



It's about
ability,
not disability

5 Reasons to Hire the Disabled

There are many reasons to hire the disabled, but some common misconceptions keep many businesses from hiring individuals. A company who wants to remain competitive may not want to take a chance on hiring an individual with a disability; however, many of the fears that business owners have are unfounded. Qualified individuals with disabilities are dependable workers and would make a great addition to any company's workforce.

1. Making your business ADA compliant is not as expensive as you think.

According to the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network:

- ✓ 15 percent of accommodations cost \$0
- ✓ 51 percent cost between \$1 and \$500
- ✓ 12 percent cost between \$500 and \$1,000
- ✓ 22 percent cost more than \$1,000

Every disability is different, so the accommodations necessary are not the same for every disabled employee. It is also important to note there are many grants and government incentives to help cover the cost of providing accommodations for the disabled.

2. Disabled employees don't miss more work than non-disabled employees.

There is a common misconception that individuals with disabilities have a weaker

constitution and thus are more susceptible to become ill. Unless the disabled worker has an immune deficiency, they are no more susceptible to becoming ill than any able-bodied worker. They can be counted on...

- to show up for work on time and
- perform their jobs like anyone else.

According to the *Journal of Rehabilitation*, the following statistical data was gathered from a study done of 13 companies to compare cost-benefit trends in the United States:

- workers with disabilities had 1.24 fewer scheduled absences and
- 1.13 more unscheduled absences.

3. Disabled employees do not need to be protected from failure.

While many employees with disabilities often exceed expectations, they don't need to be protected from failure. Everyone is entitled to experience both triumphs and failure, and the disabled worker is no different.

Employers should expect a disabled employee to meet the same job standards as their able-bodied co-workers, as long as reasonable accommodations have been made so they can meet those standards.

4. According to a 1981 study prepared by DuPont that included 2,745 employees...

...92 percent of disabled employees rated average or better in job performance compared to 90 percent for those who weren't disabled.

While there isn't a big difference between the two groups, the disabled workers in the study appear to hold their own when it comes to job performance in the workplace.

If an employee is hired based on their job qualifications, they should be able to complete their job tasks the same as anyone else in the same position, regardless of a disabling condition.

This assumes the disabled person is provided with reasonable accommodations for their disability, so they are on equal footing with the able-bodied employee.

5. Hiring disabled workers will not raise a company's insurance rates.

Hiring disabled workers will not raise worker's compensation insurance rates or health insurance premiums. The worker's compensation rate is calculated based on the hazards relative to the operation of the business. It also includes the rate of accident incidence at the business site. Therefore, hiring a disabled worker will not increase the rate charged to a business for their workers compensation.

Health insurance rates will not increase based on hiring a disabled employee either. Many individuals with disabilities also receive Social Security Disability Income also receive Medicare benefits, and others utilize the Medicaid buy-in option.



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