (video)
- [The Interviewer](#) by Bus Stop Films (video)
- [Intern David on the News Hour](#) by Global News
- [Feeling comfortable with co-workers with disabilities](#) by Jeffrey Smith
- [Empowering Employees with Disabilities](#) by VOA News



Video: [Intern David on the News Hour](#) by [Global News](#)

Employment Service Providers

Alberta

- Calgary Alternative Support Service: www.c-a-s-s.org
- Calgary Employment First Network: www.calgaryemploymentfirst.ca
- Inclusion Alberta: www.inclusionalberta.org

British Columbia

- South Fraser Community Futures: www.southfraser.com
- Community Living BC: www.communitylivingbc.ca

New Brunswick

- Community Employment Agency - A Division of Moncton Employment and Training Service Inc: www.cea-aec.ca
- New Brunswick ACL: nbacl.nb.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Avalon Employment Inc.: www.avalonemploy.com

Nova Scotia

- East Novability: www.eastnovability.ca

Saskatchewan

- Saskatchewan Abilities Council: www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca
- Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC): www.sarcsarcan.ca

Frequently Asked Questions

There are common questions and concerns when hiring a person with a disability. These questions may be difficult to read and understand; however they are statements that need to be overcome.



Policy Statement:
[Walgreens Believes in Diversity](#)

I already have all the employees I need.

That's fine, but when you are seeking a new employee, we encourage you to explore inclusive employment as part of your business structure.

We're not set up for this type of employee.

This may not necessarily be true. People with disabilities often do not need any additional special equipment or set-up but if they do, there are service providers who can help (found on the previous page).

Is there funding available?

There are many inclusive employment funding and support opportunities through both federal and provincial programs. These options can be explored to help your employee transition into the workplace. Refer to your local employment service provider (found on the previous page).

Can they do the work?

Of course! Treat people with disabilities much like how you would your other employees. Provide them with a defined role and training.

Who will train and supervise them?

Typically, the same person who trains and supervises your other employees. But in some cases, they may bring a support worker to provide them transitional assistance.

Who will look after them?

People with disabilities do not need to be 'looked after', and can be supervised by whoever is typically in charge of your other employees.

Why should I do this?

Ultimately, it makes good business sense.

What's in it for me?

A member of staff who is willing, dedicated, and enthusiastic about work. Studies have also shown that people with disabilities can contribute to a positive increase in business revenue.

What if they hurt themselves ?

Treat the situation as you would if any other employee would hurt themselves.

What if they mess up? Who will fix it?

Treat the situation as you would if any other employee makes a mistake.



Video: [Business owner makes money by hiring disabled workers by The National](#)

How will the other employees cope?

There are many examples of how inclusion of employees with disabilities have actually improved productivity and workplace morale.



Video: [Hiring Persons with Disabilities by TD Canada Trust](#)

What will the customers say?

Possibly nothing. In fact some customers are more apt to support a business which is truly inclusive.

There are many studies and more importantly, real case examples that prove that customers will respond to inclusion positively. Customers will respect and support organizations that demonstrate broad and diverse employees who represent the communities we all live in.

Hiring someone with a disability means costly modifications to accommodate their needs.

Not necessarily. Typically, a person with a disability will need no more than any other modification needed for existing staff to aid in their productivity and wellbeing.



Video: [The Spirit Behind Creative Spirit by Droga5 Sydney](#)

Thank You

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society would like to thank you for both your time and attention in viewing this package, and consider the possibilities which it may bring forth. We also wish to have the opportunity to connect and work with your Human Resource team in building in roads to greater employment diversity in the workforce through sound economic objectives.

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