



Why should I hire people with disabilities?

Credit given to <https://discoverability.network/business/faqs/>

Not only should you hire people with disabilities, you should be marketing to them as well. Hiring people with disabilities isn't about "doing the right thing." It's about "doing the right thing for business." There are real, proven advantages to employing people with disabilities. Your business can benefit by:

- Increasing the size of its skilled labour pool
- Reducing costs associated with turnover, training, and safety
- Improving the engagement of all your employees
- Harnessing the value of innovative processes and new perspectives
- Attracting an underserved consumer market worth \$55 billion in Canada

Benefits of hiring someone with a disability

There are many benefits to hiring someone with a disability. This is sometimes referred to as the "Business Case" for hiring someone with a disability. People with disabilities bring unique perspectives to the workplace. Diverse teams have been shown to be more productive.

Studies show that people with disabilities work as productively and as safely as people without disabilities. Employees with disabilities tend to stay on the job longer, lowering recruitment costs.

What questions are appropriate to ask during the interview, relating to disabilities?

While you cannot legally ask a candidate to disclose their disability in any way, it is important to foster an inclusive recruitment process right from the interview invitation. Asking the candidate if they will need any supports or accommodations to participate in the interview will facilitate an open discussion and make the candidate more comfortable to inform you in detail about the types of supports they may need both throughout the recruitment process and on the job.

Here are some tips to help you communicate more effectively with all candidates:

- Reinforce your company's value for diversity at all stages of recruitment. For example: "Our organization values the diversity of all our employees. Is there any stage of the recruitment process that you will need supports or accommodations for?"

- Note that the candidate might not immediately request any supports. Allow a window of time for the candidate to think about the types of accommodations they need and get back to you. This is especially helpful for individuals who may have difficulty with memory or social anxiety.

Most employers advertise job postings that include a description of the primary job functions. These should be tasks that are necessary to do the job. Be specific, so that you ensure all candidates have the qualifications you are seeking. For instance "lifting 22 kg boxes throughout an eight-hour shift". Just like any candidate, a person with a disability applying for the job must be able to do the primary job functions.

You do not have the right to ask someone if they have a disability, or what their disability is. You can ask them if they require an accommodation.

Accommodation
Request Procedure



You can ask a job candidate how they might approach the primary job functions. You could ask "this job requires you to lift multiple 22 kg boxes throughout the day. Are you able to complete this task?" Don't make assumptions about what people are able to do, or not do. You can also ask a candidate how they might approach a task. Perhaps you are interviewing someone who appears to have limited dexterity and the job requires typing speed in order to complete the daily workload. You might ask "this job requires that you type approximately 120 wpm. How would you deal with this workload?". They might be able to use a product such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, a speech recognition software to do the requisite keyboarding.



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What supports should we put in place to effectively orientate new employees with disabilities into our work environment?

As a starting point, always ask employees what they need. Be sure to be flexible and open to a wide range of needs and involve all employees in thinking through accessibility needs within the organization. Team building activities and thinking creatively about orientation is a great place to start.



Once hired, do we need special policies for people with disabilities?

You do not need any special policies to include people with disabilities, but it is always good practice to have equity and diversity policies outlined as part of Human Resources. These can include accommodation policies or an ongoing accessibility plan. Remember, though, that these are for all employees, not just those from diverse backgrounds.

As an employer, how do I know if I am required to make an accommodation?

You are required to provide reasonable accommodations that allow a person with a disability an equal chance to apply for a job, do a job or have equal access to the workplace. This could cover a lot of ground. Ex-

amples of reasonable accommodations might be:

- A change to a work schedule
- Providing a handsfree telephone headset or another type of assistive device or technology
- Providing an ergonomic chair
- Additional breaks or a leave of absence
- Making changes to how, or when, a job task is completed
- Moving or reconfiguring office space (e.g., a desk to a sunnier location, or closer to the washroom)
- Allowing a person to work from home one day a week
- Providing an accessible parking spot
- Providing materials in large print or Braille (this is called an alternative format)

Myths & Misconceptions

By far, the biggest barrier to people with disabilities obtaining employment are attitudes, beliefs, and misconceptions of employers.

Only a few people with disabilities are in the labour market, so it's not an issue for our company.

People with disabilities in Canada represent a large untapped labour pool. There are 443,900 people with disabilities ready and able to work but who are unable to find employment, and almost half of them have a post-secondary education. If you are not accessing this talent pool, your competition is!

Hiring people with disabilities will increase safety incidents and cause my insurance premiums to increase.

Employees with disabilities have a 40% lower safety incident rate and 78% lower overall costs associated with accidents. Tim Hortons franchisee Megleen Inc. has never made an insurance claim for a work-related injury to an employee with a disability despite employing almost 100 people with disabilities over 19 years. Safety insurance premiums are based on your safety record and the type and size of your business.



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Employees with disabilities have higher turnover and absenteeism rates.

Studies show that people with disabilities have lower absenteeism and stay with employers longer than their non-disabled counterparts.

People with disabilities have poorer job performance and require additional support

90% of people with disabilities rated average or better on job performance – a good indicator of their independence in the workplace.

People with disabilities are brave, courageous and inspirational.

Adjusting to a disability requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage.

Most people with disabilities use wheelchairs.

While the wheelchair icon has prompted this belief, they are only used by 6% of people with disabilities – that's about 1% of the general population.

I cannot discipline or fire an employee with a disability.

Employees with disabilities should be hired based on their ability to do the job. There are no special processes or procedures for disciplining or firing employees with disabilities who are not meeting performance expectations. Firing someone with a disability is no different than firing any other employee who is not performing their job as required.

I would like to hire people with disabilities but we are a small business with limited budget. Isn't it expensive to accommodate people with disabilities?

According to the 2016 Partnership Council Report on Employment and Disability, the average cost of accommodating people with disabilities is just \$500. 60% of employers spend nothing at all.

Won't having people with disabilities on the team lower the productivity of the whole team?

90% of people with disabilities rated average or better on job performance – a good indicator of their independence in the workplace.



Will our business have to continue to make a financial investment to retain people with disabilities over the longer term?

Studies show that people with disabilities have lower absenteeism and stay with employers longer than their non-disabled counterparts. The potential costs of accommodation are significantly outweighed by the savings incurred by long-term employees.

I'm concerned that our customer base may react negatively when interacting with employees with disabilities.

Studies show that the majority of Canadian consumers are more likely to engage with a business if they are seen to hire people with disabilities. 22% of Canadian have a family member with a disability, so positive perceptions are more common.

The duty to accommodate is a broad equality concept that applies to all grounds of discrimination covered under human rights legislation and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Every human rights law in Canada protects workers from discrimination at work, including disability-based discrimination.

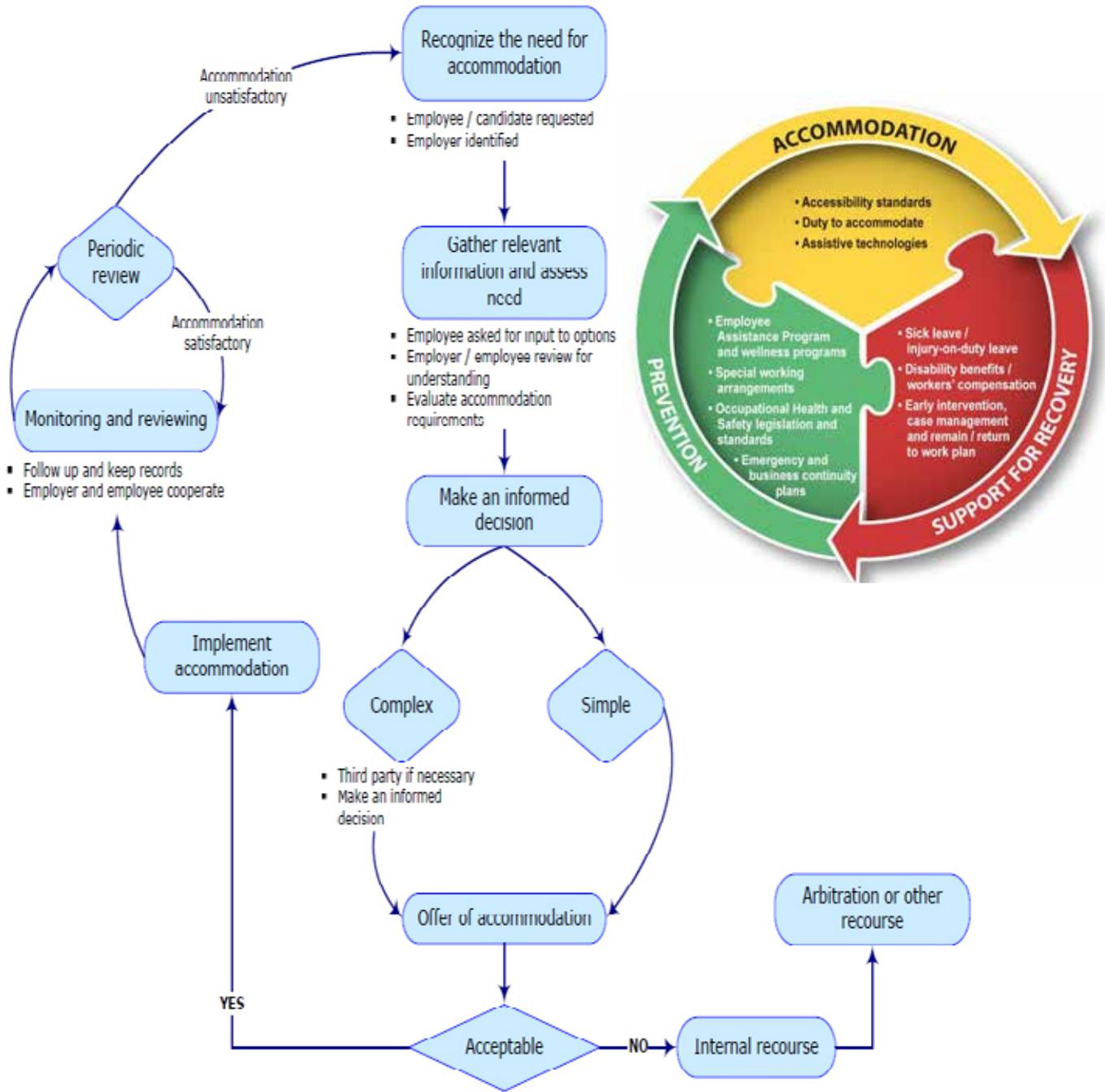


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Accommodation Process

Unlike the return-to-work process, which is transitional and for a fixed duration, accommodation is an ongoing process that requires regular monitoring and review. Privacy requirements are respected in all cases, especially as related to the sharing of medical information. The diagram above assumes that the Canada Labour Code, Part II, has been observed and that the place of employment is barrier-free.

Credit given to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/health-wellness-public-servants/disability-management/accommodation.html>



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