



The Conference Board of Canada  
Insights You Can Count On

# Tapping the Talents of People with Disabilities



a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

## A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS



By Ruth Wright

In partnership with  
The Ministry of Citizenship—Government of Ontario



The Conference Board of Canada  
**Insights You Can Count On**

### About The Conference Board of Canada

The Conference Board of Canada is an independent, not-for-profit research organization with affiliates in the United States and Europe. Our mission is to help our members anticipate and respond to the increasingly changing global economy. We do this through the development and exchange of knowledge about organizational strategies and practices, emerging economic and social trends and key public policy issues. Since 1954, the Board has been committed to researching innovative practices, designing new strategies and providing our members with the most up-to-date information, analysis and expertise to help them excel in Canada and around the world.

### About the Centre for Management Effectiveness

The Centre for Management Effectiveness provides decision makers in the private and public sectors with knowledge and insight on key issues and trends in the areas of human resources, strategy, quality and organizational effectiveness through research on best practices, customized information services and executive networking opportunities.

### The Ministry of Citizenship

The Ministry of Citizenship is responsible for overseeing a number of areas. Part of its mandate is to enforce human rights legislation, promote equal opportunity, co-ordinate provincial policy on immigration, provide supports for immigrant settlement and implement provincial strategies to improve access for persons with disabilities.

The Ministry is also responsible for encouraging volunteerism across the province and overseeing various honours and awards programs, including the prestigious Order of Ontario.

The Ministry also provides public education and supports to help prevent violence against women and allow seniors the ability to lead independent and meaningful lives.

---

**Editing** Laurie Bowes • **Design** Holly W. Michael



©2001 The Conference Board of Canada\*

Tapping the Talents of People With Disabilities: Guide for Employers  
Printed in Canada • All rights reserved • ISBN 0-88763-500-8

\*Incorporated as AERIC Inc.

# LETTER OF GREETING

The Conference Board of Canada and the Government of Ontario are pleased to jointly launch *Tapping the Talents of People with Disabilities: A Guide for Employers*.

To ensure Canadians continue to enjoy the quality of life we are recognized for internationally, we must enhance our competitive edge in the global marketplace on many fronts. Executives have told us, for example, that their ability to attract and retain people with the skills they require has a dramatic impact on their productivity. This new guide encourages employers to access a vast but underutilized Canadian talent pool: people with disabilities.

*Tapping the Talents of People with Disabilities* was developed to assist employers in hiring people with disabilities and integrating them into their workplaces. It contains practical advice on everything from pre-employment considerations through recruitment and selection, appropriate modifications to accommodations, and workforce education.

Expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities offers other benefits as well. As full participants and contributors in the marketplace, they can live independently and in financial security.

Implementing sustainable change in this area will directly benefit communities and businesses and ultimately enhance the prosperity of all Canadians. Without the people with the skills to get the work done, Canadian businesses cannot achieve their potential. As the population ages and labour force growth slows, shortages in specific industries and occupations are likely to become more generalized, affecting the quality of life of all Canadians. It is clear, therefore, that our continuing prosperity depends on our ability to value, build, access and utilize the strengths of all our citizens—including people with disabilities.

This *Guide* was developed through the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship's EnAbling Change program in partnership with The Conference Board of Canada. On behalf of both, we offer our sincere hope that you will find it a useful tool in promoting diversity in your workplace. Together, we are creating new opportunities for all Ontario residents.

Sincerely,



James R. Nininger  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
The Conference Board of Canada



The Honourable Cameron Jackson  
Minister of Citizenship  
Province of Ontario



The Conference Board of Canada  
Insights You Can Count On



## Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable advice provided by Judith MacBride-King, Director, Human Resources Management Research, Centre for Management Effectiveness, as well as the input of our partner, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship (formerly the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation), in the persons of Estella Cohen, Program Consultant, and Mary-Helen Spence, Director of the Equal Opportunity and Disability Partnerships Unit. Thanks are extended, in addition, to the Roundtable participants, who included representatives of labour, management, and agencies that support people with disabilities in the context of employment, with special thanks to Fern Stimpson, Assistant Vice-President, Employee Relations, Manulife Financial, who hosted the Roundtable. Heartfelt thanks are also extended to the individuals who presented at and participated in our five seminars, which took place across Ontario; to individuals from the organizations that are profiled in the guide; and to the many managers and individuals from agencies that provide support to people with disabilities, who shared insights and information. Finally, I am grateful for the research assistance provided by Pat Booth and Donna McLeod, the administrative support of Deborah Pratt and the production support of Carole Smith and also to the Canadian Association for Community Living and Chris McCallan for use of the photographs in this publication.

# CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Chapter 4: Recruitment and Selection .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Why an Employer Guide? .....	1	Generating Candidates.....	23
Purpose of the Resource Guide .....	2	Proactive Recruitment Strategies .....	23
How to Read the Guide .....	2	Advertising the Job to Candidates with Disabilities .....	25
<b>Chapter 2: People with Disabilities: The Business Case for Inclusion.....</b>	<b>5</b>	Outreach Recruiting .....	26
An Inclusive Workplace Culture Benefits Everyone .....	5	Profile 6: Wal-Mart .....	27
Changing Demographics Suggest Good Employees Will Become Harder to Find .....	5	Profile 7: The Glenn Crombie Centre .....	28
Business Benefits of an Inclusive Culture .....	6	The Selection Process .....	29
Profile 1: Armstrong Monitoring.....	7	The Job Interview.....	29
Profile 2: Canadian Tire .....	8	Applicant Testing .....	30
Consumer Clout .....	8	<b>Chapter 5: Integration: Creating an Inclusive Workplace Culture .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Profile 3: Oak Run Farm Bakeries .....	9	Readying Your Organization and Workforce .....	33
Communities Benefit .....	10	Addressing Attitudinal Barriers Through Education....	34
Disability and Human Rights .....	10	Dispel Misconceptions About People with Disabilities .....	34
<b>Chapter 3: Getting Started .....</b>	<b>11</b>	Awareness and Sensitivity Training.....	35
Understanding the Business Case Is Not Enough.....	11	Get Ready to Address Concerns.....	36
Helping Employers and People with Disabilities to Connect.....	11	Profile 8: Loblaws .....	36
Gathering Information.....	12	Building a Supportive Infrastructure.....	37
Resource 1—Information and Internet Web Sites .....	14	Clarify Roles.....	38
Locating Community Resources .....	15	Leadership from the Top Creates the Imperative....	38
Broaden Candidate Searches by Tapping into Local Job Agencies .....	15	HR Provides the Tools .....	38
Profile 4: Casino Niagara .....	16	Managers Drive the Processes .....	39
Resource 2—Local Employment Services Co-ordinating Agencies in Ontario .....	17	Monitor Results .....	39
Profile 5: Partnerships .....	18	Profile 9: IBM.....	40
Examining Policies and Practices to Eliminate Barriers .....	19	Making the Workplace Accessible .....	41
Establish an Advisory Committee .....	19	What Is Accommodation? .....	42
Review Employment Systems .....	19	Accommodation Doesn't Have to Be Expensive .....	43
Understand Job Requirements .....	20	Beyond Physical Access .....	43
		Common Access Issues and Some Accommodative Solutions .....	44
		Resource 3—Ontario Government Programs .....	45

Return to Work of Employees Who Become Disabled ..46  
Accommodating Individuals with Specific  
Disabilities .....47  
Physical/Mobility .....47  
Hearing .....48  
Visual .....49  
Psychiatric/Emotional .....49  
Learning, Cognitive or Language Disabilities .....49  
Intellectual Disabilities .....50

Resource 4—Workplace Accessibility and  
Accommodations Resources .....51

**Appendix 1: About the Project .....53**

**Appendix 2: Disabled Student Services at  
Universities and Colleges (Ontario).....54**

**Appendix 3: “JINGO” .....58**

# Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Why should organizations include people with disabilities in their business and hiring strategies? Because they cannot afford *not* to. As our economy grows and good employees become harder to find, people with disabilities offer a relatively untapped reservoir of talent. In fact, having a diversified recruitment pool offers more choice, thus increasing the likelihood of getting the right person for the job. In addition, an inclusive work culture improves the morale of all employees, and this in turn improves quality, productivity and service.

Numbering roughly one million in Ontario, people with disabilities also represent a large consumer group, with billions of dollars of spending clout. It makes good business sense to include people with disabilities in your workforce and to bear in mind their needs as customers.

## WHY AN EMPLOYER GUIDE?

In 1999, The Conference Board of Canada entered into a partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship (formerly the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation) to learn more about employers' experiences and best practices in hiring people with disabilities and integrating them into the workplace.

What we found is that this process does not have to be expensive or difficult. What's more, creating an inclusive organization generates tangible benefits that can boost the bottom line.

However, following consultation with stakeholders, we discovered that employers, despite an expressed willingness to hire and provide accommodations for people with disabilities, were having difficulty connecting with them and with the agencies that provide this community with transitional employment support services. In other words, employers lacked awareness of where to turn for assistance, and in some cases they perceived the process as more complex or expensive than it has to be.

We also found that a wealth of information is available to employers on the Internet and through agencies that provide services to people with disabilities. What was missing was a simple reference tool that could help direct them to these resources and walk them through some of the considerations that arise at various steps of the employment continuum, from attracting applicants and hiring people with disabilities to accommodating their special needs. This guide has been prepared as a response to these employers' demonstrated needs.

*Why should organizations include people with disabilities in their business and hiring strategies?  
Because they cannot afford *not* to.*

## PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCE GUIDE

The guide provides you, as employers, managers and/or human resource practitioners, with some facts, practical advice and examples bearing on how to facilitate the inclusion of employees with disabilities in your workplace.

The guide includes information on:

- making your job competitions inclusive and accessible;
- ensuring job descriptions are detailed, accurate and up-to-date;
- conducting effective job interviews;
- ensuring the workplace is barrier-free;
- providing appropriate technical aids and workspace accommodations in order to enhance an employee's abilities; and
- facilitating the orientation process for the employee and the rest of staff.

It also includes practical checklists, resources and contacts. What's more, throughout the publication, we have gathered *good practice* examples of leading organizations' recruitment and accommodation strategies. These are real examples and have been taken from research involving employers who have been successful in employing persons with disabilities.

## HOW TO READ THE GUIDE

This guide is organized on the basis of the employment continuum, from pre-employment considerations through recruitment, selection and integration into the workplace. It walks employers through the basic stages of the hiring process and provides information on how to build an inclusive workplace culture that is accessible to people with disabilities.

- Chapter 2 speaks directly to the business case for targeting people with disabilities as prospective

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 1999, The Conference Board of Canada, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship (formerly the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation), launched a project aimed at gaining an understanding of the policies, practices and needs of employers in the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. While diversity overall was the project theme, the principal focus was on investigating and developing tools to share good employment practices for hiring and integrating people who have disabilities.

This two-year multi-phased project involved several steps. The resources and materials gathered in the process have been incorporated into this guide. Components of the project included:

- a survey of Ontario-based employers to gather information about organizations' experiences in the recruitment, development and retention of a diverse workforce, especially the integration of people with disabilities;
- a multi-stakeholder roundtable;
- case studies of organizations that have demonstrated success in attracting and retaining persons with disabilities;
- interviews with employers and stakeholders who provide transitional employment services to people with disabilities;
- learning events/seminars that were held in April and May 2000 in five Ontario communities—Sudbury, London, Hamilton, Markham and Ottawa.

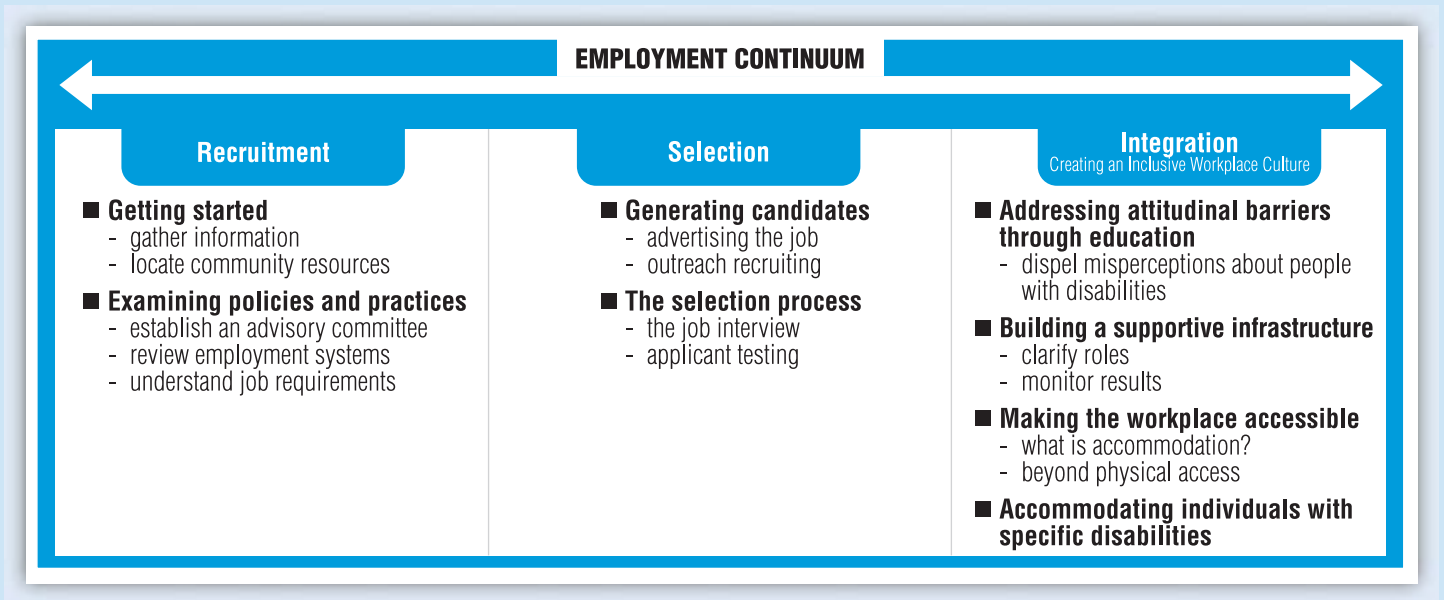
For more information on the methodology, various phases of the research and participants in the project, see Appendix 1, "About the Project."

Ontario employers reported that  
greater public awareness about people  
with disabilities and access to employment-related  
resources would be helpful.

employees. It provides background information about the benefits of inclusive business and employment strategies that specifically target people with disabilities.

- Chapters 3 and 4 examine the hiring process. They provide tips on how to recruit and select candidates with disabilities and identify resources that can help.
- Chapter 5 provides information on how to build an inclusive work environment that is accessible to people with disabilities. It also provides an overview of common types of accommodations for individuals with specific disabilities.

Below is a graphical representation of the employment continuum, which provides the structure for the guide. The employment continuum is designed as a handy reference tool so that you, as an employer, can quickly find the information you need, whether it be coordinates to contact a local agency, ideas on how to attract job candidates with disabilities, or tips on how to accommodate individuals with specific disabilities. The continuum appears in each section on recruitment, selection and integration, with the specific steps to be discussed in the section highlighted.





# Chapter 2. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: THE BUSINESS CASE FOR INCLUSION



In this chapter, we outline the business benefits of including people with disabilities in your workforce and marketing strategies.

## AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE BENEFITS EVERYONE

There are good business reasons for employing people with disabilities. First, they offer a relatively untapped source of talent that should not be overlooked as employment markets become tighter. People with disabilities have the skills, abilities and experience to add value in a competitive workplace setting. Moreover, as we shall see in this chapter, there are tangible returns to business from building broadly inclusive workplace settings. A second business

consideration is the sheer size of the population of people with disabilities, which makes them a large consumer group to be reckoned with.

## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS SUGGEST GOOD EMPLOYEES WILL BECOME HARDER TO FIND

Ontario has been experiencing spectacular growth. Despite a short-term slowdown, the medium-term economic forecast for the province continues to look promising. Even as the

## WHO ARE CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES?

What is the size of the labour pool of people with disabilities? It is difficult to get a complete and current picture, but Statistics Canada's population and labour force surveys tell us the following:

- Canadians with disabilities living at home make up about 13 per cent of the working age population, between the ages of 15 and 65; just under half are employed, compared to nearly 70 per cent of people without disabilities.
- The incidence and severity of disability increases with age.
- The majority of Canadians with disabilities (90 per cent of those under age 35) report their conditions as mild to moderate.
- While most people with disabilities in the workforce report some limitation at work (85 per cent), fewer than 20 per cent require any form of accommodation, and the vast majority of those require one or two supports at most.
- Over half of people with disabilities have high-school diplomas, and more than one-third have post-secondary certificates or degrees.
- The annual disposable income of working-age Canadians with disabilities is about \$25 billion.

Source: Statistics Canada, Health and Activity Limitation Survey, 1991, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1994.

economy grows, however, our workforce is ageing. As baby boomers move through their fifties and begin to retire, the number of young people and immigrants entering the workforce will be insufficient to meet demand. More generalized shortages will occur by mid-to-late decade, particularly in some of Ontario's "hot" spots, as the number of vacancies begins to exceed the number of job seekers. That means there will be fewer new workforce entrants to help propel business expansion. Employers who recognize the potential of underutilized talent sources will be at an advantage in the race for talent.

### BUSINESS BENEFITS OF AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

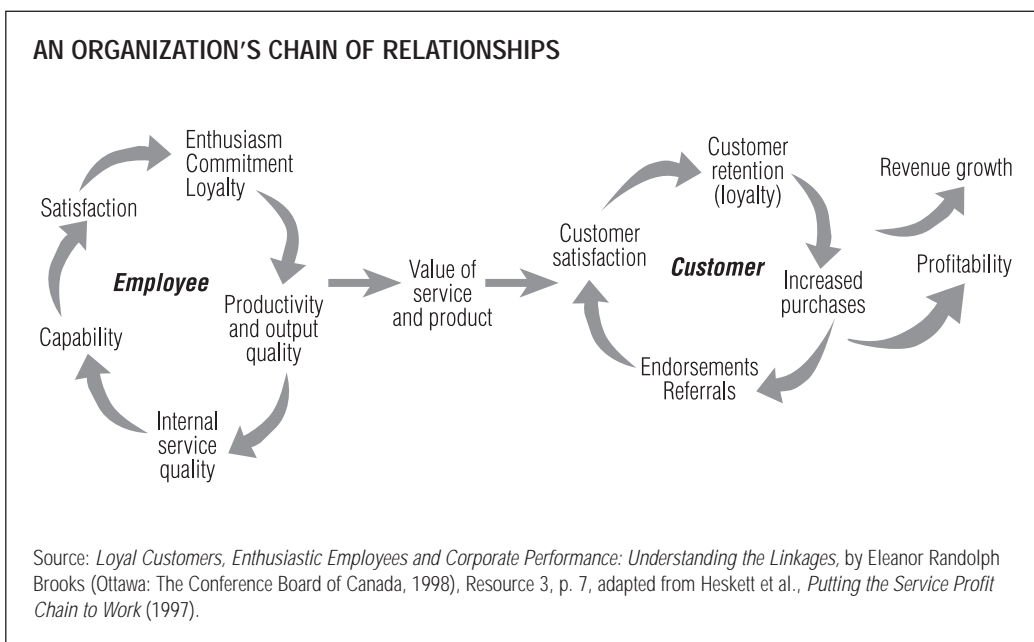
Beyond addressing current or impending labour shortages, there are good business reasons to tap the talents of people with disabilities. Emerging research clearly shows the link between employee satisfaction and loyalty and between customer interaction and the bottom line (see box). Employers describe a range of benefits that positively affect productivity and profitability when an attempt has been made to create an inclusive, diverse culture that includes people with disabilities. Simply put, employee-sensitive workplaces are better, more energizing places to work and more profitable over the long run.<sup>1</sup> Following are some of the ways in which an inclusive workforce strategy can improve business results.

### PUTTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD IS A GOOD INVESTMENT

There is clear evidence that access to training and work-related supports makes a difference in the employability of people with disabilities. Recent research by The Roeher Institute, which analyzed Canadian income statistics, shows that people with disabilities who have done well—people who earn above median income—are clearly those who have been better supported by their communities and employers. They have received better access to training, to assistive devices and to other supports, all of which have helped them break through the access barrier. Therefore, the investments we make, as a society and as employers, in formative education, skills development and retraining are a win-win proposition for everyone. Employers gain access to the skills they require, and people with disabilities are elevated to a level playing field so they can compete in employment markets.

Source: Cameron Crawford, Acting President, The Roeher Institute, information from presentation made at WellSizing the Workplace Conference, Toronto, April 2000.

- **Improved quality**  
Research shows that good morale, teamwork and high employee satisfaction correlate with better product and service quality. An inclusive, nurturing environment can have a direct impact on the quality of the service



<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Randolph Brooks, *Loyal Customers, Enthusiastic Employees and Corporate Performance: Understanding the Linkages* (Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 1998).

## PROFILE 1: Targeting People with Disabilities at Armstrong Monitoring Creates a “Win-Win”

The Armstrong Monitoring Corporation truly believes that people are its biggest assets, and this Ottawa-based manufacturer of sensing technologies makes every effort to ensure that it is recognized as a good employer. The work at the company involves desktop assembly of gas, liquid or materials detection equipment (e.g., carbon monoxide detectors). Electronics industry jobs are traditionally highly paid, and each new hire requires a significant investment in training. The work lends itself to people with mobility challenges, because tasks are largely stationary. As a result, Armstrong has come to be a well-known employer of people with disabilities, to the benefit of both the company and its employees.

It makes pragmatic business sense to target people with disabilities as employees, states Don Segall, Vice-President, Product Technology and Resources, simply because people with disabilities themselves identify Armstrong Monitoring as an employer of choice. He explains that, some years ago, Armstrong realized that too many short-term employees were leaving for other jobs and the training costs were wasted. The company decided that it made much more sense to invest training dollars in applicants, such as people with disabilities, who targeted them as a good place to work. It believes that such individuals are likely to have longer tenure, reducing the costs of production.

Armstrong Monitoring's strategy has paid off. At any given time, roughly 15 to 20 per cent of the production workforce have disabilities. Turnover is low, and a number of individuals have progressed to roles with more responsibility. Segall has found that when people are provided with dignified work and a good working environment, they are appreciative and do their best to make the relationship long term. The result for Armstrong is a stable, productive workforce with little turnover.

### COMPANY FACTS

Name: The Armstrong Monitoring Corporation

Business profile: Designs and manufactures gas, liquid or materials sensing and detection equipment

Headquarters: Ottawa

Number of employees: 35

Web site: <http://armstrongmonitoring.com>

or product. Oak Run Farm Bakeries in rural Hamilton-Wentworth can attest to this. According to Oak Run's general manager, Tony Tristani, when an employer shows that it cares about its people, the people put forth a better effort. “The more people care, the better our product,” he says.

#### • **Improved productivity**

A diverse work team also injects dynamism and synergies that directly improve productivity. People with different backgrounds and formative experiences bring fresh perspective and new insights, from which a work group learns and grows. Often, by necessity, persons with disabilities will approach tasks differently. They frequently display “out-of-the-box” thinking that can shift a team's orientation from focusing on prescribed work processes (doing things the way they have always been

done) to thinking about how things can be done differently to build a better product or provide better service (focusing on results). The chief registrar of an Ontario community college described the effect on her department of hiring a former student who happened to be deaf.

Turnover is costly in terms of lost time,  
missed business opportunities and  
consumption of internal resources required  
to replace the individual.



## PROFILE 2: Capability Is What Counts at Canadian Tire

Canadian Tire has a reputation both for its well-run franchise operations and as an employer of choice in the retail community. That is because owners and associate dealers such as Frank Saraka, who operates six stores in Ontario and Newfoundland, understand the bottom-line benefits of investing in people and providing an inclusive work environment.

Two individuals with developmental disabilities have worked in Saraka's Chatham store for over a year now, thanks to a partnership with the local District Association for Community Living. Both work in a variety of departments, and they prove their value on every shift, according to Saraka, who says that their duties vary little from those of other employees in the same roles. Moreover, having a diverse staff has a positive impact on co-workers, he adds. Exposure to people who confront challenges on a daily basis has had the effect of boosting their own expectations and has encouraged a "can-do" approach to their own work. As a result, the business benefits and everyone wins.

Source: "Diversity Boosts Staff Morale and Productivity," on Gateway to Diversity Web site, [www.equalopportunity.on.ca](http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca)

### COMPANY FACTS

Name: Canadian Tire

Business profile: Canadian Tire is Canada's largest hard goods retailer specializing in automotive, sport, leisure and home products. With approximately 430 Associate Stores serving communities nationwide, the Canadian-owned company has a 75-year franchise with Canadians. Other business includes the Petroleum Division, which has 197 gasoline outlets and is the largest independent retailer of gasoline in Canada, and Canadian Tire Acceptance Limited, a financial services company.

Head office: Toronto

Number of employees: 34,000

Web site: [www.canadiantire.ca](http://www.canadiantire.ca)

Forty-eight per cent of respondents to our survey agreed with the statement that providing accommodations for people with disabilities is good for employee morale.

This individual could empathize with the student "customers," with and without disabilities, and was able to provide service in innovative ways that served as an inspiration to others in the department.

### • **Attracting and retaining people**

In a competitive employment market, good employees are like gold. Not only will a reputation for being an employer of choice attract the best and the brightest, inclusive strategies that engender employee loyalty increase the likelihood that they will stay.

Turnover is costly in terms of lost time, missed business opportunities and consumption of internal resources required to replace the individual. Cost estimates vary, depending on what is included in the calculation, but range from over \$10,000 for a clerical-level individual to hundreds of thousands of dollars for a senior executive. Senior executives tell us that they would rather invest money in supporting an employee who has a special need than spend dollars on recruiting yet another candidate who may or may not work out.

### • **Improved morale**

An inclusive work environment is good for the morale of all staff. Employers who participated in this project cited numerous instances of the positive impact that introducing a person with a disability had on the workplace. They noted characteristics such as "energy" and "enthusiasm" and spoke of the spillover effect on work groups of having individuals with these traits. For example, one executive in a public utility talked about hiring an individual with Down's syndrome to support an administrative team. She required little supervision, and her enthusiasm and commitment had an energizing effect on the team.

## CONSUMER CLOUT

People with disabilities also comprise a large and powerful consumer group, with significant spending power. A recent study by Royal Bank estimated that this group commands disposable income of between \$20 billion and \$25 billion.<sup>2</sup> That figure may be low. Canadian income statistics show that the after-tax income of working-age Canadians with disabilities in 1994 was \$26 billion. Their combined household income was \$56.3 billion.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Outlook for People with Disabilities in Current Analysis," Royal Bank, April 2000, [www.royalbank.com/economics](http://www.royalbank.com/economics)

<sup>3</sup> Cameron Crawford, The Roeher Institute, presentation at Wellizing the Workplace, April 2000. Data are from Statistics Canada's 1994 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

In addition, it makes sense that organizations whose workforces mirror their communities are better positioned to understand the needs of customers. As a group, people with disabilities represent significant service and product market opportunities. A study by Paralympic Games Market Research found that 40 per cent of U.S. households that included an individual with a disability would be “extremely likely” or “very likely” to switch brands to support a disability cause. What’s more, 32 per cent of households that had no member with a disability would do the same.<sup>4</sup>

A number of organizations have benefited by developing products or providing services that tap into this sizeable market of consumers with disabilities. Following are some examples.

- **Product development opportunities**

Microsoft and IBM have discovered lucrative market opportunities in developing and marketing adaptive



**PROFILE 3: Oak Run Farm Bakeries Earns Preferred Supplier Status**

Oak Run Farm Bakeries in rural Hamilton-Wentworth provides fresh-baked goods to major grocers such as A & P and fast food empires like Tim Horton’s and McDonalds. Though Oak Run does not sell directly to the public, it has found that its practice of hiring people with disabilities has helped make it a supplier of choice for some of its corporate customers. According to the company’s general manager, although attracting business was never the motive for Oak Run’s employment practices, customers take notice—“Buyers see what we are doing and they are drawn to us.”

**COMPANY FACTS**

Name: Oak Run Farm Bakeries  
 Business profile: Supplier of baked goods to grocers and restaurants.  
 Head office: Lancaster, Ontario  
 Number of employees: 250

software and hardware technologies. Both have developed sophisticated, highly accessible e-business marketing infrastructures to sell these products directly to people with disabilities and businesses that seek accommodative solutions.<sup>5</sup> These firms also understand that technologies developed for people with disabilities often have potential for wider market applications. Microsoft’s accessibility strategist, Greg Lowney, observed in a published interview that, after all, the typewriter was invented to aid a secretary who was blind.<sup>6</sup>

- **Enhanced customer loyalty**

Sales can increase dramatically when customers know that people serving them understand their unique needs.<sup>7</sup> Marriott Hotels are reportedly the hotels of choice for people with disabilities in the United States, not because they are the only ones that accommodate people with disabilities (they are not), but because they hire people with disabilities—people who understand the needs of this particular clientele.<sup>8</sup>

4 Rachel J. Dickinson, “The Power of the Paralympics,” in *American Demographics*, May 1996.

5 See Web sites at <http://www.ibm.com/able> and <http://www.microsoft.com/enable>

6 “Greg Lowney, Microsoft’s Accessibility Strategist, Discusses the Importance of Universal Design and Accessibility,” in *PressPass* on Microsoft’s Web site, <http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/features/2000/jun00/06-16accessibility.asp>

7 Dr. John Sullivan, “Diversity Recruiting—The Compelling Business Case,” on Gateway Consulting Web site. <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/gately/pp15js96.htm>

8 Maureen Minehan, “Being an Employer of Choice for People with Disabilities,” in *HR-Source Special Reports*, 06/12/2000.

## COMMUNITIES BENEFIT

Communities also benefit when their institutions treat people with disabilities as an important customer base. For instance, Cambrian College in Sudbury has a mission to be the post-secondary institution of choice for students with disabilities. The majority of these students are attracted from other communities, specifically because of the excellent services provided by The Glenn Crombie Centre for Disability Services. The Centre provides a range of assistive technologies and supports that help students with disabilities integrate into mainstream classroom programs. The college's president, Dr. Frank Marsh, estimates that the 700 students with disabilities enrolled at Cambrian pay tuition fees of over \$2 million. What's more, Dr. Marsh estimates that the living expenses incurred by these students and other discretionary spending bring an additional \$6.7 million annually into the community.

## DISABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Beyond the bottom-line benefits to business of hiring and integrating people with disabilities, it should not be overlooked that employers have a legal requirement under the Ontario Human Rights Code to ensure that workplaces are accessible and free of discrimination. Nearly three-quarters of complaints received by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) are from the workplace, and of these, discrimination in employment on the basis of disability is one of the greatest single sources of complaints. Such cases are costly, time-consuming and bad for the corporate image.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has published two helpful documents: *Guidelines for Assessing Accommodation Requirements for Persons With Disabilities* and an employer handbook, *Human Rights at Work*. The *Guidelines* can be obtained directly from the Ontario Human Rights Commission Web site at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca) and *Human Rights at Work* can be purchased directly from distributors of Ontario government publications.



Section 17 of the Code provides that people with disabilities have the right to have their individual needs accommodated, short of undue hardship to the organization, in a manner that most respects their dignity, in order to allow them to perform the essential duties of their job. Factors that the OHRC will take into account when assessing undue hardship include:

- the cost of the accommodation and whether or not it threatens the viability of the business;
- the availability of outside sources of funding to offset costs;
- health and safety considerations; and
- bona fide occupational requirements—e.g., vision requirements for driving a vehicle.

# Chapter 3: GETTING STARTED

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

In this chapter, we identify sources of information on hiring people with disabilities and provide strategies for self-assessment of business readiness.

## UNDERSTANDING THE BUSINESS CASE IS NOT ENOUGH

Even employers who recognize the business advantages of a diverse workforce report that they have had difficulty accessing the talent of people with disabilities. The principal challenge, reported by close to three-quarters of employers who participated in our study, is finding qualified job applicants.

There are a number of reasons for this. Weak recruitment and selection practices play a part. Even among organizations that have policies in place to manage diversity, many are experiencing difficulty in translating strategy into action. The guide is designed to help employers address these challenges.

## HELPING EMPLOYERS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO CONNECT

If people are an organization's most important resource, then who an organization hires may be the most important decision it makes. Getting the right fit between employer and employee is crucial. The fact is that many common hiring practices are not serving anyone well. Limited candidate searches and unreliable selection practices contribute to poor hiring decisions, which can be costly.

According to Alan Webber, the founding editor of *Fast Company* magazine, the only way to find the right people to fuel success in a hot employment market "is to do a

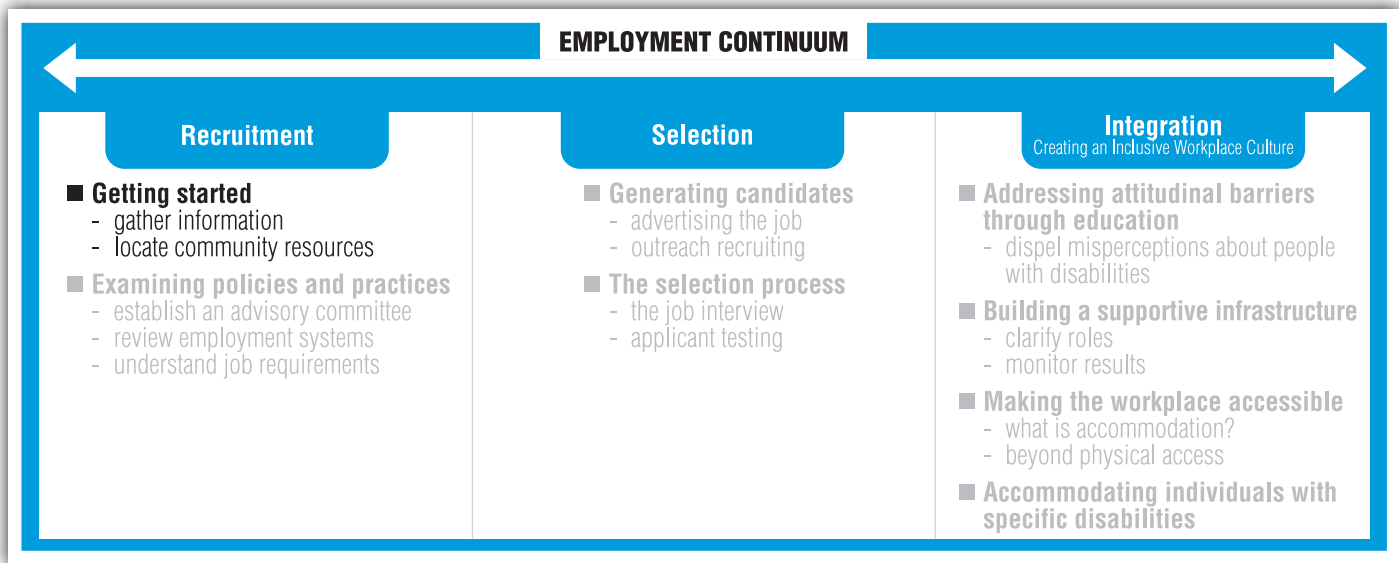
much better job of adding different people." That means doing a better job of finding talent—by fishing in new places. It also means doing a better job of assessing talent by learning to make a critical distinction between talent and credentials.<sup>1</sup>

People with disabilities represent an unfished pool of talent for employers. They are an underutilized resource who have traditionally encountered barriers to mainstream employment, principally because employers and job candidates with disabilities have not been connecting. Retooling recruitment and selection processes to develop a more diverse candidate pool will help organizations to find superior employees.

This chapter is designed to help employers find information and resources to improve hiring practices, eliminate barriers to employment and get the message out to individuals with disabilities that job opportunities are available.

Though many employers clearly understand the benefits of an inclusive workplace culture, they report difficulty attracting job candidates with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup> Alan Webber, "Blue-Chip Firms Embrace Pragmatic Diversity," in *USA Today*, May 1, 2000, p. 19A.



As we learned, employers frequently do not know where to turn for help in identifying and attracting job candidates with disabilities, or they are discouraged before they begin because they believe that the process of contacting numerous agencies will be labour intensive. The fact is that the social support system for people with disabilities can be confusing for the uninitiated. *It does not have to be.*

Ontario employers that participated in our survey articulated a clear need for information on best practices in recruitment and outreach. Fifty-seven per cent said that better access to expertise about accommodation possibilities would be helpful. Many lacked awareness of how best to obtain this information. For instance, only just over one-third appear to be networking with disability groups or agencies that provide employment services for people with various types of disabilities.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

Where can organizations turn for information? Along with the federal and provincial governments, there are a number of national and community-based organizations that provide information and services on how to recruit and integrate people with disabilities. Most are accessible through the Internet. At the community level, there are local agencies that have been established to co-ordinate and support training and job placement for people with disabilities. These provide a range of more direct services for employers. Some key resources are described on page 17.

There are several Canadian organizations that provide general information about hiring and accommodating people with disabilities. For example:

- The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) is an umbrella organization that provides educational programs and consultation services to employers. The CCRW operates a national Web site, *WORKink*, which contains a collection of informative articles. CCRW also has a free information hotline, *JANcAn*, that will answer questions on specific issues in accommodation.
- *EnableLink*, operated by the Canadian Abilities Foundation, provides links to thousands of Ontario-based, national and international sites that provide information on people with disabilities. (Resource 1 lists organizations and their Web sites that provide general information on hiring and accommodating people with disabilities.)
- The Ontario March of Dimes (OMD) provides extensive services throughout the province. If you cannot locate any service agencies in your area, OMD will provide services or refer you to a local agency.

Other organizations that provide transitional job training and placement services in Ontario communities also operate Web sites, e.g., the Training Coordinating Group. Most of the Web sites are linked to one another. See Resource 2, page 17 for contact information.

Many organizations that provide services for people with specific categories of disabilities—for example, the

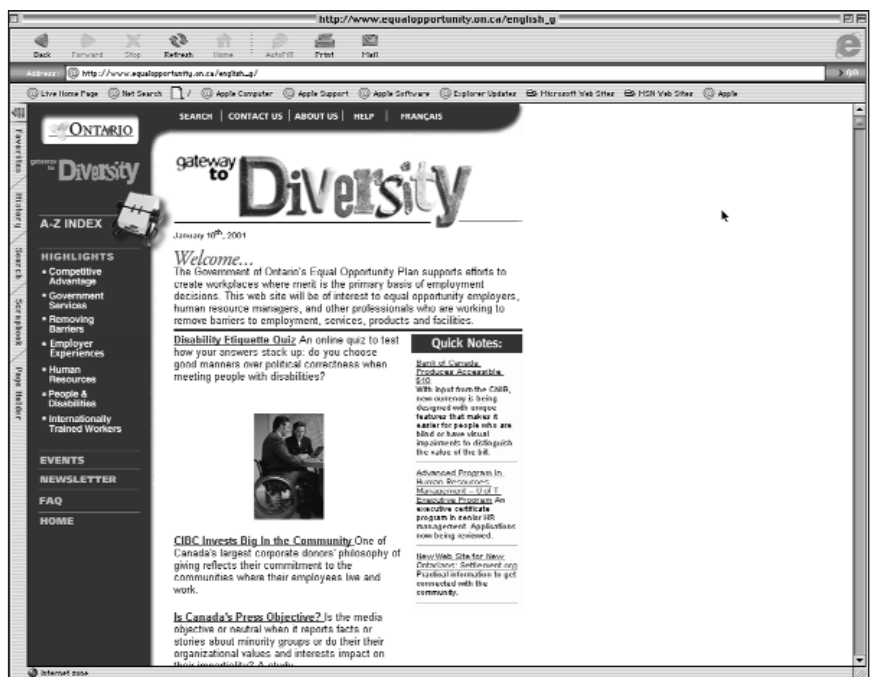
Canadian Hearing Society and the Canadian Paraplegic Association—have comprehensive Web sites and provide direct services at the community level. If they do provide transitional employment services, they will most likely have a portion of their Web site aimed at employers, with information on the kinds of employment transition, placement and follow-up services they provide.

## GATEWAY TO DIVERSITY

*Gateway to Diversity* is a Web site with current information on recruiting, accommodating and retaining persons with disabilities, published by the Government of Ontario's Ministry of Citizenship. The site was initially developed as a partnership initiative with over 125 Ontario businesses, associations and disability groups and has recently been upgraded to help employers more easily navigate through a wealth of equal opportunity and diversity news, announcements and resources from Ontario, Canada and around the world.

The site—[www.equalopportunity.on.ca](http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca)—has a number of unique features, which include:

- A new **A–Z Topic Index** that quickly provides you with a list of resources under specific subjects of interest that will help you to search easily for information
- Improved search capabilities that allow you to conduct **Advanced Searches** using free text
- **Frequently Asked Questions Section** that provides you with answers to issues related to areas such as workplace diversity and accessible Web design
- **Featured Employer Profiles** that share experiences in equal opportunity, including implementing diversity initiatives such as hiring and accommodating an employee with a disability
- **Events Section** that features a calendar announcing current conferences, workshops and other diversity-related events in Ontario, Canada and worldwide
- **Highlights Pages** that provide access to fast, up-to-date information on key topics such as the Competitive Advantage of Diversity and Removing Barriers
- An **Enhanced Database** that enables you to identify a spectrum of useful resources dealing with a wide range of diversity fields
- A free, monthly newsletter, *Gateway to Diversity News!* You may register your employees to receive this newsletter.



## RESOURCE 1—Information and Internet Web Sites

### Government Sources

### Contact Information

#### Gateway to Diversity Web Site Ontario Ministry of Citizenship

<http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca>

- A site for equal opportunity employers, human resource managers and other professionals who are working to remove barriers to employment, services, products and facilities (see page 13 for details).

#### Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Web Page Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

<http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS/page/services/odsp.html>

Tel: (416) 325-5666

Fax: (416) 314-8721

- A program that provides income support for people with disabilities and employment supports for people with disabilities who want to work.

#### Workplace Accessibility Tax Incentive Web Page Ontario Ministry of Finance

<http://www.gov.on.ca:80/FIN/english/tb99-1e.htm>

Tel: (905) 433-6513

Fax: (905) 433-6747

- A program supporting businesses that hire new employees with disabilities.

#### Persons with Disabilities Resources and Information Web Page Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

<http://www.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hamilton/english/partner/pwd.html>

- A site offering a listing of local, provincial and national disability resources, including the Canadian government's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, Disability Policies and Programs, and sites of interest to employers.

#### Guide to HRDC Services for Canadians Web Page

<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/dept/guide/menu/how.shtml>

- A Web page offering a guide to a range of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) programs and services including disability issues. Refer to Subject Index.

### Not-for-Profit Organizations and Agencies

#### Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) Web Site

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/mission.htm>

A site offering information and links to CCRW's programs and services including:

- *WorkInk*—Online, real-time employment counselling services and information.
- *WAEN*—A resumé database for persons with disabilities that allows searches by potential employers.
- *JANcana*—The Canadian service of the U.S.-based Job Accommodation Network (JAN), which assists in the hiring, retraining, retention or advancement of persons with disabilities by providing accommodation information.
- *Skills Training Partnership (STP)*—Using pre-employment training to prepare persons with disabilities for positions with an employer partner.
- *Consultation Services*—Workplace assessment, informative presentations, accessibility audits and awareness training.
- *Fit-to-Work*—Training for employers and agencies covering disability management and the recruitment and promotion of persons with disabilities.

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/wink.htm>

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/waen.htm>

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/jancana.htm>

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/stp.htm>

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/consul.htm>

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/ftw.htm>

#### Centre for the Management of Community Services

[http://www.cmcs.on.ca/html/about\\_cmcs.html](http://www.cmcs.on.ca/html/about_cmcs.html)

- Works with local service providers and employers to improve linkages. Services to employers include support in the development of strategic plans, awareness training and help in finding local services.

#### EnableLink

<http://www.enablelink.org>

Canadian Abilities Foundation

- A site linking persons with disabilities, employers and employees to a list of resources including the Ontario and national employment service directories.

#### Integrated Network of Disability Information and Education (INDIE)

<http://laurence.canlearn.ca/English/learn/newaccessguide/indie/index.html>

- A directory of disability information on the Internet.

## LOCATING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Broaden Candidate Searches by Tapping into Local Job Agencies

While employers report difficulty attracting job candidates with disabilities, people with disabilities report that they have difficulty learning about job opportunities. Many job openings, for instance, are not posted. When Tricia Pokorny established a special needs department at Casino Niagara, her goals included improving guest services and increasing the number of employees with disabilities. Her first step was to identify and establish contact with local community agencies. She found that the time invested up-front in searching for community support and expertise paid off (see Profile 4, page 16).

Most regions in Ontario are served by a local employment agency that coordinates employment-related services for people with disabilities. These agencies can help broadcast your job opportunities to communities of people with disabilities. They are a great source of information and an efficient way to connect with the various agencies that provide transitional employment support services to people with disabilities at the community level. These local coordinating agencies draw from local, provincial and federal resources and provide a range of related services, from pre-screening of candidates, job readiness training and workplace disability awareness training to work-site audits, after-placement support and follow-up.

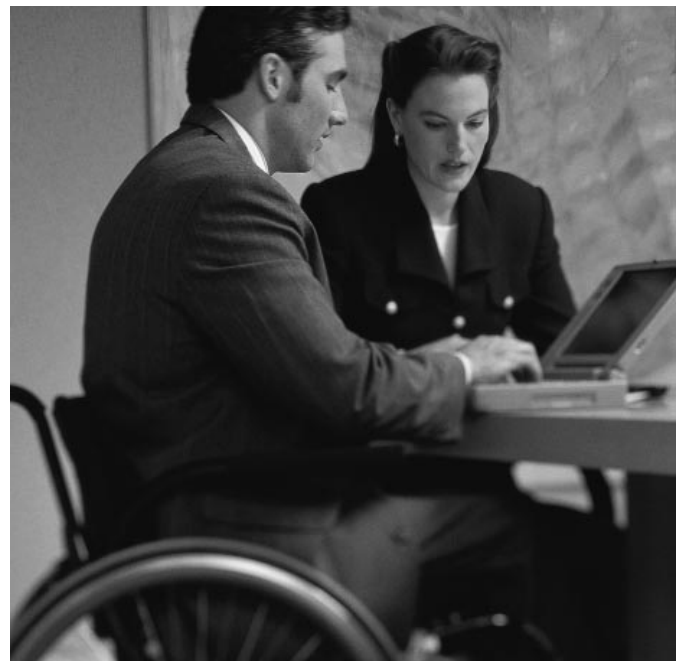


Good-practice employers have well-developed community outreach initiatives at the national and local levels, ensuring that prospective job candidates with disabilities learn about employment opportunities with their organizations.

Local co-ordinating agencies can save employers who seek job candidates a great deal of time and confusion. They typically provide a “one-stop” link to the various community organizations that provide services to people with a range of types of disability.



In Hamilton, for instance, Work-Able Services Inc. liaises with local disability agencies and with government and other local support services to provide recruitment services for employers. Employers simply provide their job orders, and Work-Able locates candidates within the community (most of whom receive some form of disability-related income support). Work-Able pre-screens candidates and provides job readiness skills or arranges for any required job-related training. The organization will also arrange for local agencies to provide on-the-job support and advice on necessary accommodations. Line 1000 Placement Services provides similar services in Ottawa, as do The Employment Alliance in London and The Niagara Employment Alliance in the Niagara region. Resource 2 contains a list of several local coordinating agencies with contact information. More details about the pivotal role they play is contained in Profile 5, page 18.



## PROFILE 4: Casino Niagara Reaches Out to Customers and Job Candidates

Casinos are exciting and electric, and casinos are noisy and crowded. Casinos can also be confusing—especially for the uninitiated and those with disabilities. That was the experience of Tricia Pokorny, who was among the first patrons to visit Casino Niagara when it opened its doors in December 1996.

As a person with a visual disability, Pokorny found it very difficult to navigate the establishment independently. That experience motivated her to develop a proposal outlining how it would benefit the casino to:

- provide greater accessibility to patrons;
- ensure staff reflect the diversity of guests; and
- provide staff with good customer service skills.

She submitted her proposal to the then-president, and a year later a Special Needs Department was formed with Pokorny as co-ordinator.

When setting up the department, Pokorny focused on three priority areas:

1. *Community Outreach*—What resources were available in the community and how could local agencies be made aware of the employment needs of the casino as a new and growing business?
2. *Staffing*—What were the key jobs at the Casino and their essential requirements? How could these opportunities be better communicated to a diverse community to attract the best candidates possible?
3. *Customer Service*—How could training be enhanced to foster good customer service skills among employees?

### **Community Outreach**

At the outset, Pokorny invested time in identifying community resources with expertise in employing people with disabilities and developing relationships with key individuals. Pokorny suggests that employers generally underutilize local agencies. She adds that employers who seek to improve relationships with local service agencies and benefit from their services should understand that these are two-way relationships. In order to better respond to businesses' requests for appropriate, job-ready candidates, agencies need better job information. Employers, therefore, need to provide direction to agencies, clearly articulating the requirements of their business regarding general and individual jobs. Pokorny has frequently found that "what agencies often consider to be 'job-ready' is not necessarily the same for employers." Stakeholders need to educate each other.

### **Staffing**

Casino Niagara has developed a formal staffing process whereby all applicants forwarded through local agencies are interviewed. Casino Niagara takes time to learn about the talents and abilities of each participant and communicates its own requirements to him/her. Resumés are stored in a data bank and matched with openings as they occur.

Casino Niagara is also in the process of systematically analyzing key jobs through a process called "job shadowing." Time is spent in departments talking to managers and incumbents alike about job

requirements. A specialist in the Special Needs Department then performs the job in a regular shift rotation. Job shadowing enables the specialist to learn about the physical and cognitive requirements of the job as well as its working conditions. Detailed job descriptions are developed and then provided to agencies that refer candidates.

The casino has stringent job requirements, particularly in areas related to technology, security and customer service. A slot machine technician, for example, requires at least a college-level certificate in electronics. These standards cannot be compromised. By more clearly articulating expectations, the casino helps the agencies to do a better job of translating its needs into training and other transitional support.

Casino Niagara also uses job analysis to improve training and employee orientation practices. Should any problems arise during a placement, the department has a useful tool with which it can effectively assess individual performance gaps.

### **Promoting Awareness—Building Customer Service**

Sensitivity and awareness training has been developed and delivered to executives, directors and managers. A modified version offered to staff on a voluntary basis is regularly fully booked. This is because Pokorny has taken care to ensure that sessions are fun and engaging as well as informative. Executives, for instance, participated in a four-hour simulated exercise in which they took a tour of the casino and performed various activities as individuals with specific disabilities. The executive who assumed a hearing disability, for instance, was never successful in communicating the type of drink he wanted to the bartender, despite several attempts. The stories about the experiences of that day have helped create excitement around the initiative and have helped to embed the lessons learned in the organization.

### **Summary**

In a few short years, Casino Niagara has experienced a positive return on its business investment in becoming a more inclusive organization. The casino is quickly earning a reputation as both an entertainment venue and an employer of choice for people with disabilities. Although training and awareness events focusing on people with disabilities are by no means complete, the next steps, states Pokorny, are to address other aspects of diversity.

### **COMPANY FACTS**

Name: Casino Niagara

Business profile: Casino complex that provides a worldwide audience with a range of amusement experiences, including gaming, entertainment and dining.

Ownership: Owned by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation and managed by the Hyatt-led Falls Management Company.

Location: Niagara Falls

Number of employees: 3,700

Web site: [www.casinoniagara.com](http://www.casinoniagara.com)

## RESOURCE 2—Local Employment Services Co-ordinating Agencies in Ontario

Agency by Region	Contact Information	
<b><i>Eastern Ontario</i></b>		
Line 1000 Employment Services	<a href="http://www.line1000.ca">http://www.line1000.ca</a>	(613) 731-7620
Neil Squire Foundation	<a href="http://www.neilsquire.ca">http://www.neilsquire.ca</a>	(613) 723-3575
Employment Services of Prescott-Russell Inc.	<a href="mailto:centre@hawk.igs.net">centre@hawk.igs.net</a>	(613) 632-0179
<b><i>Greater Toronto</i></b>		
TCG Link-Up Employment Services, The Training Coordinating Group for Persons with Disabilities VR Placement	<a href="http://www.tgc.on.ca">http://www.tgc.on.ca</a> <a href="http://www.vrplacement.com">http://www.vrplacement.com</a>	(416) 413-4922 (416) 483-0611
<b><i>Hamilton-Wentworth</i></b>		
Goodwill, The Amity Group PATH Employment Services Work-Able Services Inc.	<a href="http://www.amity.on.ca">www.amity.on.ca</a> <a href="http://www.pathemployment.com">www.pathemployment.com</a>	(905) 526-8481 (905) 546-2834 (905) 546-2696
		TTY/DD
<b><i>London</i></b>		
The Employment Alliance (TEA)	<a href="http://www.atn.on.ca">http://www.atn.on.ca</a>	(519) 858-8436
<b><i>Niagara</i></b>		
The Niagara Employment Alliance	<a href="http://www.employniagara.com/">http://www.employniagara.com/</a>	(905) 687-6774
<b><i>Peel/Halton/Dufferin</i></b>		
Employment Access	<a href="http://www.disabilityaccess.org">www.disabilityaccess.org</a>	(905) 569-9997
<b><i>Thunder Bay</i></b>		
Yes Employment Services	<a href="http://yes.air.on.ca">http://yes.air.on.ca</a>	(807) 623-0768
<b><i>Trenton, Brighton and Campbellford</i></b>		
Career Edge	<a href="http://www.careeredge.on.ca">http://www.careeredge.on.ca</a>	(613) 392-9157
<b><i>York Region and Bradford West Gwillimbury</i></b>		
Disability Information Network	<a href="http://www.york-net.org/din/index.html">http://www.york-net.org/din/index.html</a>	(905) 830-9299
<b><i>Various Communities, including Northern Ontario</i></b>		
Ontario March of Dimes	<a href="http://www.dimes.on.ca">www.dimes.on.ca</a>	

Note: This list should not be considered exhaustive.

## PROFILE 5: Partnerships Create a “Win-Win” for Employers and Job Candidates

The system of disability supports in Canada is complex and can be confusing. From an employer's perspective, it is easier not to have to deal with numerous agencies and government departments for information and access to job candidates. The one-stop local coordinating agency may be the solution to a problem that has historically prevented employers and people with disabilities from connecting.

### **Role of Local Coordinating Agencies**

In London, for instance, a local coordinating agency was created in 1999 in an effort to improve services to employers and streamline agency services. The Employment Alliance (TEA) works on behalf of numerous agencies serving people with disabilities in the City of London and Middlesex County. It presents employers with a single window through which to locate qualified, job-ready candidates. Behind that window, TEA broadcasts information about employment opportunities to individual agencies. In addition, TEA pre-screens candidates and coordinates training. It can also help employers to obtain other services they require, such as workplace accessibility audits, specific accommodations for individuals and employee awareness training.

As the Partnership Model shown here demonstrates, coordinating agencies such as TEA bring stakeholders together by drawing on expertise from agencies and academics, by drawing on funding and expertise from government sources, by organizing training and by bringing key constituencies, such as labour and management, together to solve problems in cooperation.

### **Partnership Model**



### **One-Stop Service Saves Employers' Time**

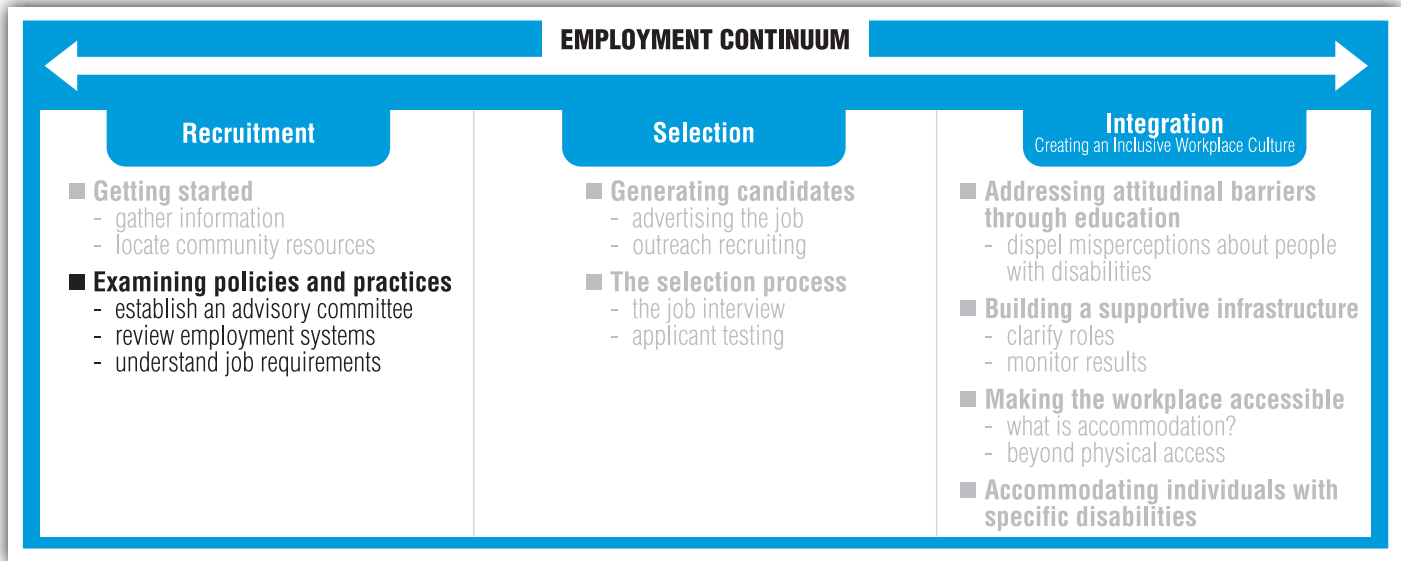
Best-practice employers in our study were appreciative of the services provided by these agencies. They found particularly useful the “one-stop” aspect of the service, which dramatically saved time. These employers developed a track record and level of trust with a particular agency, which over time became more in tune with the business needs and environment of the employer. This in turn helped agencies to pre-screen and supply appropriate candidates.

### **Better Mutual Understanding Improves Quality of Service**

From the perspective of Shannon O'Meara, an HR manager at General Motors of Canada, Diesel Division, the creation of TEA in the London area fulfills a need. Like many leading employers in the London area, GM Diesel recognized the untapped potential of people with disabilities in a tightening employment market. Although it considered itself an equal opportunity employer, it seemed to the company that few suitable candidates with disabilities were applying for jobs. It was difficult to find the time, however, to do the extensive work required to reach various communities of people with disabilities and educate them individually about the company's employment requirements as a heavy manufacturer. Through Ms. O'Meara's involvement in TEA, job developers attached to various agencies gain a better understanding of the company's work environment and business needs so that when an opportunity becomes available, pre-screening and training efforts will be more effective.

TEA is just one of a number of agencies that have emerged in recent years to help streamline job placement and accommodative services for employers. The Niagara Employment Alliance and, in Toronto, The Training Co-ordinating Group for Persons with Disabilities provide similar services. For a listing of local coordinating agencies in several other communities, see Resource 2, page 17.

Source: Adapted from presentation by Don Cunningham, Executive Director, Work-Able Services Inc., at Roundtable of Stakeholders, convened by The Conference Board of Canada, November 9, 1999.



## EXAMINING POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO ELIMINATE BARRIERS

In addition to identifying and locating externally available information and resources, it is important to conduct an assessment of the organization's employment policies and practices, or systems, to ensure that people with disabilities are not inadvertently denied access to opportunities.

### Establish an Advisory Committee

A first step in identifying and addressing barriers in your organization's employment system and coordinating your efforts in the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities is to establish an employee advisory committee. This practice is highly recommended in the diversity literature and by several employers who participated in our project. IBM, for example, has put in place three global advisory committees, made up respectively of individuals with visual, mobility and hearing disabilities. Their mandate is to inform the corporation on ways to meet its obligations to both customers and employees who have disabilities (for more information on IBM's committees, see Profile 9, page 40).

Ideally, the committee should consist of people from across the organization and from diverse groups, including people with disabilities. If members are broadly representative of diverse communities, they can provide important personal insights. Typically, advisory committees are charged with reviewing systems or processes governing

the various stages of employment, from hiring to termination, in order to identify and eliminate practices that may result in obstacles for people with disabilities. The committee may gather information from the larger employee population through surveys, focus groups and/or interviews and develop recommendations for change. The committee can also act as a sounding board to react to or provide advice on policy changes.<sup>2</sup>

### Review Employment Systems

Unnecessarily stringent job requirements can keep people with disabilities out of job competitions. People with disabilities often have not had the educational or formative



Good-practice employers conduct careful analyses of jobs to ensure that the requirements are appropriate. Job postings make it clear that all qualifications will be considered.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on conducting a systems review and establishing an advisory committee, see Trevor Wilson, "The Employment Systems Review: How to Involve Employees in Developing the Diversity Strategy," Chapter 7 in *Diversity at Work: The Business Case for Equity* (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons Canada Ltd., 1996).

work experiences that employers seek, but they may have experience and skills that will make them good performers. Potential candidates are often discouraged from applying for specific jobs because of the way job requirements are described in the job posting. Even when they do apply, their resumes are often culled during the applicant screening process because they lack specific experience or credentials.

According to consultant Trevor Wilson, if organizations are not attracting diverse people when there is a pool available and qualified, they are saying “either none are the best or there is something wrong with the employment system.” While numbers do not explain the underlying problem, under-representation of people with disabilities should be viewed as the flashing red light that tells you something is wrong.<sup>3</sup> Chances are, the organization’s employment systems need attention.

Some examples of common practices that can have an adverse impact on people with disabilities include:

- recruiting through word of mouth, through walk-ins or by advertising in mainstream media;
- posting jobs on Web sites that are not easily accessed by people with visual disabilities;
- not having accessible facilities;
- failing to standardize interviews and ensure sensitivity to cultural, gender or other attitudinal biases;
- using employment tests that are not good predictors of skills required in a job and that are difficult for people with certain disabilities (e.g., learning or physical) to perform;
- having inflexible hours and work processes that fail to accommodate individual needs; and
- having promotion systems that do not allow people in entry-level roles to advance.

Poor recruitment practices are a legacy of decades of plentiful labour. Employers have tended to focus on screening candidates out rather than on attracting the best and the brightest in. As a result, recruitment and selection practices of Canadian employers are, perhaps, the most poorly executed stages in the employment continuum.



### Understand Job Requirements

One of the most common barriers encountered by job seekers with disabilities is the job posting itself and, more specifically, stated job requirements that may not reflect skills and abilities truly needed to perform the function. For instance, many jobs that are advertised as requiring a university degree do not need this credential for effective performance of the job. Credentialism is often a barrier because it overlooks the many talents and experiences of individuals. In reality, there are usually a variety of ways a job can be performed.<sup>4</sup> Experienced employers report that people with disabilities may not use conventional approaches to completing a task but still get the job done efficiently. In some cases, experience has taught individuals with a disability to overcome obstacles in creative ways that can be transferred to the workplace setting. Hence, job requirements should focus on desired results rather than activities.

### Job Analysis

An objective job analysis is a useful tool to help work through the essential components and desired outcomes of a job. A thorough job analysis will clarify the purpose and scope of the job, typical work flows, and the skills and behaviours required to perform the duties. The analysis can be used to determine physical or cognitive

<sup>3</sup> Trevor Wilson, in *Diversity at Work: The Business Case for Equity*, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> Sandra Carpenter, “Understanding Job Requirements...What Kind of Job Is It?” in *Focus on Ability: An Employer’s Handbook on Employment and Disability*, The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, 1993.

demands or other physical working conditions that are pertinent to some people with disabilities. It is especially important when considering a candidate with a disability that the analysis focus on desired job outcomes as opposed to processes or methods.

Second, the analysis can be used to determine essential qualifications and articulate the requirements in a job description. For instance, is a licence or credential of some sort necessary or should the candidate be asked for an

equivalent combination of skills, experiences and education? Organizations also use these analyses to assess job level, roles and responsibilities, and appropriate compensation. They are used in the recruitment process to develop the job posting and interview questions and later to develop criteria for performance appraisals and promotions.

Typically, the information for use in the job analysis is gathered through a structured questionnaire asking about duties, responsibilities, knowledge, and the skills and

## CAPTURING KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A JOB USING JOB ANALYSIS

An objective, systematic job analysis is a fundamental tool for understanding the essential requirements of the job and ensuring people with diverse backgrounds and different formative experiences, including people with disabilities, are assessed fairly in job competitions. Some key components of a job analysis include:

*Position title*—Where and how does the job fit into the organization, and what is its status in relation to other jobs?

*Reports to*—Who does the position report to, and what is the level of accountability?

*Job purpose*—What is the incumbent's primary function and overall purpose, and why does the job exist?

*Key objectives*—What are the major responsibilities and essential functions?

*Typical activities*—What are the major duties and essential functions of the job, and what proportion of time is spent on each?

*Key relationships*—Identify interdependencies within and outside the work group, with other departments and with outside customers, vendors and suppliers. What is the scope, purpose and frequency of contacts?

*Key competencies*—What are the behaviours and competencies required to be successful in a role? Some examples of competencies include:

Decision making—How much supervision is required/how many are supervised?

Problem solving—Does the job require resourcefulness and initiative?

Communications—Are oral or written communications involved? What skills of persuasion are required?

*Formal education or equivalencies*—How much formal education is required to do the job? Why? What other types of experience can replace the formal qualifications?

*Experience*—How much similar or related work experience is necessary to start the job? How much is necessary to be proficient?

*Other key skills or knowledge*—What background or skills will be required in the job? For example, a political reporter should be knowledgeable about public affairs.

*Performance standards*—How will performance be measured?

*Working conditions*—What are the physical surroundings and their relative quality in terms of lighting, ventilation, temperature, comfort? Are there disagreeable conditions or hazards?

*Physical demands*—What are the physical requirements in terms of lifting, walking, repetitive motions, standing or sitting for prolonged periods?

Sources: Carswell's *Compensation Guide*: "Write Job Descriptions to Improve Hiring Accuracy" at [www.workplace.ca](http://www.workplace.ca)

abilities required to do the job. There are many other ways to collect the information. Some employers use a process called “job shadowing.” At Casino Niagara, for instance, a staff specialist in its Special Needs Department actually assumes a job and performs the job function. Having an “outsider” perform the role ensures a more objective assessment of key duties and associated processes and, in turn, determines requirements. For key components of a systematic job analysis, see box on page 21.

### *Job Descriptions*

Once a thorough job analysis has been done, a job description is prepared, which in turn can be adapted for job postings. A well-written job description, based on proper job analysis, is an effective tool for ensuring that bias does not creep into the recruitment process. The job description should include realistic expectations and qualifications that pertain to the job. It should focus on skills, abilities and outcomes desired, not credentials and prerequisites unless they are bona fide job requirements.

# Chapter 4: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION



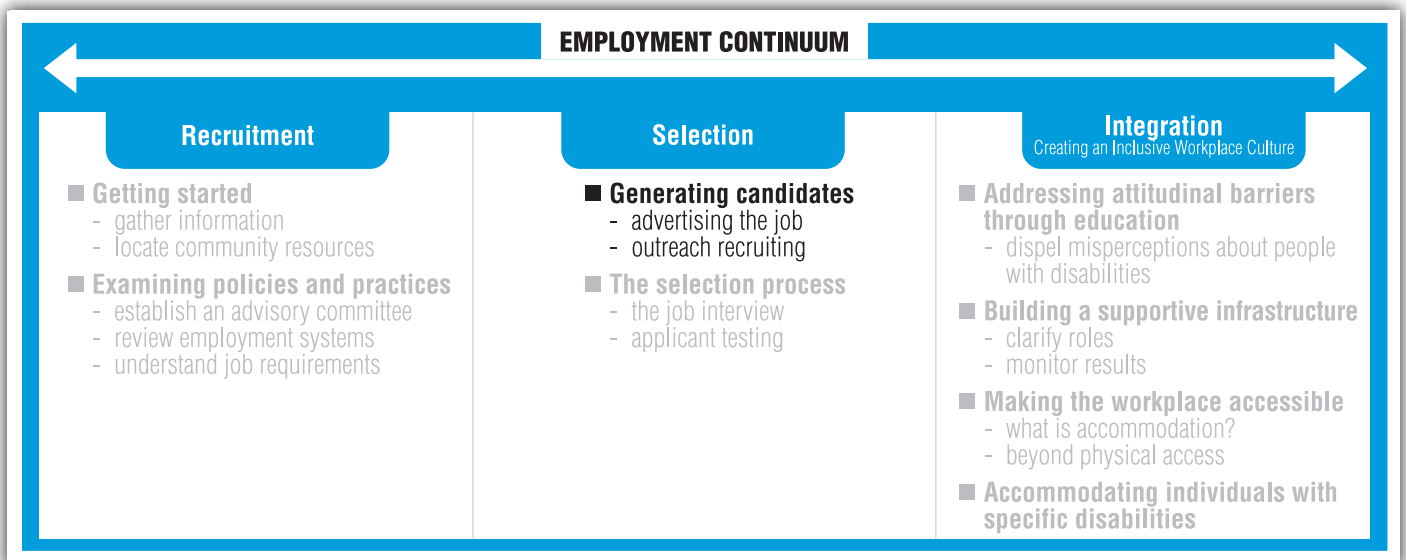
This chapter is designed to help employers improve recruitment and selection of persons with disabilities. Tips on improving hiring practices and examples of good employer practices are included, along with lists of helpful resources.

## GENERATING CANDIDATES

### Proactive Recruitment Strategies

Much of the difficulty organizations have encountered in locating job candidates with disabilities can be attributed to problems with recruitment practices (see box, page 24). Ontario employers that participated in the Conference Board's survey reported that, while they had undertaken a range of initiatives aimed at hiring and retaining a diverse workforce, efforts to attract external candidates stood out as an area where activity had yielded modest results.

When generating a candidate base, it is important to be proactive and look beyond mainstream sources for recruits. The Internet, for instance, is becoming a popular recruitment tool, with the potential to reach candidates from diverse communities in a very targeted way. However, according to the results of our questionnaire, only 15 per cent of the Ontario-based employers who have used the Internet as a recruitment tool view it as very effective in attracting diverse candidates. This may be because organizations are posting jobs on corporate Web sites and job boards in a passive manner—expecting job candidates to come to them. The Internet can be used much more proactively, in a more targeted way, to broadcast opportunities to specific communities of people with disabilities through the agencies that provide employment support services.



While employers reported having put in place a range of initiatives to improve access to a broader pool of potential job candidates, many of these initiatives, such as Internet recruiting and advertising jobs in non-traditional locations, were perceived to have limited effectiveness. Generally, the more targeted the intervention, the more effective the initiative was felt to be.

## WHAT IS WRONG WITH TRADITIONAL RECRUITMENT PRACTICES?

Traditional recruitment practices have a tendency to reproduce the status quo. Below are some common recruitment practices and reasons why they can act as unintentional barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

### **Walk-ins and Referrals**

Many small and medium-sized employers (and increasingly, larger ones) rely on “walk-ins” or employee and word-of-mouth referrals. If your workforce is not already diverse, this can discourage people from applying who do not match your current workforce demographic. Consider more proactive methods of advertising that reach out to communities of people with disabilities.

### **Private Employment Agencies and Search Firms**

Many employers use employment agencies to locate and pre-screen applicants. Agencies often do not, unless directed by clients (or unless this is part of their advertised service), conduct extensive outreach to find candidates from diverse communities. Consider using local employment agencies that have a mandate to provide transitional employment placement services for people with disabilities.

### **Advertising in Mainstream Media**

Advertisements in the classified employment section of large-circulation national and regional newspapers will reach a larger audience, but will they attract candidates with disabilities? Maybe—depending on how the ad is written and whether it specifically welcomes applications from people of diverse backgrounds. Position descriptions in job ads often look for specific experience and/or credentials. A person with a disability may have equivalent experience that just as effectively predicts success in the role. Language can also be off-putting. For instance, many ads have a preamble in which they list a range of desired personality traits—e.g., “we seek a mobile, high-energy individual. . . .” Be careful that language does not exclude people with disabilities. A signalling statement, such as “We are an accessible employer,” will tell people with disabilities that their applications are welcome (see Motorola sample job ad).

### **Internet Recruiting**

It is true that recruiting on the Internet will increase the size of the audience for your job posting. Many employers send postings to third-party, highly visible Internet recruitment sites, such as Monster Board. This can dramatically increase the volume of applications received, many of which, however, will be highly unsuitable. To deal with the volume, some employers have increased their reliance on software that pre-screens and stores applications in data banks. Such software relies on keyword recognition search engines and may screen out candidates with disabilities whose valid qualifications do not match the computer's program. Recruiters responsible for screening resumé—whether internal staff or third-party contractors—should be trained to identify systemic biases and recognize equivalent qualifications.

## Advertising the Job to Candidates with Disabilities

Where you recruit and how you present the job advertisement are aspects of marketing. It is important, therefore, to think of the job candidate as a customer and understand the needs, interests and associations of the target market—in this case, people with disabilities. Your employee advisory committee can provide useful insights, for instance, about favourite cyber haunts, associations, newspapers and magazines.

Some tips for advertising your job to people with disabilities:

- Circulate postings to organizations that provide services to people with disabilities, including local agencies and campus special needs departments. In the job posting, indicate that your organization is accessible (see section on barrier-free design, page 41).<sup>1</sup>
- If you outsource recruitment, ensure search firms and private employment firms are aware that you

welcome candidates with disabilities. Consider sending your job orders to a firm that has experience in placing people with disabilities.

- Many communities host an annual job fair for people with disabilities. Consider getting involved by taking the lead or setting up a booth.
- Job postings should be available in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, accessible electronic formats (e.g., home page browsers for people who are blind) and plain language.
- Recruit from job bank services that seek to serve diverse communities. The federal government electronic job bank service is broadly inclusive. The Training Coordinating Group for Persons with Disabilities, an agency that provides services to Toronto area employers, operates “TCG LinkUp Employment Services,” an electronic bulletin board with job postings (see Resource 2, page 17, for contact information).

### *Job Posting Designed to Attract Diverse Candidates*



# **MOTOROLA**

## **Ready to realize your full potential?**

Motorola is a global leader in providing integrated communications solutions and embedded electronic solutions.

We are currently seeking engineering professionals in the following areas:

- Software Engineering—embedded, C, C++
- Electronics Engineering—Data, Video & Voice Communication and Networking Products

Please visit our Worldwide Web site at [www.motorolacareers.com](http://www.motorolacareers.com) to submit a resumé online (quote WDC301), to view current openings and for information on our products and culture. You may also fax a copy of your resumé to 905-507-7234 or e-mail to: [y17147@email.mot.com](mailto:y17147@email.mot.com).

For information about our Canadian Workplace Diversity initiatives, including accommodation, please contact: [email.yhum03@email.mot.com](mailto:email.yhum03@email.mot.com) or Tel 905-709-7217.

At Motorola, we value the diversity of people and products. Diversity at Motorola means a workplace where individual differences are recognized and appreciated, respected and responded to in ways that fully develop and utilize each person's talents and strengths.

905-507-7355. TTY 905-709-7293.



and Motorola are registered trademarks of Motorola, Inc. Copyright 2000 Motorola Canada Limited.

<sup>1</sup> Resource 2 lists several local agencies in Ontario; Resource 3 on page 45 lists some government assistance programs; and a list of campus special needs departments is provided in Appendix 2.

## Outreach Recruiting

Just like everyone else, people with disabilities have a wide variety of backgrounds, education and experience. Most who are highly skilled, educated and experienced are already in the workforce. They use the same media, contacts and job search techniques as the general population to identify new employment opportunities. There is a large segment of the population with disabilities, however, who for various reasons experience barriers to employment. These individuals frequently turn to agencies that provide job placement and transitional employment support. Ensuring that agencies are aware of your organization's employment needs is an effective way of locating job seekers within communities of people with disabilities.

*“Barriers encountered by people with disabilities often have more to do with the environment—i.e., attitudes of people and lack of social supports—than the disability itself.”*

Gail Fawcett, *Living with Disability in Canada: An Economic Portrait* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1996)



## Partnering to Develop Talent

Among the most significant barriers to employment for people with disabilities is lack of access to education and to formative, work-relevant experiences that help develop skills needed to compete for jobs. Some leading employers and community agencies have partnered to create innovative skills development programs that provide intensive, job-specific training for people with disabilities. This training prepares participants for a specific job role (e.g., Web page designer) and provides them with job-specific skills and industry knowledge. Training partnerships are customized to meet the specific needs of the employer partner. Typically, high-demand occupations are targeted in order to help sponsoring organizations fill skills shortages, thus creating a win-win situation for all stakeholders. Those programs we identified were up to six months in length and included classroom training as well as work placements.

One example of such a partnership is a call centre training program located in Toronto. The program is coordinated by Goodwill Toronto and involves numerous sponsoring organizations, including businesses such as American Express, Rogers Communications and the major banks, as well as local disability agencies. Candidates are pre-selected and sponsored by the participant companies. Program graduates are guaranteed jobs by their sponsor. For more details on how partnership training programs work, see Profile 6, featuring Wal-Mart Canada's retail training program.

If your organization is interested in partnering with an agency in your community to develop the talent you need, consider contacting CCRW or Goodwill in Toronto, Amity Goodwill in Hamilton, or the Ontario March of Dimes in various communities. Alternatively, your local disability coordinating agency may be able to refer you to an appropriate training partner located in your region. Contact information can be found in Resources 1 and 2 on pages 14 and 17.



## PROFILE 6: Wal-Mart Training Partnerships Let New Recruits Prove Their Value

When you enter Wal-Mart Canada's Agincourt store northeast of Toronto, chances are you will be greeted by Andrew. Andrew is friendly and outgoing. He knows everything that is going on in the store and is trained to perform a number of typical roles performed by retail staff, or associates, as Wal-Mart calls its employees. Andrew will direct you to the department with the goods you seek, and he plays a critical trouble-shooting role if a store emergency occurs. In fact, he has more formal training than most associates have when they are hired.

By the way, Andrew has a disability.

Andrew has always known that he wanted to work in customer service, because he loves people. However, he encountered some difficulty in finding full-time work after leaving school. Now he is keen to perform well in his chosen career in retail. In fact, he is still slightly amazed to have passed numerous pre-screening hurdles to be accepted into the 24-week Wal-Mart Canada retail associate training program.

The retail associate training program is designed and managed by the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) in partnership with federal and provincial governments. Goodwill Toronto is a key partner in training delivery.

The training program has been run for Wal-Mart in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver several times since 1996, and plans are underway for a Halifax session. Local agencies attached to the program recruit extensively through local disability services networks. Rigorous pre-screening ensures that candidates are suited for the retail environment and Wal-Mart's unique culture. Wal-Mart is responsible for final selection from short-listed applicants. Graduates are guaranteed jobs.

The first half of the program is classroom based. Students learn about the retail business and about "the Wal-Mart way." Curriculum also includes general skills, such as computer use, and soft skills like team-building and anger management. In the second half of the program, students are assigned to a particular store where they job-shadow and train in a number of associate roles. This was Andrew's favourite part of the program.

The program has provided a "win-win" for all involved. According to Wal-Mart's Darri Beaulieu, who has corporate responsibility for the program, the retention rate of graduates since courses began in 1996 is about 85 per cent, which is remarkable in retail, where annual turnover can exceed 30 per cent.

Diane Smith is personnel manager at the Agincourt store. She and the store manager are the champions at the store level. Diane cites three keys to success:

1. management support at the corporate and store levels
2. good communications
3. training

The Canadian president and CEO, Dave Ferguson, is an outspoken champion and a visible role model. He opens corporate training sessions and makes a point of attending graduation ceremonies. Wal-Mart is well-known for its highly motivational weekly staff meetings. The subject of integrating people with disabilities and providing this community with good customer service arises frequently.

As a result of short, regular training sessions on aspects of integrating people with disabilities into the store, as well as discussions at staff meetings, management and store associates are very well prepared and comfortable about working with a co-worker with a disability. Staff are also consulted on a regular basis on how to improve the training or any other aspect of the program that affects them. Store associates participate in hiring panels and act as sponsors, taking program participants under their wings and helping to train them.

The training program has benefited both Wal-Mart and its new associates with disabilities. Wal-Mart gains rigorously trained, enthusiastic new recruits. The introduction of Andrew and two of his classmates to the Agincourt store has brought managers and many associates together in a common cause that has uniquely enhanced culture and spirit at the store. Wal-Mart has also earned a reputation as a community leader and employer of choice for people who want an opportunity to be recognized for their ability. People with disabilities like Andrew have a genuine opportunity for a meaningful, fulfilling and sustainable career.

### COMPANY FACTS

Name: Wal-Mart Canada

Business profile: Retail department store

Canadian headquarters: Mississauga, Ontario

Number of employees: 38,750 in 166 stores across Canada

Web site: [www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com)

## PROFILE 7: The Glenn Crombie Centre for Disability Services at Cambrian College

Cambrian College is a community college in Sudbury. With the support of government, employers and citizens in the community, it has established The Glenn Crombie Centre for Disability Services, which is recognized as a centre of excellence in North America. On a campus of roughly 4,000 students, 700 with disabilities utilize its services.

The Centre provides these students with a range of accommodative aids and supports for any disability so that they can participate in regular classroom programs. Its staff of technicians custom-designs aids for students, which range from low-tech to very high-tech. In fact, the Centre is frequently approached by manufacturers of assistive technologies to beta test products.

Centre staff are extremely knowledgeable about tips and tactics for accommodating people with disabilities and do provide consultation

services to employers. Cambrian College has, itself, taken advantage of the Centre's resources and graduates to become a leading employer of people with disabilities.

The College is an excellent source of talent. If you are interested in recruiting from its pool of students or you would like general information on accommodative strategies, contact the Centre's Director, Susan Alcorn-MacKay, or visit its Web site at <http://homepages.cambrianc.on.ca/snrrc>.

### FACTS

Name: The Glenn Crombie Centre for Disability Services at Cambrian College

Location: Sudbury, Ontario

Web site: <http://homepages.cambrianc.on.ca/snrrc>

### Recruiting Skilled Graduates: Go to the Source

Youth with disabilities today are benefiting from special needs support systems in public schools and post-secondary institutions that allow them to participate in regular classroom programs (see Profile 7). Special needs departments established in many post-secondary institutions are in close touch with the students who use their services and are a terrific point of contact for employers who recruit on campuses. A list of Ontario colleges and universities and contact information for their special needs departments can be found in Appendix 2.

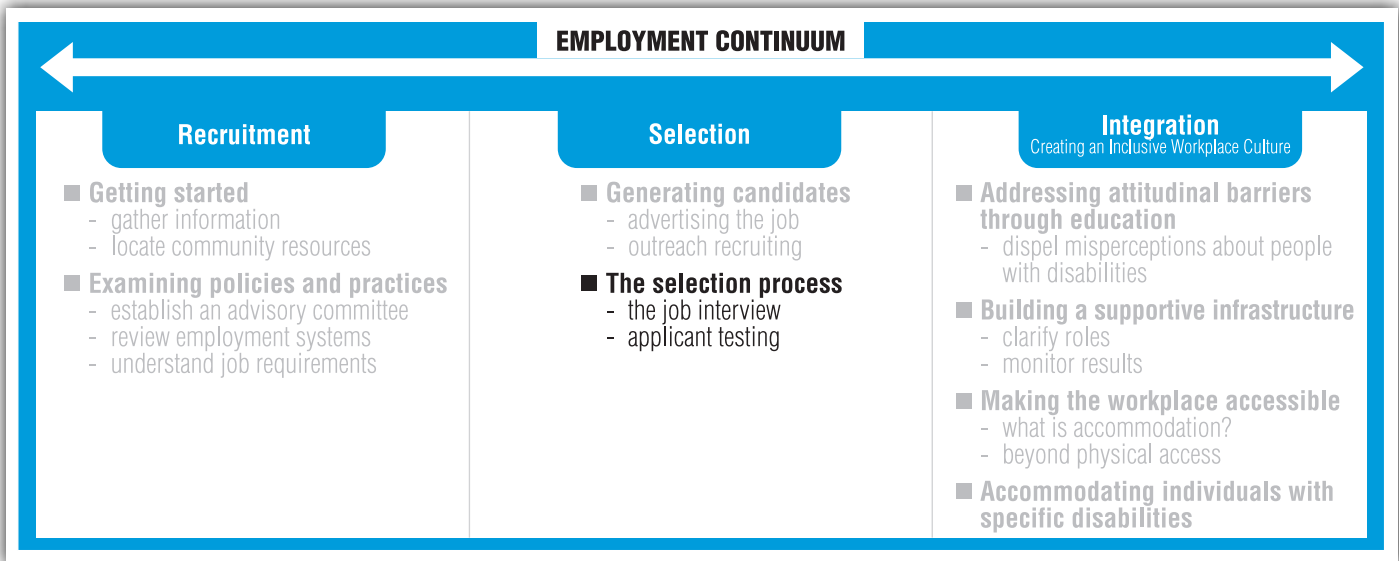
### Developing Talent for the Future

Getting job experience is difficult enough for youth as they make the transition from school into jobs and careers. Youth with disabilities face a double jeopardy. They are less likely to have part-time and summer jobs that provide work experience and help smooth the school-to-work transition. Internship programs are one way of providing work experience for people with disabilities. About 30 per cent of organizations that responded to the Conference Board's questionnaire have formal internship programs. IBM Canada is one example. IBM also co-sponsors a summer camp where youth with disabilities can develop computer-related skills. The Canadian Bankers Association (CBA) and five of its member banks—TD Bank Financial Group, Royal Bank of Canada, Scotiabank, Bank of Montreal, and Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce—have launched an internship

program called *ability edge* in the Greater Toronto Area. The program targets college and university graduates with disabilities who are interested in working in the financial services sector.

Some individuals may be eligible for training support through the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Contact your local ODSP office for information on how the program works: <http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS/page/services/odsp.html>. Resource 2, page 17, contains a list of local coordinating job placement agencies that may have experience in setting up internships or other types of job experience programs.





## THE SELECTION PROCESS

The purpose of the selection process is to identify the candidate with the qualities that best predict and ensure success in a role. Selection processes involving job candidates with disabilities need not differ significantly from those followed with other applicants. Consistency is the watchword. Interviews, tests and other screening tools should be based on the job description and standardized for all job applicants. This avoids discrimination and ensures that all applicants are evaluated on the basis of the same criteria.

### The Job Interview

Most employers rely heavily on the job interview to make their final selection among candidates. It is important to keep in mind that interview conversations that focus on past performance in jobs, at school or in recreational sports can work against candidates with disabilities, who often have different formative experiences. In addition, interview questions are often not standardized, which makes results difficult to compare (see accompanying box for some helpful interviewing tips).

A growing number of employers are striving to improve the reliability and predictive ability of the job interview. One such tool is *behavioural-based interviewing*. As the term suggests, interviewers use a structured interview format to probe for evidence of behaviours and competencies considered predictive of successful job performance. This approach helps remove systemic biases, such as over-emphasis on specific credentials or work experience. An example of a behaviour required for an accounting role is “detail orientation.” Required competencies might include

### TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING JOB CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

- Ensure interview locations are accessible by people with mobility impairments or other disabilities.
- Ask all candidates in advance, as a matter of course, whether they have any needs that will require special support or accommodation during the interview. Not all disabilities are visible.
- Be familiar with the Ontario Human Rights Code and/or legislation governing human rights in jurisdictions regulating your organization's workplace(s). The Ontario and Canadian human rights commissions have employer guidelines detailing questions that can and cannot be asked, along with alternative ways to phrase questions that extract necessary information.
- Ask only questions that are job related. General inquiries about health problems are prohibited by law. An employer can ask about physical ability, for instance, only in the context of a job requirement—e.g., the job requires moving heavy objects or strenuous activity.
- Applicant tests should be accessible and screened for biases. The mechanisms for gathering information might need to be adapted. For instance, a test could be administered orally if the applicant has a learning or visual disability.
- Ensure that interviewers are trained to recognize their biases. They should be trained to avoid making assumptions about whether a person can perform the essential functions of a role and encouraged to allow candidates to explain how they will fulfill key aspects of a job.

“business focus.” Candidates who demonstrate the appropriate qualities, whether or not they have a college designation, may have better aptitude for the role and higher potential than candidates with certificates. A well-designed behavioural-based interview, coupled with appropriate testing, is a better tool for making this kind of determination than a screening process based on credentials and an informal interview.

### Applicant Testing

In addition to the job interview, employers use numerous tools, such as aptitude, psychological or skills testing, to evaluate job candidates. Tests should be standardized and

administered by trained personnel. These tests should be objective and demonstrate skills specified in the job description as well as reviewed for any unnecessary bias. A person with a learning disability, for instance, may be disadvantaged by a written test assignment when required skill sets could be tested for in another way. Another individual might require additional time or an environment that reduces stress. Also bear in mind that a test administered to one candidate should be administered to all to avoid any semblance of bias. The tool itself should be convertible to Braille, large print format or even audio tape. Facilities as well as testing tools should, of course, be accessible. That means providing elevator access and accessible washrooms for people with mobility impairments.

Employers are striving to improve the predictive ability of interview and applicant testing techniques. Behavioural-based interviewing, for example, probes for evidence of behaviours and competencies considered predictive of successful job performance.

### LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT: SOME TIPS ON WORD USAGE

Language is a powerful and important tool in shaping ideas, perceptions and, ultimately, public attitudes. It is important to use terms that show respect for people with disabilities as individuals. The federal government's Office for Disability Issues has developed a guideline on the appropriate use of terminology when talking to or referring to someone who has a disability. The document was prepared with the media in mind but is also relevant in the context of the workplace and especially for conducting a job interview. Following are some excerpts.

- “Disabled” and “handicapped” are not the same thing. A disability is a functional limitation or restriction of an individual's ability to perform an activity. A “handicap” is an environmental or attitudinal barrier that limits the opportunity for a person to participate fully. Negative attitudes or inaccessible entrances to buildings are examples of handicaps.
- The word “disabled” is an adjective, not a noun. People are not conditions. Do not use “the disabled”; use “persons with disabilities.”
- Try to avoid categorizing persons with disabilities as either super-achievers or tragic figures. Choose words that are non-judgemental and non-emotional and are accurate descriptions. Avoid using “brave,” “courageous,” “inspirational” or other similar words that are routinely used to describe a person with a disability. Remember that the majority of persons with disabilities are average and typical of the rest of the population. Similarly, references that cause discomfort, guilt, pity or insult should be avoided. Words like “suffers from,” “stricken with,” “afflicted by,” “patient,” “disease” or “sick” suggest constant pain and a sense of hopelessness. While this may be the case for some individuals, a disability is a condition that does not necessarily cause pain or require medical attention.
- Avoid the use of words such as “burden,” “incompetent,” “defective,” “special,” etc., which suggest that persons with disabilities should be treated differently or excluded from activities generally available in the community.
- Persons with disabilities are comfortable with the terminology used to describe daily living activities. Persons who use wheelchairs go for “walks,” people with visual impairments “see” what you mean, etc. A disability may just mean that some things are done in a different manner; however, that does not mean the words used to describe the activity must be different.

Source: *A Way with Words: Guidelines and Appropriate Terminology for the Portrayal of Persons with Disabilities*, Office for Disability Issues, Human Resources Development Canada, <http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/disabl12/index-e.html>

## **SUMMARY TIPS FOR RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

- Conduct a review of your hiring and employment practices to identify and address systemic barriers to employment for people with disabilities.
- Do your homework. Identify resources and local agencies in communities where your organization operates. Make contact and learn about their services.
- Select your partners with care. For instance, if you outsource recruitment, ensure that agencies that do your recruiting are able to locate candidates with disabilities.
- Recruit on campuses that have good quality services for people with disabilities and a sizeable student enrolment. Not all campuses make this a priority.
- Most agencies that support and provide employment transition services for people with disabilities have Internet sites. Send your postings to key agencies and other electronic job posting sites.
- Understand the essential requirements of the job being offered and ensure that requirements are valid, fair and based on the job description.
- Focus on the potential of the candidate and his/her specific skills, not on aspects of the disability that are not job-related.
- Ensure that assessment mechanisms relate to job requirements and are effective predictors of likely success in the role.





# Chapter 5. INTEGRATION: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE



This chapter provides information on how to ready your organization and workforce to include people with disabilities. First, it examines organizational culture and how to address attitudinal barriers through education and communications. Second, it looks at the management system that underlies culture and the roles and responsibilities of key actors. Third, it addresses more tangible aspects of accessibility, including general tips on universal access and specific considerations that address the needs of people with different types of disabilities.

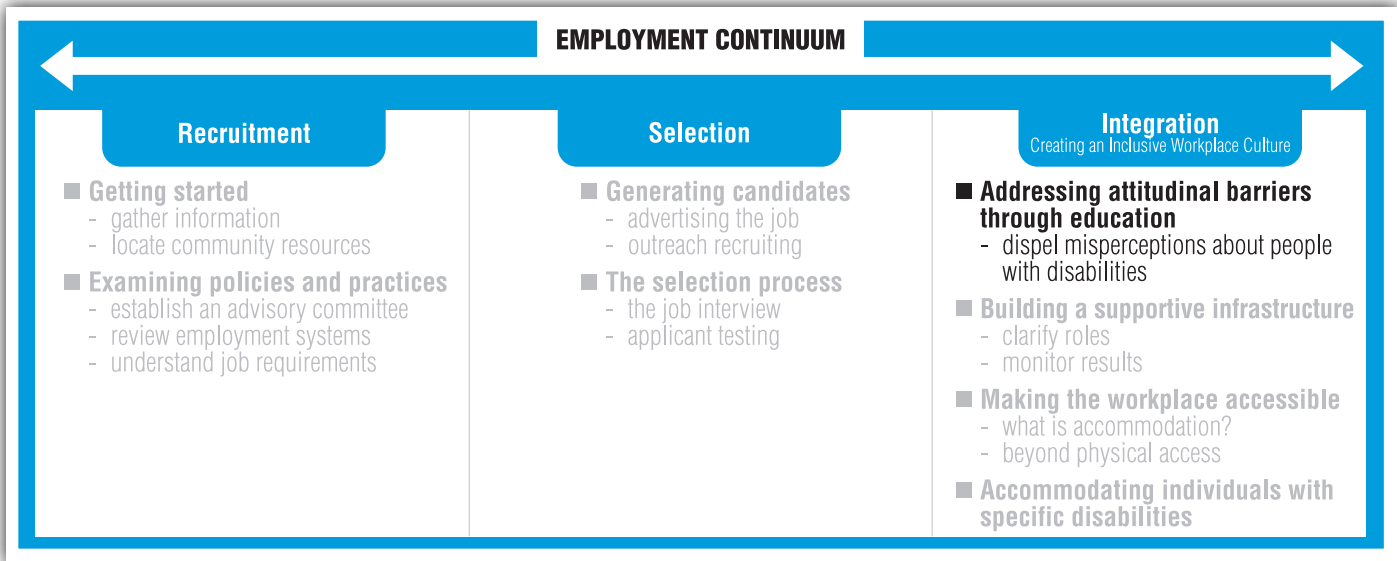
## READYING YOUR ORGANIZATION AND WORKFORCE

How can an organization create an environment that allows diverse individuals to perform to their potential? Better still, how can your organization create synergies from differences to deliver superb customer service, develop next-generation products and achieve competitive advantage? The steps that an organization takes to create an inclusive culture, accessible to people with disabilities, follow the same fundamental principles that some of the world's most long-lived, successful companies have used to build adaptable, high-performance cultures. Such organizations typically have strong leaders who clearly communicate the goals of the organization and the roles and expectations of members as well as an infrastructure that supports managers who are accountable for results.

High-performance organizations also provide their people with the tools and support needed to perform a role, including appropriate training and learning opportunities.

*“You cannot make your workplace barrier-free unless you are willing to do the training necessary to break down the attitudinal barriers.”*

Lauri Sue Robertson, Vice-President Operations, HANDIDACTIS Inc.



Attitudinal barriers and stereotypes persist in many Ontario-based organizations.

Challenges remain in gaining the commitment and support of employees, line managers and labour groups within firms. Fewer than 30 per cent of employers who participated in our questionnaire agreed that line management and union leadership “treat diversity as a high priority,” and slightly over one-third agreed that employee support for diversity initiatives is “excellent.”

Applied to the context of readying the workplace for people with disabilities, these principles can be translated as follows:

- Leaders take the lead in addressing stereotypic attitudes and educating managers and the general workforce about the capabilities of people with disabilities and the benefits of an inclusive workplace culture.
- The organization develops an infrastructure that supports managers and holds them accountable.
- The workplace is physically accessible, and individual needs are accommodated.
- Work skills training is provided where appropriate.

#### ADDRESSING ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS THROUGH EDUCATION

##### Dispel Misconceptions About People with Disabilities

Myths and stereotypes about people with disabilities persist in society, and workplaces merely mirror the world they inhabit. People with disabilities and those who support their efforts to work in mainstream environments will tell you that the largest single barrier they experience is not the disability itself but attitudinal barriers and misperceptions about their skills and ability to add value in a workplace setting. Hence, education to counter the myths and stereotypes is the first step in building an inclusive workplace culture.



Good-practice organizations take advantage of every opportunity to promote awareness of the capabilities of people with disabilities. They make formal training available to all employees and involve staff at all levels in initiatives to create a more inclusive culture.

## Awareness and Sensitivity Training

Several organizations that participated in our research told us how important training had been as a first step in changing attitudes and alleviating fears. There are many excellent organizations in Canada that offer training. Examples are provided in the various resource lists in this guide and can be accessed through the Gateway to Diversity Web site at [www.equalopportunity.on.ca](http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca). Your local coordinating placement agency (Resource 2, page 17) should be able to make a recommendation.

Often, trainers themselves have disabilities. They speak from experience and with credibility. Some employers have noted that seeing a person with a disability perform in a professional context can, in itself, be an effective way to open eyes and change mindsets.

Training sessions are typically launched with some publicity. Senior executives attend the first session, and training is then rolled out to managers and supervisors and finally to the general workforce. See box below for suggestions about messages to include in training sessions.

### SOME MESSAGES TO INCLUDE IN TRAINING SESSIONS

- *Changing demographics and the business case*—Creating a more accessible, inclusive workplace is a win-win proposition for everyone.
- *Break down myths and stereotypes about people with disabilities*—People with disabilities are capable and competent and require the same consideration and flexibility that any employee would desire and expect.
- *People with disabilities are just like everyone else*—They want the same things in life, including meaningful, sustained employment.
- *Typical barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities*—Not all barriers are physical. Often people's attitudes, formed by stereotypes and misperceptions, create the greatest barriers.
- *Providing equal opportunity does not always mean people are treated equally; it means treating people fairly*—Accommodations help level the playing field.
- *Some tips for interacting with people with disabilities*—It is human nature to be nervous about the unknown. Sessions should encourage staff to get to know the individual and support him or her as they would any new colleague.

About two-thirds of the large organizations and over a third of the smaller organizations that responded to our survey had implemented formal training, at least to supervisors. The majority felt training was effective, particularly in increasing co-worker comfort levels about interacting with people with disabilities.

### Make Learning Events Fun

Learning events can and should be fun for the participants. Icebreakers are an effective way of getting people's attention and imparting general knowledge in a fun way. (Appendix 3 contains an icebreaker quiz used at Motorola Canada.)

Also effective are simulation sessions in which participants "experience" what it is like to have a disability while attempting to perform typical workforce activities. At Casino Niagara, for instance, the senior executive team "assumed" various disabilities and attended the Casino as patrons. The executive team (and staff who served them) had fun with the event and learned a great deal in the process. Training is rolled out to the rest of the organization on a voluntary basis, and Casino Niagara's special needs coordinator, Tricia Pokorny, reports that her department has been challenged to fulfill the demand and develop further educational opportunities.

### Use Other Means of Promoting Awareness

Training should not be a one-shot affair. Successful organizations help staff build their knowledge base on how to break down barriers by providing information on a regular basis and by supporting individual initiative. Casino Niagara, for instance, has reimbursed the tuition costs of a number of employees who have enrolled in courses to learn American Sign Language.

Other suggestions and mechanisms that can be used to improve awareness and sensitivity about people with disabilities in the workforce include the following.

- *Communications from senior leaders*: Directed communications from senior management help reinforce messages delivered in training and signal that this issue is a priority. The more senior the sponsor, the better. At Wal-Mart, for instance, the CEO or store

manager introduces training sessions and takes part in the graduation ceremonies of a special training program for people with disabilities (see Profile 6, page 27).

- *Well-publicized mission:* Draft a mission statement and communicate the organization's commitment to hiring and integrating people with disabilities at staff meetings, on intranets and in newsletters. The mission statement might contain a preamble about the importance of respect and dignity in the workplace.
- *Provide tools:* Since managers and supervisors are ultimately responsible for supporting and driving diversity in their business units, they need access to background information to bolster their personal knowledge and training materials in support of their efforts to educate their staff. Develop or provide supervisor guides or show videos on removing barriers. Several disability organizations have developed videos, guides and other literature for employers, and these are made available at a relatively low cost. Here are some examples.
  - The Canadian Association for Community Living has produced a short video on hiring employees with an intellectual disability.
  - Future Abilities and Creative Employment (FACE) has developed a user-friendly guide on workplace accommodation.
  - CCRW offers a series of publications that provide employers with information on a range of issues, from recruitment through accommodation of individuals with specific types of disabilities.

- The Ontario Human Rights Commission publishes an inexpensive handbook for employers that is available through government bookstores across the province. Guidelines on accommodation are available online on the OHRC Web site, <http://www.ohrc.on.ca>.

- *Promotional events:* Take advantage of internal or external events to get the messages across. For example, many organizations recognize and participate in National Access Awareness Week in the first week of June. Some bring in guest speakers to address issues associated with removing barriers for people with various kinds of disabilities, and some participate in awards programs or special job placement programs that are organized by local disability agencies in conjunction with the annual event.
- *Partnerships:* Involve employees, union representatives and external disability agencies in initiatives to raise awareness among the general workforce (see Profile 8).

### Get Ready to Address Concerns

Introducing an employee with a disability to a work group can create anxiety for co-workers. Individuals with little exposure to people with disabilities may be fearful simply because they do not know what to expect or how to behave. In fact, there are some rules of etiquette on how to relate to people with specific types of disabilities, and these are easily taught. This will help ensure that relationships start off on the right footing. Later in this

## PROFILE 8: Labour Partnership Creates Opportunities at Loblaws

The right partnership can benefit everyone involved. A 10-year partnership involving Loblaws, its union and local community agencies has created employment opportunities for over a hundred individuals with developmental disabilities. Loblaws and its labour partner, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, have worked with local Community Living associations across Ontario to pre-screen and coach job candidates during an eight-week paid training program. Individuals receive instruction and work placement. Each trainee is linked up with a Community Living job coach, who provides on-the-job supervision and skills training. Successful candidates are hired in unionized, permanent part-time positions under the classification of Front End Clerk.

As the employee becomes independent and develops natural supports within the workplace, the job coach's involvement gradually decreases, although support remains available when needed.

According to employment consultant Dave Jenkins with the Toronto Association for Community Living, "We work with business owners and employees to make sure that the employment opportunity is a success. We don't set up people for failure; employers expect the same from our clients as any other employee."

Source: "A Successful Hiring Program Provides Food for Thought" on Gateway to Diversity Web site, [www.equalopportunity.on.ca](http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca)

### COMPANY FACTS

Name: Loblaws  
Business profile: Retail grocery  
Canadian headquarters: Toronto  
Number of employees: 17,000

chapter, we provide some specific tips; a rule of thumb, however, is to consult the individual with the disability directly about his or her requirements and preferences.

Three in 10 employers who completed our questionnaire agreed that negativity and fear within the workforce remain a key challenge in attracting and retaining individuals with disabilities.

### *Provide Information and Answer Questions*

Some individuals will have concerns about how working alongside a person with a disability will affect their roles. They may ask: Will this situation create extra work? Will my job change? Will the special consideration being given to this person be fair to the rest of us? People need an opportunity to ask questions, air views and provide input, either in a team meeting or in one-on-one conversations with their managers. When broaching the subject, keep the discussion focused on the issues and avoid any personal statements about the individual.

Having an expert who is knowledgeable about the specific disability address the work group is a good idea. Job placement agencies can help you find the right person. These agencies also often assign a “job developer,” whose role is to advise on necessary accommodations and facilitate the job candidate’s integration through the early weeks of a placement. The job developer can provide practical information on the etiquette of communicating with an individual with a specific disability. Agencies such as the Ontario March of Dimes, the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, for example, can also provide expert support.

### *Ensure Positive First Experiences*

It is important to manage the introduction of people with disabilities in such a way that the first experience is positive for everyone. Don Cunningham, executive director of the employment placement agency Work-Able Services Inc., carries out an audit in the work sites he is involved with to determine how accessible they are before he places an

individual. If the organization has had little exposure to people with disabilities, some of the subtler features of a barrier-free facility are unlikely to be in place. To ensure a successful placement, and to help those who have had little exposure to people with disabilities overcome fears and concerns, he will initially place people with less severe disabilities. Cunningham finds that cultures and facilities invariably evolve over time to become more inclusive, and he is then able to place individuals who require more supports.

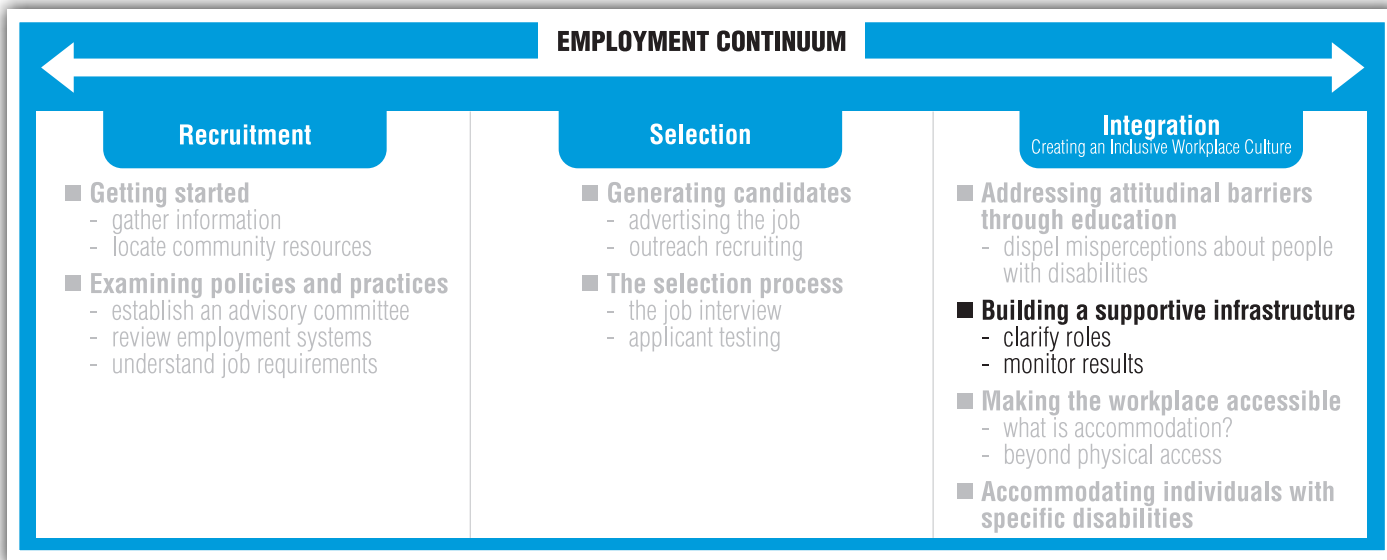


When introducing a person with a disability into the workplace, good-practice organizations are sensitive to the information needs of co-workers. An effective approach is to have the manager hold a work team information session, inviting questions from staff and drawing on expert resources where needed.

### **BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE**

*“Unless diversity management is integrated at the leadership level and permeates other functions in an organization, it will remain an HR-driven initiative...and will not yield results.”*

Bobby Siu, President Infoworth Consulting Inc.,  
*Canadian HR Reporter*, May 27, 2000.



### Clarify Roles

Education is an important first step in raising awareness and addressing misperceptions about the value individuals with disabilities can add to organizations. For change to be sustainable, an infrastructure that supports managers and makes them accountable for results is required. Change is initiated by leaders at the top. Human resources has a role in ensuring that infrastructure and programs are in place to support a more inclusive culture, but it is the manager who ultimately makes hiring decisions and is responsible for managing people. These relationships, roles and expectations should be clear.



### Leadership from the Top Creates the Imperative

As in any change initiative, top leaders play an important role as initiators and champions of building inclusive organizations. As team captains, they set policy direction, act as role models, use every opportunity to communicate objectives, and intervene where necessary. In best-practice organizations such as Wal-Mart and Casino Niagara, the chief executive officers are visibly committed to improving service for people with disabilities because they see them as a key market segment. Moreover, they believe that staff should mirror their diverse customer base. These leaders are highly visible, speaking frequently at internal and external functions. In effect, these organizations have staked their public reputations on providing good service to people with disabilities and on being top employers. That puts added pressure on the enterprise to ensure that the goals are achieved.

### HR Provides the Tools

Human resources departments (or whoever is responsible for staffing in an organization) play a pivotal role in ensuring that infrastructure and programs are in place to build and support an inclusive culture. They are the team trainers, coaches and equipment managers. HR provides the tools, but other stakeholders, namely managers and union leaders (where present), drive employment processes. For example, HR can provide a template on how to conduct a behavioural-based interview to minimize bias, but managers conduct the interviews.

Depending on the size of the organization, there may be a senior corporate function that coordinates the management

of diversity or even a special needs department that focuses exclusively on integrating people with disabilities. This function will have a specific mandate to coordinate initiatives focused on improving service to people with disabilities and hiring and integrating them. Usually the incumbent, often called the diversity or special needs coordinator, is attached to the human resources department, and the focus is primarily on hiring systems.

In the context of employment, the diversity or special needs co-ordinator is typically responsible for ensuring systems are barrier-free, for providing internal support to managers who hire and supervise people with disabilities, and for developing and executing strategy. This individual may also:

- coordinate and possibly design training;
- coordinate and act as a resource to employee committees;
- develop and execute a communications strategy;
- develop relationships with external partners;
- pre-screen candidates with disabilities;
- conduct or contract an accessibility audit;
- organize accommodative services or equipment.

### Managers Drive the Processes

Line managers are the team “athletes” who execute strategy on the organizational playing field. It is ultimately managers who are responsible for hiring and supervising people with disabilities. They will take this mandate more seriously if they:

- understand from a product and service standpoint that diversity is an operations issue and therefore an integral part of the business;<sup>1</sup> and
- are accountable for results and receive tangible, visible recognition for achievements (e.g., incentive compensation, mention in the company newsletter or a staff award).

Diversity manager Brenda Jean Lycett of Motorola Canada observes that supervisors, because of their responsibility for hiring, firing and performance evaluations, may be more uncomfortable than staff when working directly with the person with a disability. According to Lycett, “It is important that managers who are responsible for people with disabilities have the knowledge, support and resources to make the placement successful.”



Good-practice organizations interpret management of diversity as a multifaceted business imperative. It is viewed as an issue and an opportunity that should be managed and aligned across key business functions, not just human resources. These organizations’ infrastructures are in place in each key functional area so that roles and responsibilities are clear and initiatives are materially supported.

### Monitor Results

Progress towards the goal of creating an inclusive organization should be tracked and measured. Beyond typical measures such as hiring targets and progress towards representational goals, however, it is important to be sensitive to the interpretation of the numbers.<sup>2</sup> In the case of people with disabilities, this might include measures that track changes in:

- *perceptions and attitudes*—measured by polling employees through surveys or focus groups;
- *improved accessibility*—measured by conducting an accessibility audit and monitoring efforts to eliminate gaps; and
- *access to job candidates*—measured by tracking and assessing returns on outreach activities.

According to Brenda Jean Lycett, it is often difficult to know if certain activities are worth the time invested. She says that tracking and measuring the value of activities

1 Bobby Siu, *Canadian HR Reporter*, May 27, 2000.

2 Nan Weiner, *Employment Equity: Making It Work* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1993), p. 271; and Trevor Wilson, *Diversity at Work: The Business Case for Equity*, pp. 80–81.

and relationships will help focus efforts where there is return on investment and, in so doing, support the business case. For instance, networking with community agencies is extremely labour intensive but very important for developing outreach recruiting contacts. She recommends

tracking interactions in terms of numbers of job postings sent, number of resumé received, number of interviews and number of hires. Over time, you will be able to measure the cost-benefit of specific relationships and identify your best suppliers.

### PROFILE 9: IBM Taps the Talents of Employees with Disabilities

Technology has been of tremendous benefit to many people with disabilities. As technology evolves, however, it may create new challenges as quickly as it solves the old. That has been the experience of IBM Corporation as it has shifted its global information systems to a Web-based environment. This has resulted in accessibility challenges, particularly for employees with visual disabilities.

IBM has made a significant commitment to solving technical issues related to access to products and services, both for employees and for customers. The two, in fact, are interdependent, as Susan Turner, Director of Workplace Diversity in Canada, explains. It is by leveraging the collective problem-solving skills of its workers who have disabilities that IBM has been able to make advances in product development. Descriptions of a wide range of accessible hardware and software technologies can be found on IBM's dedicated Web site at [www.ibm.com/able/hr](http://www.ibm.com/able/hr).

In order to support its employees who have disabilities, IBM has a global special needs group, based in Austin, Texas. Its mandate is to ensure that all Web-based, integrated applications are fully accessible to people with disabilities. The special needs group, in turn, has established three global committees (for employees with visual, mobility and hearing disabilities) that form task forces and inform the corporation of ways to meet its commitments, both to its employee population and to its customers who have disabilities.

IBM's global Web-based network for people with visual disabilities, for example, has between 60 and 70 members. Every day, says Turner, there are six to 12 notes on specific hardware and software issues. This feedback is funnelled to the special needs group and/or to product development teams, as appropriate. Canadian Rejean Proulx, based in Markham, is the leader of this particular network. Recently, he has been involved in the corporate development of a new product called Home Page Reader, which helps people who are blind to navigate the Web using voice synthesis technology.

At the national level, IBM Canada supports its employee population with disabilities in a number of ways. For example:

- IBM Canada has established a diversity council to provide input on more local concerns. For instance, some employees found

the busy intersections near IBM's Markham headquarters difficult to navigate. The company worked with the city to have audible traffic signals installed.

- While average costs of accommodation are low, IBM has encountered situations where retrofits of a work site are costly. Therefore, it has set up a centralized "accommodation fund" to help departments defray costs.
- Because developing a talent pipeline for the future is another priority for IBM Canada, the company has a student internship program. It also sponsors SCORE, a two-week technology summer camp in partnership with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. To encourage youth with disabilities to think about preparing themselves for careers in technology, IBM is also very active at the community level—at job fairs and conferences—in an attempt to get its message out.

For IBM, keeping pace with rapidly evolving technological developments is only part of its corporate commitment. The company also strives continuously to maintain its position as leader. By leveraging the special knowledge of its employees with disabilities, it has carved out a leadership position in developing accessible technologies that benefit employees and customers alike, creating a business advantage for IBM.

#### COMPANY FACTS

Name: IBM Canada

Business profile: Marketing, sales and service of IBM products in Canada and Caribbean North District as well as manufacturing and development operations that include a semiconductor packaging plant in Bromont, Quebec, and a software solutions laboratory and e-business solutions laboratory in Toronto. Canadian subsidiary companies include Information Systems Management Corporation (ISM), Object Technology International Inc., and Polar Bear Software Corporation.

Canadian headquarters: Markham, Ontario

Number of employees: 17,624

Web site: <http://www.can.ibm.com>

## CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Creating a more inclusive culture is an exercise in fundamental change management that begins with a directive at the most senior level, is integrated into management practices and is tracked to monitor progress towards goals. Are the following items in place in your organization?

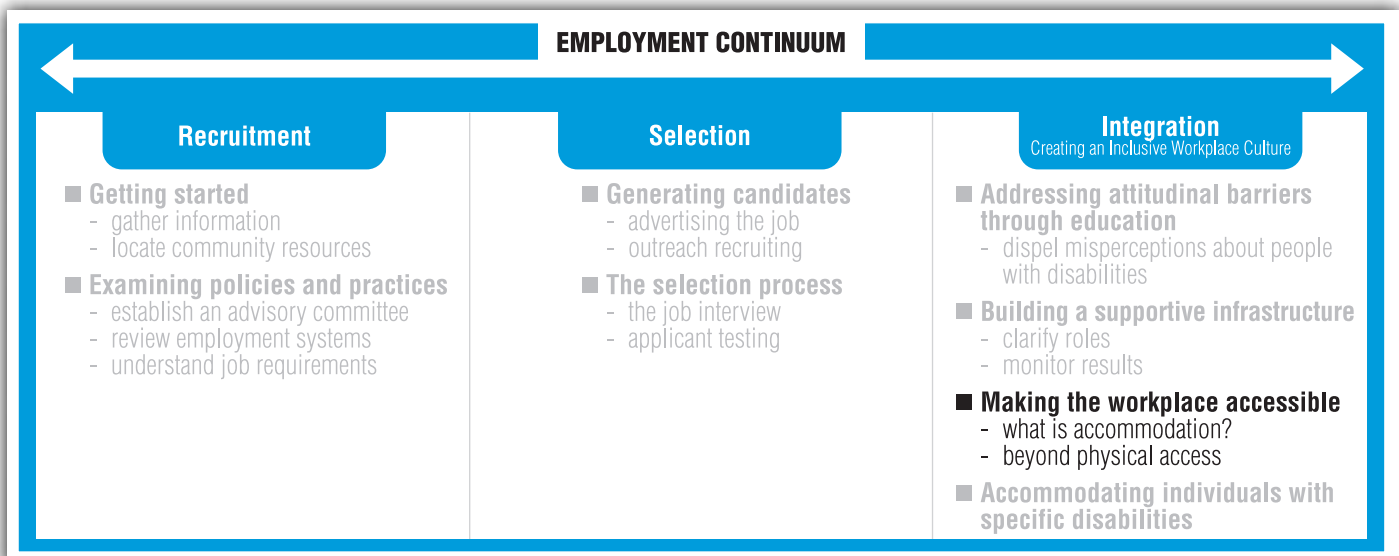
- ✓ Is leadership providing clear focus and direction?
- ✓ Does management understand the link between achieving business objectives and hiring people with disabilities?
- ✓ Are action plans in place to execute strategy with timetables and deliverables?
- ✓ Have sufficient resources been committed?
- ✓ Are the roles of managers who hire and supervise staff clear in terms of their responsibility to promote the organization's diversity management objectives?
- ✓ Are managers held accountable for creating an inclusive culture?
- ✓ Are they rewarded if they are successful?
- ✓ What is the role of the human resources department, and is it providing appropriate support to managers?
- ✓ Are there simple, clear measures in place to track progress?

## MAKING THE WORKPLACE ACCESSIBLE

Creating accessible workplaces is good for customers, good for staff and good for business. The third step in readying the workplace is to improve its general accessibility and develop information sources and contacts to turn to for assistance in solving specific issues in accommodation as they arise. Beyond concerns around cost and around the physical nature and pace of some work, employers in our study found this step in the employment continuum easiest to manage. Indeed, in our survey of Ontario-based workplaces, virtually all had implemented some accommodative measures to assist people with disabilities. What's more, they indicated a general willingness to implement further accommodative measures as demand surfaced.

*“People with disabilities vary in the extent to which their condition limits their ability to work. Of roughly 9 per cent of the workforce who have disabilities, most (85 per cent) report some limitation at work. Fewer than 20 per cent, however, require any form of accommodation, and the vast majority of those require one or two supports at the most.”*

Statistics Canada, Health and Activity Limitation Survey, 1991.



## What Is Accommodation?

Accommodation means ensuring that facilities and products are accessible to customers and to prospective and current employees. In the context of employment, accommodation encompasses any modification or support that allows a person to do his or her job. This includes altering architectural features of the building, adapting work processes, and providing tools that an individual uses in the course of daily work.<sup>3</sup>

*“It seems as long as we use the word ‘accommodation,’ it is perceived as a special or costly initiative only for specific people. The truth is, employers accommodate employees all the time through flex time, software enhancements, office supplies, etc.”*

Brenda Jean Lycett, Manager, Workplace Diversity,  
Motorola Canada Ltd.

The term “accommodation” is sometimes used interchangeably with the terms “universal access” or “universal” or “barrier-free design.” According to the Neil Squire Foundation, work environments that utilize universal design are “accessible, convenient and comfortable for all.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, universal design principles ensure that environments are accessible to a wider variety of people of all ages and abilities. For instance, curb cuts in sidewalks were designed for people in wheelchairs and motorized scooters, but those curb cuts also benefit people with strollers and even skateboarders and cyclists.<sup>5</sup>

Good design also encompasses ergonomics and proactive health and safety practices and thus benefits people who do not have disabilities. Moreover, as our population ages,

the number of Canadians with disabilities is increasing; hence, the need for universally accessible facilities will increase in the future. Some principles of universal access include:

- equitable use or accessibility to everyone;
- flexibility;
- convenience;
- simple and intuitive use;
- wider tolerance for lack of precision;
- low physical effort; and
- injury prevention.<sup>6</sup>

Conference Board research findings suggest that employers are much better at accommodating the needs of existing employees than attracting job candidates with disabilities. A majority of respondent organizations have implemented at least some workplace practices to accommodate persons with disabilities. The top five (with more than 50 per cent of firms reporting the initiative) include:

- modified duties;
- flexible hours/scheduling;
- workspace/equipment modifications;
- building modifications; and
- assistive devices.

The Canadian Standards Association publishes a standard on barrier-free design<sup>1</sup> that specifies how to make buildings accessible and safely usable by people with physical or sensory disabilities. The Ontario Building Code contains minimum barrier-free standards that can be obtained from the province by contacting Publications Ontario online at [www.gov.on.ca/MBS/english/publications.2](http://www.gov.on.ca/MBS/english/publications.2)



- 1 Contact the Canadian Standards Association online publications store at: <http://www.csa-intl.org/onlinestore/welcome.asp>. The cost for the *Standard on Barrier-Free Design* is \$65.
- 2 For mail order, call 1-888-361-0003 or visit [www.orderline.com](http://www.orderline.com).

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from definitions provided in “Working Together: An Employer’s Resource for Workplace Accommodation, Future Abilities and Creative Employment,” and in “Workplace Accommodation: Opening Doors for Everyone,” presented by Rachele Clark and Cathie Kissick of Neil Squire Foundation at Tapping the Talent of People with Disabilities Seminar, organized by The Conference Board of Canada and held in Ottawa in April 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Sandra Carpenter, “The Electronic Curb Cut: Driving Technology by Disability,” in *WORKink*, originally published in *Abilities Magazine, Canada’s Lifestyle Magazine for People with Disabilities*, Summer 2000, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> *Universal Design in the City Beyond 2000*, Canadian Institute for Barrier-Free Design Inc., [www.arch.umanitoba.ca/UofM/CIBFD](http://www.arch.umanitoba.ca/UofM/CIBFD)

## Accommodation Doesn't Have to Be Expensive

While close to half of the Ontario-based employers we surveyed agreed with the statement that accommodations are expensive, we found that often it is the perception of cost rather than the actual cost that prevents employers from being more proactive in making workplaces accessible. We also learned that solutions need not be costly or complex. Indeed, research suggests that while costs can range considerably, depending on the type, number and severity of the disability(ies), roughly half of people with disabilities require no accommodation at all. What's more, only 20 per cent of accommodations cost more than \$500,<sup>7</sup> and about half of accommodations cost nothing at all!

### SAMPLE ACCOMMODATIONS AND COSTS

- Changing a desk layout from the right to the left side for a data entry operator who has a shoulder injury (\$0).
- Supplying a telephone amplifier for a computer programmer who is hard of hearing (\$70).
- Using an articulating keyboard tray to alleviate the strain of repetitive motion and carpal tunnel syndrome (\$150).
- Providing a special chair for a district sales agent to alleviate pain caused by a back injury (\$400).
- Providing a drafting table, page turner and pressure sensitive tape recorder for a sales agent paralyzed from a broken neck (\$1,100).

Source: The Job Accommodation Network Canada (JANcana) at <http://216.13.114.21/workink/national/jancana.htm#facts>

- **Be flexible**—Most jobs can be modified in some way without jeopardizing the essential outputs or incurring substantial costs. For example:
  - *Work modification*—A slight redefinition of duties or alteration to work flow may allow the individual to still perform the essential elements of a job and avoid expensive alterations to facilities.
  - *Flexible hours*—Hours of work may need to be altered to accommodate public transit schedules or availability of attendant care. Some organizations also allow banked overtime or sick time and offer personal leaves so that people can take time off work when necessary.
- **Provide supports**—There are literally thousands of supportive devices, ranging from high-tech to low-tech, from simple amplifying or magnification devices to large-keypad keyboards and Web browsers with voice synthesizers.
  - *Office tools*—Many office tasks require handling of paper and telephone communications. There are many devices available (e.g., electric staplers and hands-free telephone receivers) that will aid people with muscular/agility problems.
  - *Personal services*—An individual may need attendant care or interpretive services to attend functions such as meetings. People with disabilities are eligible for

## Beyond Physical Access

### Some Management Principles

As mentioned earlier, workplace accessibility includes considerations beyond building access. It also applies to the tools we use and the routines we perform in our daily work. When developing accommodations for an individual, there are three management principles to keep in mind:

- **Consult with the individual**—Listen and ask what the person's needs are. As the box Job Accommodation Basics (page 44) illustrates, the most successful accommodation lies in individual solutions. The person with the disability is in the best position to say what he or she needs. Many adjustments can be implemented by listening, problem solving and applying common-sense solutions.



Good-practice organizations look beyond physical accessibility to consider how their workplaces could be made more accessible to the broadest possible range of people. They follow the three principles of consultation with the individual, flexibility in work processes and scheduling, and support by providing necessary tools.

<sup>7</sup> Teresa Andreychuk, "Job Accommodation: What Do Employers Need to Know?" in *Articles for Employers*, WorkInk Web site, <http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/wink.htm>

funding of some support services through the Ontario Ministry of Health (see Resource 3, page 45).

- *Computer enhancements*—Developments in computer hardware and software have been a liberator for people with a range of disabilities. For those who use computers, there are a number of often inexpensive solutions that improve access. Examples of assistive technologies for people with specific disabilities can be found on page 46.

## JOB ACCOMMODATION BASICS

### *There is no substitute for good communication*

It is important that your workplace environment be one where employees feel comfortable in disclosing information and seeking assistance. An open environment can be created by:

- demonstrating respect for confidentiality and the dignity of each person;
- flexibility in administration of policies, procedures and working conditions;
- positive attitudes that turn problems into challenges and learning opportunities;
- willingness to explore creative solutions to situations;
- an organizational climate where everyone feels included, valued and accepted; and
- using language that is free of stereotypes and focuses on the person, not the disability.

### *The key to successful accommodation lies in individual solutions*

The foremost expert on which job accommodation will work best is the person with the disability:

- Listen to what your employee tells you about his/her disability and what he/she thinks is needed.
- Ask questions when you don't understand.
- Use the available resources specializing in specific disability issues.
- Be creative, flexible and innovative.
- Allow your employee to test any special equipment or device before you purchase.

Source: *Working Together: An Employer's Resource for Workplace Accommodation, Future Abilities and Creative Employment*. Available from Human Resources Development Canada.



## Common Access Issues and Some Accommodative Solutions

Most disabilities affect individuals in one of the two following ways.

- **Mobility/agility limitations**—This affects how people move around. People with mobility/agility disabilities may require wheelchairs or have some motor skills impairment.
- **Information processing**—Many disabilities affect the way people receive or process information. People with visual, hearing and learning disabilities require information in alternative formats.

Whether the issue is one of physical access or access to routine workplace communications, accommodation should encompass such considerations as the following.

- **Safety and/or emergency response procedures**—People who are deaf require signage and other visual cues; people who are blind need audible and tactile cues; and people with physical disabilities might need a customized “escape” plan.
- **Routine conduct of meetings**—Individuals may be affected by physical accessibility, environmental conditions (air quality, lighting too bright or too dim), or access to visual or oral presentation material. Solutions exist for people with specific disabilities (e.g., note takers or interpreters for the deaf).
- **Learning and development opportunities**—People with disabilities may have difficulty participating in traditional classroom training for reasons of physical accessibility or because course materials are in inaccessible formats. There are many training alternatives to

### RESOURCE 3—Ontario Government Programs

Program	Ministry	Reference/Contact Information
<p>Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A program that provides income support for people with disabilities and employment supports for people with disabilities who want to work.</li> </ul>	Community and Social Services	<a href="http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS/page/services/odsp.html">http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS/page/services/odsp.html</a>
<p>Workplace Accessibility Tax Incentive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provides tax deductions to firms to accommodate</li> <li>• job candidates at the interview stage; and</li> <li>• newly hired employees who require accommodations.</li> </ul> <p>Examples of eligible deductible expenses include: attendants, job coaches or intervenors; modified equipment, special lighting and information communications systems. Individuals must meet certain conditions to qualify, e.g., be unemployed over previous 12-month period.</p>	Finance	<p><i>Corporations Tax Act</i>, subsection 8(15.30), and <i>Ontario Income Tax Act</i>, section 8.4</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.on.ca/FIN/english/tb99-1e.htm">http://www.gov.on.ca/FIN/english/tb99-1e.htm</a></p>
<p>Assistive Devices Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– helps people with long-term disabilities obtain needed equipment and supplies. Qualified individuals must apply, and examples of assistive devices include: artificial limbs, orthopaedic braces, wheelchairs, hearing and breathing aids.</li> </ul>	Health and Long-Term Care	<p>1-800-387-1154</p> <p>TTY: 1-800-387-5559</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.on.ca/health/english/program/adp/adp_mn.html">http://www.gov.on.ca/health/english/program/adp/adp_mn.html</a></p>
<p>Special Education Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provides school boards with special education funding for:</li> <li>• special education programs and services that address the full range of exceptionalities; and</li> <li>grants for students with high-cost specialized equipment and classroom support needs.</li> </ul>	Education	<a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/funding.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/funding.html</a>
<p>Designated Parking Permit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– allows people with disabilities, whether vehicle passengers or drivers, access to designated parking spaces and exemptions from municipal traffic by-laws.</li> </ul>	Transportation	<p>Licensing Administration Office</p> <p><a href="http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/vehicle/disabled.htm">http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/vehicle/disabled.htm</a></p>

the classroom, and course materials can be made available in a variety of formats. Provision of an aide or interpreter may be necessary if other alternatives are unavailable.

Many organizations specializing in workplace accommodation services will conduct a review or audit of the physical workspace and typical work processes to flag issues and gaps in facilities and practices that affect people with disabilities. *Barrier-Free Employers: A Practical Guide for Employment Accommodation for People with Disabilities*, an online guide published by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, provides examples of common office items or typical workplace situations where accommodation may be appropriate (see box for some excerpts).

## RETURN TO WORK OF EMPLOYEES WHO BECOME DISABLED

Employees who become disabled during their careers, whether through accident or because of illness, can face enormous challenges returning to the workplace—particularly if the disability makes it difficult or impossible to return to their previous roles. Early and safe return-to-work programs help to return employees to suitable employment quickly and with little or no loss of earnings. Where workplace injury has occurred, employers under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board are obligated to contact the individual as soon as possible after the injury is incurred, to maintain communication throughout recovery and reintegration, and to re-employ the individual. For more information, see [www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca).

### EXAMPLES OF EMPLOYMENT ACCOMMODATION

Acquiring accessibility software or constructing barrier-free workplaces to accommodate an employee or employees is a good investment all around. Remember, there is no catch-all solution—not all deaf people require sign language interpreters; not all blind people read Braille; and not all people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair.

Following are some examples of typical workplace situations where accommodation may be appropriate.

#### Furniture

- Arrange office furniture to compensate for right or left side dexterity; this also promotes ease of access and reach.
- Install suitable flooring to promote ease of movement.
- Adjust the height of shared items such as photocopiers, printers and fax machines to promote ease of access and reach.

#### Meetings/interviews

- Provide sign language interpreters to facilitate verbal and visual interaction and communication.
- Change the venue if necessary to promote ease of access; certain venues are more accessible than others.

#### Accessibility of common spaces

- Widen hallways and entrances to workspaces and common areas if necessary to promote ease of access and movement.
- Install access ramps where necessary to promote ease of access and movement.
- Ensure that washroom facilities are accessible.

#### Presentations

- Use visual aids, such as overhead projectors and presentation software, to ensure that information is highly visible, easily accessible and easily understandable.
- Procure presentation software that is physically easy to use and highly visual.
- Provide sign language interpreters to facilitate verbal and visual interaction and communication.

#### Job-related stress

- Make provisions such as flexible working hours or working at home to relieve some pressure.

#### Air quality

- Install air filters to restrict or limit respiratory or skin irritants.

Source: Adapted from *Barrier-Free Employers: A Practical Guide for Employment Accommodation for People with Disabilities*, The Canadian Human Rights Commission, <http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/ee/bfe-eso.asp?l=e#accom>

The National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) researches and promotes best practice in active return-to-work programs for employees who become disabled. Workplace-based disability programs or active return-to-work programs typically involve the supervisor, union and insurance representatives, where applicable, and the case coordinator or human resources, depending on the size of the organization and how the program is structured. NIDMAR recently opened an Ontario office in Ottawa and is a good source of literature, information and educational programs. Contact: (613) 260-2951 or <http://www.nidmar.ca>.

Some common elements of return-to-work programs include:

- regular communication to and follow-up with employee;
- use of a case manager;
- inventory of physical demands of work in various roles in the organization; and
- crafting of modified or transitional duties.

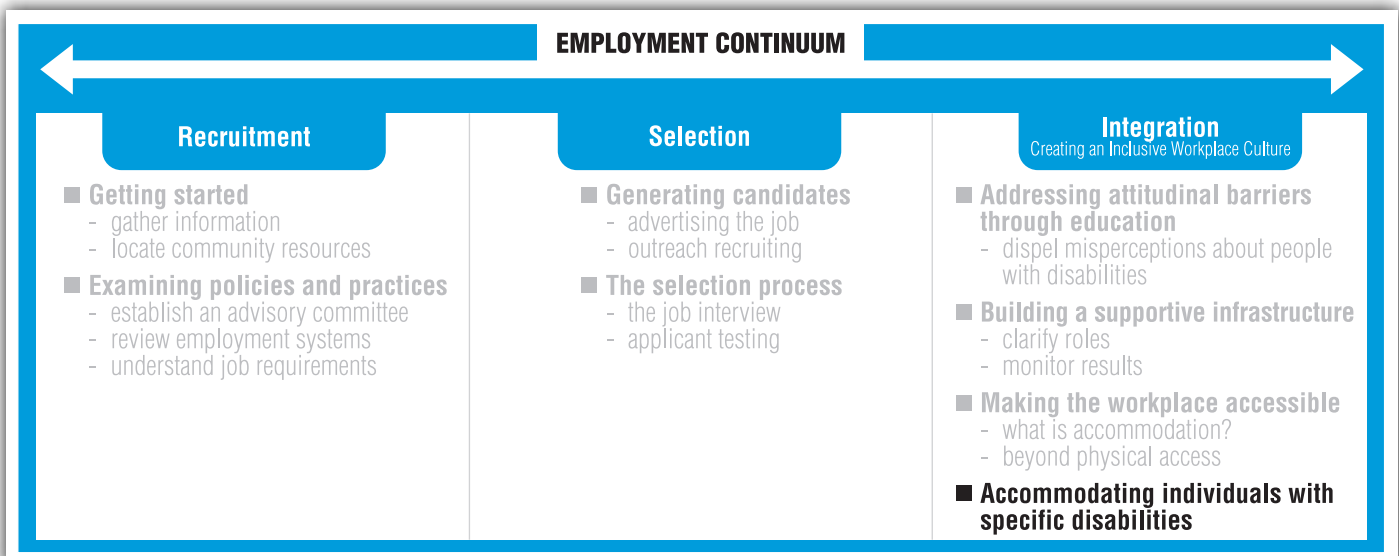
#### ACCOMMODATING INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

The extent to which a person's disability poses a disadvantage in a workplace setting varies widely, depending on the type and severity of the disability as well as the nature of the work and the environment. In the following section, we outline some access issues, suggested accommodations and tips to keep in mind when interacting with people with specific disabilities. The following suggestions are not exhaustive. They are intended to provide a sense of the scope of disabilities and the wide range of solutions available. This information has been adapted from some readily available sources, listed in Resource 4, page 51.

In our study, interventions by employers to assist people with particular types or categories of disability roughly reflected the incidence of those disabilities in the general population. For instance, by far the largest proportion of people with disabilities have physical or mobility disabilities. Consequently, the organizations we surveyed were far more likely to have provided accommodations to improve physical accessibility than to have implemented measures that assist people with other categories of disability.

#### Physical/Mobility

Roughly 60 per cent of people with disabilities have disabilities affecting their ability to move and the speed and quality of movement. This may be as a result of a wide range of medical conditions, such as multiple sclerosis or arthritis, a traumatic disorder or back impairments. The individual may require a wheelchair or need other supports for gross or fine motor impairments. The disability may be progressive or intermittent. In addition to obvious agility problems, symptoms can include fatigue, weakness and other symptoms.



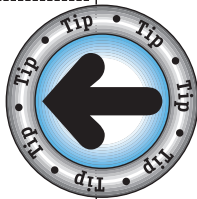
### Suggested accommodations

- Designated parking spaces close to employee entrances
- Ramps and handrails
- Wide doorways, corridors—The sizes and shapes of wheelchairs also vary, affecting space requirements.
- Lowered control panels on elevators, door openers, etc.
- Large washroom stalls—Soap dispensers, faucets, water fountains, etc., should all be reachable from a chair.
- Non-skid flooring
- Ergonomic workstation
- Alternative telephone and computer access hardware—e.g., hands-free; energy-saving attachments, including grip aids, foot rests, arm supports, large keypads, etc.
- Flexible work schedules, reduced hours or telework
- Self-paced workload

### Assistive technologies

- Voice input or speech recognition aids
- Voice synthesizer
- On-screen keyboards—allow selection of keys by using pointing devices
- Keyboard filters—allow for erratic motion
- Alternative input devices and typing aids
- Word prediction software

When interacting with a person in a wheelchair, ensure that you communicate at eye level so that the person can comfortably see your face.



### Hearing

Hearing disabilities encompass a wide range of hearing limitations, from partial to total deafness. The degree of hearing limitation and its onset affect whether communications should be visual or oral as well as the most appropriate assistive technology to use. Types of hearing disabilities include:

**Deaf**—The person was born deaf or became deaf early in life. Not all people who are deaf use sign language. For those who do, it should be understood as a completely different language, with its own syntax, rules and vocabulary. Therefore, if a first language is sign language, written English skills may be weak in some cases.

**Deafened**—The individual experienced hearing loss after having learned language. Such individuals are less likely to know sign language and may lip-read or use note-takers.



**Hard of hearing**—A person has partial hearing and may use a hearing aid to amplify sound. The person may, as a result, be sensitive to noise in the workplace.

### Suggested accommodations

- Written communications—notes, e-mail, real-time computer exchanges (chat lines)
- Amplifiers—available for telephones. FM systems and other technologies can be used to amplify sound at a meeting.
- Sign language interpretation
- Visual signals, such as lights on elevators or on alarms

### Assistive technologies

- Voice recognition software, which translates speech to text.
- TTY telephone service, which provides voice-to-text/text-to-voice translation.

When speaking to someone who uses an interpreter, address the person with the disability, not the interpreter. When communicating with someone who lip-reads, speak clearly and slowly and ensure the person can see your face. Do not shout and do not block a light source.



## Visual

There is a variety and range of visual impairment, from legally blind (defined as visual acuity of under 20/200 with best correction) to low vision. Only 10 per cent of legally blind people see absolutely nothing. The majority have some vision but may have difficulty discerning light or darkness, shapes and patterns, colours or peripheral objects. Some may be very sensitive to bright light. A number of accommodations are available for people with varying degrees and types of visual disability. Many blind people do not use Braille but instead avail themselves of vision aids that can range from low-tech (hand-held magnifiers) to high-tech (large-print computer programs).

### *Suggested accommodations*

- Large-print formats, signage with colours and contrast for people with low vision
- Audible signals or alarms, e.g., on elevators or fire alarms
- Instructional material on audio cassette

### *Assistive technologies*

- Audible devices, from small portable readers to talking calculators and watches
- Speech synthesis applications for personal computers that assist the blind are burgeoning. Both Microsoft and IBM market these technologies, and detailed information on their products can be found on their Web sites (see Resource 4, page 51, for contact information).
- Screen enlarger utilities

When encountering someone who is blind, identify yourself. Describe any objects you are giving the person and where they have been placed. Ask if assistance is required, for example to open a door or be shown to a place. Let the person take your arm (do not take theirs). If the person has a guide dog, he/she may instruct it to follow you.



## Psychiatric/Emotional

There is a wide range of psychiatric or mental health problems, from depression and anxiety-related disorders to schizophrenia. Some illnesses are biologically or chemically based and others have a more emotional or environmental basis. The disability may be episodic, and many conditions are treatable through drug therapies. The disability may affect a person's stamina, ability to handle stress, interpersonal abilities, organizational and time management skills, and ability to concentrate.

### *Suggested accommodations*

- Flexible scheduling and reduced or part-time hours
- Privacy and a quiet work space to limit distractions
- Frequent breaks
- Use of coaches
- Self-paced workload with extra time to learn new responsibilities
- Written instructions, minutes, checklists, etc.

When interacting with a person with a psychiatric disability, behave in a calm and relaxed manner, avoid confrontation and respect personal space. Pay attention to non-verbal cues, such as rapid breathing, pacing, perspiring, etc. If the individual appears to be in a crisis, ask how to help.



## Learning, Cognitive or Language Disabilities

Learning disabilities affect people's ability to process and interpret information that they see or hear. Conditions include dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, dysgraphia and dyscalcula. The problems are not related to intelligence but can affect a person's ability to read, write, organize ideas or use numbers. It is important to accommodate the way in which a person best processes information, learns and communicates.

### *Suggested accommodations*

- Provide alternative methods of communication—telephone, tape recorder, verbal instructions
- Break tasks into smaller ones
- Limit distractions

## Assistive technologies

- Keyboard filters—word prediction, spell checkers
- Voice input or speech recognition programs
- Screen review or text-to-speech synthesizer utilities
- Accessibility training products

Do not assume the individual lacks intelligence. Be patient and consult with the person to find out how he or she best learns and takes instruction. Find out whether he or she is sensitive to environmental distractions, e.g., noise, motion, light.



## Intellectual Disabilities

Intellectual or developmental disabilities imply mild to severe cognitive limitations that result in difficulties with reading, writing, memory, coordination, social skills, etc. People with intellectual disabilities require more directional and emotional support than physical support or assistive devices.

### *Suggested accommodations*

- Job coaches to help in the orientation and training phase. Coaches may also be required on a periodic basis to provide needed direction if problems occur or changes take place in accustomed routine.

- Simple and clear directions—Instructions might be stored on a tape recorder for repeated reference.
- Limited range of tasks, broken down into discrete, manageable segments

Do not make assumptions about an individual's ability to perform a role. Be patient and work with the individual to find out how he or she optimally learns and the tasks he or she is comfortable performing and can excel at.



## RESOURCE 4—Workplace Accessibility and Accommodations Resources

### Organizations

#### Accommodation, Training & Networking for Persons with Disabilities (ATN)

London

<http://www.skillcentre.on.ca/ATN/newatn2.htm>

Tel: (516) 433-7950

- A site offering information on services for persons with disabilities, including sensitivity and accommodation information; also a source of skilled labour for educators and employers in the London area.

#### Cambrian College—The Glenn Crombie Centre for Disability Services

Sudbury

<http://homepages.cambrianc.on.ca/snrrc/textbase/about.htm>

Tel: (705) 566-8101 ext. 7420

- A site offering information on a system of support services for students with disabilities to achieve their potential for education at Cambrian College; will also provide consulting services to employers and has a very useful Web site.

#### Future Abilities and Creative Employment (FACE)

York Region and Bradford West Gwillimbury

<http://www.york-net.org/din/information/face.html>

Tel: (905) 836-9299

- Information on a variety of services to assist and support employers and employment service providers in accommodating persons with disabilities in their organizations.

#### HANDIDACTIS Inc.

Toronto

<http://pages.infinet.net/handidac/HANDIDACTIS1.html>

Tel: (416) 267-5939

- A site offering information on why services should be made accessible to customers and employees, types of disabilities, and services for employers, including site audits and disability awareness workshops.

#### Job Accommodation Network in Canada (JANCana)

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/jancana.htm>

jancana.htm

Tel: 1-800-664-0925 ext. 229 or

(416) 260-3060 ext. 229

- The Canadian service of the U.S.-based Job Accommodation Network (JAN), offering free consulting service to

employers, persons with disabilities and service agency staff regarding job accommodations.

#### The National Institute of Disability Management and Research

<http://www.nidmar.ca>

Tel: (613) 260-2951

- Brings together multi-stakeholders to promote active return-to-work programs and strategies. NIDMAR had developed a number of publications, videos and educational workshops to help organizations develop and improve support for workers who become disabled, whether due to injury or to illness.

#### Neil Squire Foundation

Ottawa

<http://www.neilsquire.ca/info/info1.htm>

Tel: (613) 723-3575

- Regional offices across Canada provide education, technology and career development for people with physical disabilities through employment access skills enhancement (EASE), consultation and assessment services (CAS), and training in the use of appropriate computer and office assistive technology.

### Assistive Technology Resources and Services

#### Assistive Devices Program

Government of Ontario

[www.equalopportunity.on.ca/enggraf/resource/adaptive.html](http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca/enggraf/resource/adaptive.html)

#### Assistive Devices—Industry Canada

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>

#### Assistive Devices Program

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

[www.gov.on.ca/health](http://www.gov.on.ca/health)

#### The Employment Accommodation Service

Adaptive Technology Resource Centre

University of Toronto

[www.utoronto.ca/atrc/service/eas.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/atrc/service/eas.html)

#### HOT Spot Hands-on Technology

<http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/Hotspot/welcome.htm>

#### IBM Diversity

[www.ibm.com/able/hr](http://www.ibm.com/able/hr)

#### Microsoft Accessibility

[www.microsoft.com/enable/](http://www.microsoft.com/enable/)

#### University of Waterloo—Disability Issues

Issues

[www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/access/index.html](http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/access/index.html)

### Publications

#### *Barrier-Free Employers: Practical Guide for Employment Accommodation for People with Disabilities*

Canadian Human Rights Commission

<http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/ee/bfe-eso.asp>

#### *Bringing Down the Barriers: The Labour Market and Women with Disabilities in Ontario*

Canadian Council on Social Development

<http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2000/wd/>

#### *Business Results Through Diversity: A Guidebook and Workshop Facilitator's Guide*

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship

<http://www.gov.on.ca/MBS/english/publications/>

#### *Creating a Welcoming Workplace for Employees with Disabilities*

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

[http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs\\_pol/hrpubs/TB\\_852/cwwed\\_e.html](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/hrpubs/TB_852/cwwed_e.html)

#### *Guidelines for Assessing Accommodation Requirements for Persons with Disabilities*

Ontario Human Rights Commission

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/index2.htm>

#### *Working Solutions: Job Accommodations for People with Disabilities*

The Employer's Companion on Disability and Employment

Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)

<http://www.ccrw.org/ccrw/en/programs.htm>

#### *Working Together: An Employer's Resource for Workplace Accommodation*

Future Abilities and Creative Employment

(FACE). Available from HRDC, Ontario Region.

<http://www.york-net.org/din/>



# Appendix 1: About the Project

This guide is the culmination of a multi-phased project undertaken with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship under the EnAbling Change program. The project was launched in 1999. The material is drawn from a variety of sources encountered in the course of the research, including a survey of Ontario-based employers, consultation with stakeholders, and learnings from best-practice employers and experts who participated in the project. The purpose of the project was to gain an understanding of the policies, practices and needs of employers in Ontario in the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce and to develop a learning tool to assist employers. While diversity overall was the project theme, the principal focus was on employers' needs vis-à-vis hiring and integrating people who have disabilities.

The **Partnership Incentive Fund: EnAbling Change** program provides funding for strategic projects that will make a significant impact on accessibility for persons with disabilities. The impact should be broad enough to be felt throughout an industry or sector or across several sectors.

## Project Components

This two-year project involved several steps. The resources and materials gathered in the process have been incorporated into this guide. Components of the project included the following.

- *A survey of Ontario-based employers* to gather information about organizations' experiences in the recruitment, development and retention of a diverse

workforce, especially the integration of people with disabilities. The survey was undertaken in the late summer and early fall of 1999. A questionnaire sent to over 1,700 large, medium and small employers generated 142 responses. Some summary findings from this phase of the work are included in the report.

- *A multi-stakeholder roundtable*, held in the winter of 1999. The purpose of the roundtable was to review the questionnaire results and discuss potential strategies to address some of the key challenges faced by employers in the attraction, retention and accommodation of people with disabilities. The session also provided an opportunity to hear from employers and employment-related service agencies about specific initiatives undertaken by employers as well as innovative employer-agency partnerships that address barriers to employment.
- *Case studies of organizations* that have demonstrated success in attracting and retaining persons with disabilities.
- *Interviews with employers and stakeholders* who provide transitional employment services to people with disabilities.
- *Learning events/seminars*. These were held in April and May 2000 in five communities across the province—Sudbury, London, Hamilton, Markham and Ottawa. The sessions were organized to provide education on the issues, feature lessons from organizations that have moved forward in this area, identify best-practice employers in the employment and accommodation of persons with disabilities, and engage stakeholders in a discussion of the issues.

# Appendix 2: Disabled Student Services at Universities and Colleges (Ontario)

## **Algoma University College**

1520 Queen St. E., Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 2G4

*Contact:* Barbara Muio, Special Needs Co-ord.

*Tel:* (705) 949-2301 ext. 267

*e-mail:* muio@auc.on.ca

*Web site:* www.auc.on.ca/campus life/student services

## **Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology**

1385 Woodroffe Av., Nepean, ON K2G 1V8

*Contact:* Vicki McBurney, Special Needs Co-ord.

*Tel:* (613) 727-4723 ext. 5353 or (613) 727-7747 (TTY)

*e-mail:* mcburnv@algonquinc.on.ca

*Contact:* Margaret Bott, Toni Connolly, Counsellors,  
Centre for Students with Disabilities

*Tel:* (613) 727-4723 ext. 5509

*e-mail:* connolt@algonquinc.on.ca (Toni Connolly)

## **Brock University**

500 Glenridge Av., St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1

*Contact:* Judith Brooder, Mgr., Services for Students with Disabilities,  
Student Development Centre

*Tel:* (905) 688-5550 ext. 3240

*e-mail:* tmuchynski@spartan.ac.brocku.ca

*Contact:* Marg Marriott, Special Needs Specialist

*Tel:* (905) 688-5550 ext. 3240

*e-mail:* marriott@spartan.ac.brocku.ca

## **Cambrian College**

1400 Barrydowne Rd., Stn. A, Sudbury, ON P3A 3V8

*Contact:* Susan Alcorn-MacKay, Dir., Special Needs

*Tel:* (705) 566-8101 ext. 7793 or (705) 566-5452 (TTY)

*e-mail:* samackay@venus.cambrianc.on.ca

*Contact:* Raymond Decosse, Special Needs Centre  
Support Staff Officer

*Tel:* (705) 566-8101 ext. 7546 or (705) 566-5452 (TTY)

*e-mail address:* radecosse@venus.cambrianc.on.ca

## **Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology**

P.O. Box 5001, North Bay, ON P1B 8K9

*Contact:* Dawson Pratt, Co-ord. of Special Needs Services

*Tel:* (705) 474-7600 ext. 5213 or (705) 495-2862 (TTY)

*e-mail:* pratttd@canadorec.on.ca

*Contact:* Shirley Renaud, Special Needs Technician

*Tel:* (705) 474-7600 ext. 5548

*Contact:* Robert Nielson, Special Needs Support Services Officer

*Tel:* (705) 474-7600 ext. 5379

*Contact:* Doug Catt, Special Needs Services Resource Technician,  
Commerce Court Campus

*Tel:* (705) 474-7600 ext. 6474, (705) 495-2862

*e-mail:* cattd@canadorec.on.ca

## **Carleton University**

Rm. 500, Unicentre, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6

*Contact:* Larry McCloskey, Dir., Paul Menton Centre

*Tel:* (613) 520-6608

*e-mail:* larry\_mccloskey@carleton.ca

*Additional contact:* Diane Proulx (LD Specialist)

*e-mail:* diane\_proulx@carleton.ca

*Additional contact:* Nancy McIntyre (LD Specialist)

*e-mail:* nancy\_mcintyre@carleton.ca

*Additional contact:* Somei Tam (accommodations)

*e-mail:* somei\_tam@carleton.ca

## **Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology Warden Woods Campus**

1012 - 651 Warden Av., Scarborough, ON M1K 5E9

*Contact:* Irene Volinets, Co-ord., Disability Services

*Tel:* (416) 289-5200

*e-mail:* aixv@cencol.on.ca

## **Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology**

299 Doon Valley Dr., Kitchener, ON N2G 4M4

*Contact:* Marian Mainland, Special Needs Co-ord.

*Tel:* (519) 748-5220 ext. 478

*e-mail:* mmainland@conestogac.on.ca

*Contact:* Richard Casey, Special Needs Advisor

*Tel:* (519) 748-5220

**Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology**

1450 Nakina Dr.,  
P.O. Box 398, Thunder Bay, ON P7C 4W1

*Contact:* Jeff Howie, Supervisor, Learning Assistance  
*Tel:* (807) 475-6618, (807) 475-6170 (TTY)  
*e-mail:* cambly@confederationc.on.ca

**Durham College of Applied Arts and Technology**

P.O. Box 385, 2000 Simcoe St. N., Oshawa, ON L1H 7K4

*Contact:* Willona Blanche, Special Needs Officer  
*Tel:* (905) 721-2000 ext. 2364, (905) 571-5560 (TTY)  
*e-mail:* blanchew@notesmail.durhamc.on.ca

**Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology**

1460 Oxford St. E.,  
P.O. Box 4005, London, ON M5V 1W2

*Contact:* Bill Aarts, Mgr. of Student Development  
Services for Students with Disabilities  
Student Services Department, Rm. A2010  
*Tel:* (519) 452-4282 or (519) 453-8617 (TTY)  
*Additional contact:* Frank Walsh (Advisor)  
*Tel:* (519) 452-4244

**George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology**

200 King St. E., Toronto, ON M5A 3W8

*Contact:* Marguerite Wales, Special Needs Consultant  
*Tel:* (416) 415-2623  
*e-mail:* mwales@gbrownc.on.ca

**George Brown College**

St. James Campus, P.O. Box 1015, Station B  
Toronto, ON M5T 2T9

*Contact:* Barbara Revill, Special Needs Co-ord.  
*Tel:* (416) 415-2620, (416) 415-2272  
*e-mail:* brevill@gbrownc.on.ca  
*Contact:* Cathy Smith, Chairperson, Education Access Services, Casa  
Loma Campus, Rm. E211  
146 Kendal Av., Toronto, ON M5K 1M3  
*Tel:* (416) 944-4466 or (416) 944-4469 (TTY)  
*Contact:* Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Unit  
P.O. Box 1015, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2T9  
*Tel:* (416) 864-0535 (TTY) or (416) 867-2065

**Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology**

B144, One Georgian Dr., Barrie, ON L4M 3X9

*Contact:* Kate Beaty, Dir., Student Success  
*Tel:* (705) 728-1968 ext. 1678  
*e-mail:* kbeaty@central.georgianc.on.ca  
*Contact:* Chris Gunnel, Special Needs Consultant,  
Barrie Campus  
*Tel:* (705) 728-1968 ext. 1231, (705) 722-5179 (fax)

**University of Guelph**

Centre for Students with Disabilities  
Third Floor University Centre, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

*Contact:* Trudy Smit-Quosai, Disabled Student Advisor  
*Tel:* (519) 824-4120 ext. 8310  
*e-mail:* trudys@uoguelph.ca  
*Contact:* Bruno Mancini, Disabled Student Advisor  
Centre for Students with Disabilities  
*Tel:* (519) 824-4120 ext. 3244  
Learning Disabilities Specialist, *Tel:* (519) 424-4120 ext. 2386

**Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology**

205 Humber College Blvd., Rexdale, ON M9W 5L7

*Contact:* Craig Barrett, Co-ord., Counselling and Disability Issues  
*Tel:* (416) 675-6622 ext. 4060  
*e-mail:* Barrett@humberc.on.ca

**Lakehead University**

955 Olivar Rd., Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5E1

*Contact:* Donna Grau, Learning Assistance Centre  
*Tel:* (807) 343-8086  
*e-mail:* dgrau@sky.lakeheadu.ca  
*Contact:* Emily Scott, Geraldine White, Special Needs Assistants,  
Learning Assistance Centre  
*Tel:* (807) 343-8086 or (807) 343-8096 (TTY)  
*e-mail:* gwhite@sky.lakeheadu.ca (Geraldine White)

**Lambton College Applied Arts and Technology**

E209-1457 London Rd., Sarnia, ON N7S 6K4

*Contact:* Bonnie Dawe, Services for Students with Disabilities  
*Tel:* (519) 542-7751  
*e-mail:* bonnie@lambton.on.ca

**Laurentian University**

Parker Building, 2nd Flr, Rm. P217, Ramsey Lake Rd.  
Sudbury, ON P3E 2C6

*Contact:* Earl Black, Co-ord. Disabled Student Services  
*Tel:* (705) 675-1151, ext. 3324  
*e-mail:* eblack@lauadmin.laurentian.ca

**Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Technology**

Box 4200, Belleville, ON K8N 5B9

*Contact:* Catherine O'Rourke, Co-ord., Special Needs  
Student Office for Alternative Resources (SOAR)  
*Tel:* (613) 969-1913 ext. 2256, or 962-0633 (TTY)  
*e-mail:* orourke@loyalistc.on.ca

**McMaster University**

Hamilton Hall, 409, 1280 Main St. W.  
Hamilton, ON L8S 4K1

*Contact:* Tim Nolan, Centre for Student Development  
*Tel:* (905) 529-7070  
*e-mail:* timnoln@MCMASTER.CA

**Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology**

135 Fennell Av. W.,  
P.O. Box 2034, Hamilton, ON L8N 3T2

*Contact:* Mary Gibson, Technician, Disability Services  
*Tel:* (905) 575-2389  
*e-mail:* gibsonm@mail.mohawkc.on.ca  
*Note:* Other campuses located at: Brantford, Stoney Creek and Health Sciences Campus

**Niagara College**

SE-102-300 Woodlawn Rd., Welland, ON L3B 5S2

*Contact:* Gilles Prescott, Centre for Students with Disabilities  
*Tel:* (905) 735-2211 ext. 7495  
*e-mail:* gprescott@niagarac.on.ca

**Nipissing University**

100 College Dr., Box 5002, North Bay, ON P1B 8L7

*Contact:* Dan Pletzer, Mgr. of Counselling and Special Needs  
*Tel:* (705) 474-3461 ext. 4235  
*e-mail:* danp@unipissing.ca

**Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology**

Box 2002, Highway 101 E., Timmins, ON P4N 8R6

*Contact:* Jim Chalmers, Special Needs Co-ord.  
*Tel:* (705) 235-3211 ext. 237  
*e-mail:* chalmejd@northernc.on.ca

**Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology**

140 Government Rd. E., Kirkland Lake, ON P2N 3L8

*Contact:* Marianne Stransky, Kirkland Lake Campus  
*Tel:* (705) 567-9291  
*Contact:* Tracie Wilson, Haileybury Campus  
Box 2060, Haileybury, ON P0J 1K0  
*Tel:* (705) 672-3376  
*Contact:* Willard Small, Moosonee Campus  
P.O. Box 130 First Av., Moosonee, ON P0I 1Y0  
*Tel:* (705) 336-2913

**University of Ottawa**

339-85 University St., P.O. Box 450, Station A, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

*Contact:* Frans Corbeil, Centre for Special Services  
*Tel:* (613) 562-5976 (Voice/TTY), (613) 562-5800 ext. 4530  
*e-mail:* fcorbeil@uottawa.ca e-mail: adapt@uottawa.ca

**Queen's University at Kingston**

262-72 Queen's Crescent, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

*Contact:* Barbara Roberts, Disability Services Advisor  
Special Needs Office, St. Laurence Building  
*Tel:* (613) 533-6467 or (613) 533-6566 (TTY)  
*e-mail:* robertb@post.queensu.ca

**Redeemer College**

777 Highway 53 E., Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4

*Contact:* Deborah Vandercrook, Special Needs Co-ord.  
*Tel:* (905) 648-2131

**Ryerson Polytechnic University**

A300-350 Victoria St., Toronto, ON M5B 2K3

*Contact:* Linda Lyons, Supervisor, The Access Centre  
*Tel:* (416) 979-5290  
*e-mail:* llyons@ACS.RYERSON.CA  
*Additional contact:* Stacey Whyne Berman  
(learning disability students)  
*e-mail:* sberman@acs.ryerson.ca

**St. Clair College, Thames Campus**

1001 Grand Av. W., Chatham, ON N7M 5W4

*Contact:* Andrea J. Main, Co-ord., Disability Services  
*Tel:* (519) 354-9100 ext. 3228  
*e-mail:* amain@stclairc.on.ca

**St. Lawrence College**

Rm. 1002, King and Portsmouth  
Kingston, ON K7I 5A6

*Contact:* Mike Evans, Counselling/Special Needs  
*Contact:* Gail Easton, Special Needs Counsellor, Brockville Campus  
2288 Parkdale Ave., Brockville, ON K6V 5X3  
*Tel:* (613) 345-0556 ext. 3191, (613) 345-0556 ext. 3308

**Saint Paul University**

223 Main St., Ottawa, ON K1S 1C4

*Contact:* Sylvie Meloche, Student Services  
*Tel:* (613) 236-1393

**Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology**

443 Northern Av., P.O. Box 60, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5L3

*Contact:* Joe West, Dir. of Student Services  
*Tel:* (705) 759-2554  
*e-mail:* Joe.West@saultc.on.ca

**Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology**

1750 Finch Av. E., Willowdale, ON M2J 2X5

*Contact:* Arthur Burke, Dir., Counselling and Special Needs

*Tel:* (416) 491-5050 ext. 2905

**Sheridan College, Oakville Campus**

1430 Trafalgar Rd., Oakville, ON L6H 2L1

*Contact:* Linda DeJong, Co-ord., Special Needs

*Tel:* (416) 845-9430 ext. 2531

or (416) 338-7860 (TTY)

*Contact:* Beryl Buckley, Special Needs Consultant

*Tel:* (416) 845-9430 ext. 2539 or (416) 338-7860 (TTY)

*e-mail:* beryl.buckley-golder@sheridanc.on.ca

*Additional contact:* Karen Zeleny

*e-mail:* karen.zeleny@sheridanc.on.ca

*Contact:* Sandra Hornby, Special Needs Consultant

Brampton Campus, McLaughlin Rd., P.O. Box 7500

Brampton, ON L6V 1G8

*Tel:* (905) 459-7533, ext. 5163, (905) 874-4311 (TTY)

**Sir Sandford Fleming College**

Sutherland Campus, 599 Brealey Dr.,

Peterborough, ON K9J 7B1

*Contact:* Hilary Nunes, Counsellor, Disability Issues

*Tel:* (705) 743-5610, (705) 749-5521 (TTY)

*e-mail:* hnunes@flemingc.on.ca

*Note:* Other campus located at Lindsay

**University of Toronto, St. George Campus**

214 College St., Rm. 204, Toronto, ON M5T 2Z9

*Contact:* Helen Simson, Dir. of Disability Services for Students,

Koffler Student Services Centre

*Tel:* (416) 978-8061

*e-mail:* h.simson@utoronto.ca

Also serves Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

*Tel:* (416) 978-8060 (main office number)

**University of Toronto at Scarborough**

53023-1265 Military Trail, Scarborough, ON M1C 1A4

*Contact:* Tina Doyle, Co-ord., AccessAbility Services

*Tel:* (416) 287-7553 (Voice and TTY)

*e-mail:* doyle@scar.utoronto.ca

**University of Toronto at Mississauga**

1113-3359 Mississauga Rd. N.

Mississauga, ON L2L 1C6

*Contact:* Liz Martin, AccessAbility Co-ord.

Resource Centre, South Building

*Tel:* (905) 828-3847 (Voice and TTY)

*e-mail:* eamartin@credit.erin.utoronto.ca

**Trent University**

Bata Library Building, 109-1600 West Bank Dr.,

Peterborough, ON K9J 7B8

*Contact:* Eunice Lund-Lucas, Co-ord. for Special Needs

*Tel:* (705) 748-1281

*e-mail:* elundlucas@trentu.ca

**University of Waterloo**

Rm. 2051 Needles Hall, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1

*Contact:* Rose Padacz, Co-ord. of Services for Persons with Disabilities, Office for Persons with Disabilities

*Tel:* (519) 885-1211 ext. 5231

*e-mail:* rmpadacz@uwaterloo.ca

**University of Western Ontario**

1137 Western Rd., London, ON N6A 3K7

*Contact:* Dr. Deb Stuart, Co-ord., Services for Students with Disabilities, Student Development Centre

*Tel:* (519) 661-2147 ext. 5887

*e-mail:* deborah@sd.c.uwo.ca

*Additional contact:* Kirk Reiser (Adaptive Technology Specialist)


*e-mail:* <kirk@braille.uwo.ca

# Appendix 3: Creating an Inclusive Workplace



## The Game of Jingo



There is a lot to learn before you can be truly sensitive and aware around a person with a disability.	People with disabilities are different.	Only a tiny percentage of the Canadian population has some sort of disability.	People with disabilities are unable to contribute to society.	Most accommodations require building modifications.
All accommodations are expensive.	Workers with disabilities don't fit in with co-workers.	Workers with disabilities are less productive.	Bringing more workers with disabilities into the work force will take jobs from people without disabilities.	All employers have an accommodation policy.
Workers with disabilities aren't reliable.	People with learning disabilities are often reluctant to disclose.		All persons with learning disabilities need to disclose.	Many employers committed to employment equity encourage disclosure.
Employers have large hiring budgets.	People with disabilities do not have post-secondary education.	A child who is blind should attend a special school.	American sign language and Les signes du Québec are not as effective a language as English or French.	All people who are deaf use the same assistive devices.
Persons who are deaf consider themselves part of a separate culture.	Stairs are the biggest problem for someone in a wheelchair.	A person with a speech impairment also has a developmental disability.	People who are blind will take your arm if they need assistance.	To successfully hire a person with a disability, it is best to match the disability to the job.

### HOW TO PLAY JINGO

This game can be used as an icebreaker in presentations or as a complete training session. The time for playing—and the numbers of games played—depends on the amount of time available in the session.

To play the game, each player has a printed game card, as above. Chips, bingo markers, magic markers or pencils may be used to mark the cards. To win, the player must cover the boxes in a straight line, vertically, horizontally or on a diagonal.

The centre box is “free.” The presenter may find it useful to do a trial run, creating a second free box. As the game begins, the presenter reads a “fact” from the answer sheet (page 59), and the players find the corresponding “myth” on their cards. Playing the game reinforces the facts through the process of matching fact and myth and through the discussion that accompanies this.

Once there is a winner (the first person to declare a winning line), the presenter may choose to continue discussion of the myths on the winning line or delay discussion to the end of the game. Alternatively, the presenter may give a more formal presentation incorporating more data/information to further support the facts and debunk the myths.

## PRESENTER'S ANSWER SHEET

### Square 1.

It is easy to show awareness. Start by avoiding stereotypes, and remember to deal with each person as an individual. Just listen to your common sense. That's all it takes. Treat a person with a disability the way you would want to be treated. Don't single out the disability—consider the person first, before the disability. Don't make assumptions in advance about the person's abilities. Keep an open mind.

### Square 2.

People with disabilities are no different than anyone else. They are unique individuals—as are people without disabilities—but they also have the similarities that we all share, which make us human. Remember that anyone can have a disability, and statistics show that you or someone close to you is likely, at some point in life, to have a disability.

### Square 3.

In fact, 2.3 million Canadians between 15 and 64 years of age have disabilities. People with disabilities represent 13 per cent of the working age population.

### Square 4.

More often than not, people are restricted not by their disability but by a society that lacks awareness. Even so, many people have been able to overcome society's misconceptions and have made impressive contributions to their communities.

### Square 5.

In Canada, the 1991 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) found that fewer than 4 per cent of the 890,000 working Canadians with disabilities required accessible washrooms, ramps or other building modifications.

### Square 6.

The most frequently reported accommodations were changes in job duties and modified hours of work. These accommodations have more to do with creativity, flexibility and sound management practices than with expensive structural modifications or specialized technology.

### Square 7.

Almost all employers surveyed reject the argument that workers with disabilities don't fit in with most workers without disabilities. Two-thirds of the public surveyed say most of their co-workers would have no problems working alongside individuals with disabilities. Two-thirds of the public surveyed support policies that would increase the number of people with disabilities working with them.

### Square 8.

Three-fourths of department heads/line managers surveyed rate workers with disabilities as equally or more productive than workers without disabilities. More than three-fourths of the public feel workers with disabilities are equally or more productive than the average worker.

### Square 9.

People with disabilities need jobs too. Costs to be self-supporting exceed government allowances. Only a small portion of the public surveyed think bringing more people with disabilities into the workforce will threaten to take jobs from people without disabilities: conversely, more than three-fourths think it will be a boost to the nation by taking people off welfare and putting them to work.

### Square 10.

Many employers do not have an accommodation policy. An accommodation policy is an effective way to assist line managers and employees. It would be an excellent learning experience to have a committee comprised of managers, union and non-union members, and a diversity of employees develop the policy. Flexibility and technological access are two key components of a good accommodation policy.

### Square 11.

More than three-fourths of department heads/line managers surveyed rate workers with disabilities as equally or more reliable compared to workers without disabilities.

### Square 12.

People with learning disabilities are concerned that disclosure may limit job prospects or advancement opportunities due to misconceptions, stereotypes or generalizations. Job seekers with LDs are also concerned that they may be offered "a token position" to fill employment equity targets, and they would rather be hired for their abilities, not their disabilities.

### Square 14.

There are persons with LDs who do not need to disclose because they have implemented personal strategies and accommodations to compensate for their idiosyncratic learning styles. However, there are others who have no choice but to disclose in order to pass employment entrance tests, complete job advancement courses, or carry out assigned work within narrowly established parameters. Many would be able to perform more efficiently on the job if they were able to arrange for some simple accommodations such as a quieter workspace, access to a computer or instructions in alternative formats.

### Square 15.

Many employers committed to employment equity encourage disclosure because they recognize the importance of developing the potential of all workers. Ultimately, the choice to disclose rests with the individual with learning disabilities, who must evaluate each situation based on thorough research of diverse factors that include personal needs, job descriptions, possible accommodations required during or after the selection process, and the organization's sensitization to disability issues.

### Square 16.

Some employers have large hiring budgets. Often, line managers are charged back any costs related to hiring, and they are conscious of cost control. Small organizations may not have an allocation for hiring.

**Square 17.**

According to the HALS survey in 1991, 35 per cent of people with disabilities had at least some post-secondary education compared to 49 per cent of the population without disabilities. This was an increase from 31 per cent in 1986.

**Square 18.**

A child who is blind can and should have the choice to attend a neighbourhood school and participate in activities designed for children without a disability.

**Square 19.**

As a communication tool, sign languages like American Sign Language and Les signes du Quebec are as effective for persons who are deaf as spoken English and French are for those who hear.

**Square 20.**

Persons who are deaf may use the following assistive devices: hearing aids, a telecommunication device for the deaf (TTY/TDD), telephone amplification devices, hearing ear dogs, closed caption decoders, and signal devices. They may also use a sign language or an oral interpreter.

**Square 21.**

Many persons who are deaf consider themselves as part of a separate culture. These persons do not mind being referred to collectively as "the Deaf" or "the Deaf community" (this is an exception to the preference for always using "persons who are..." or "persons who have...").

**Square 22.**

Stairs are only one of many barriers; for persons with mobility impairment, it is often attitudes among the general public that prevent full inclusion in community activities.

Presented at Tapping the Talent of People with Disabilities seminar, Toronto, May 2000.

Feedback welcome: Contact Brenda Jean Lycett, Manager, Workplace Diversity, Motorola Canada Ltd.

**Square 23.**

Do not make the mistake of thinking that a person with a speech impairment is not intelligent or has a developmental disability. This leads to patronizing and other unacceptable reactions to persons with speech impairments. Use of a symbolic communication system does not mean that the person has an intellectual limitation.

**Square 24.**

Let the person take your arm, normally above the elbow. Do not grab the arm or elbow and push the person ahead of you. The person with a guide dog will drop the harness handle and usually take your left arm (as dogs are trained to walk on the person's left side).

**Square 25.**

If you focus on matching the disability to the job, you will not be hiring the most qualified applicant and you may have a serious retention issue. More often than not, people are restricted, not by their disability, but by a society that lacks awareness. Consider if the following well-known people had been restricted from their jobs or professions by their disability: Ludwig van Beethoven might have been ruled out as a classical composer because he was deaf. Thomas Edison might have been ruled out as a creative inventor because of his learning disability. Patrick Watson might have been ruled out as a television journalist/broadcaster because he is also an amputee. If you were looking for someone to motivate your sales force, would you consider someone who uses a wheelchair, such as Rick Hansen? If you were appointing a provincial judge, would you consider the Honourable Mr. Justice Sam Filer of the Ontario Court of Justice who uses a computer to speak because of Lou Gehrig's disease?

**Information Sources for Jingo**

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture, and Recreation, *Myths and Misunderstandings*, [www.equalopportunity.on.ca](http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca)

Ontario March of Dimes, *Dispelling Myths About Workers with Disabilities*.

Learning Disabilities Programme, Counselling and Development Centre, Jayne Greene-Black & Rob Middleton, *Secrets for Success*.

Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, *The Inclusion Action Pact*.

Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, July 27, 1992.





The Conference Board of Canada  
**Insights You Can Count On**

255 Smyth Road, Ottawa, ON, K1H 8M7 Canada • *Tel.* (613) 526-3280 *Fax* (613) 526-4857  
*Internet* <http://www.conferenceboard.ca>