

7 TIPS for making sure YOUR BUSINESS IS DISABILITY INCLUSIVE



Committing to becoming disability inclusive across your organization is an extended process. It's a journey with many checkpoints along the way. The journey matters as much as the final destination. Following these tips will ensure you and your business are taking the best steps forward in your disability-inclusion journey.

1 Use plain language: Keep language simple, accessible and easy for all to understand.

Remember the saying, "Often it's not what you say, but how you say it." Using plain language has business benefits: it increases efficiency, saves time, and reduces training time and costly mistakes.

TYPICAL Ascertain that the carton weight is within safety parameters before attempting to lift it, keeping your posture correct to avoid injury.

BETTER APPROACH ✓ Make sure the carton isn't too heavy before you try lifting it. When you lift it, bend your knees, not your back, to avoid injury.

2 Be confident and competent before onboarding.

This means accessing *all available resources* to help you build your confidence in recruiting, hiring and onboarding job seekers who have a disability. Consider taking Disability Awareness and Confidence Training to better understand how these resources can be applied in the workplace.

3 Incorporate Universal Design (UD) across your organization.

This involves making sure every aspect of a workplace environment is accessible and usable by all:

- Building entrances
- Office/factory-floor/store layouts
- Technology used by employees or customers
- Products you make and/or the services you provide

4 Set goals reflecting your community, and know your goals

Your business benefits from understanding your consumers. Researching information about the demographics of the community you serve is great not only for marketing your products or services, but you can learn how your hiring practices can reflect your consumers. Make sure everyone in your organization knows your goals, and is accountable for reaching them.

Demographic: 22% of Canadians self-identify as having a disability (Statistics Canada)

Goal: People who have a disability comprise 20% of your workforce

“Disability inclusion in a business must be driven from the top down, and there must be accountability at all levels of the organization.”

5 Create standard processes

Performance appraisals and evaluations help your employees know whether they're meeting your expectations. It also helps identify areas and opportunities for improvement. Do evaluations regularly, to address any concerns immediately. Performance evaluations should be consistent, to ensure fair and equitable treatment regardless of who's doing the evaluation.

6 Make it an intentional journey, not an “initiative”

An initiative is an act — often something done to resolve a difficult situation at a moment in time. Initiatives can be easily forgotten when completed. Disability inclusion, on the other hand, is a journey.

Journeys have a starting point and a destination in mind; they can be continuous. Eventually, you will arrive at your destination: being an inclusive employer of choice in your community.

7 Understand the diversity of disability

Not all disabilities are visible. To make your organization truly disability inclusive, you first need to understand the diversity of disability. In reality, disability encompasses:

- Physical disabilities
- Mobility impairments
- Learning disabilities
- Developmental disabilities
- Mental health disorders
- Sensory disorders
- Any combination of disabilities, including all the ones above



Connect with us for more information or if you have questions on how to start your disability inclusion journey.

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