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Disability Benefits 101

Message / Communications Plan

Version 4 • 4/14/09

Table of Contents

1. Product Overview
2. Launch Plan

1. Product Overview

What is DB101?

DB101 ("Disability Benefits 101") is a comprehensive, interactive web site that provides people with disabilities ("PWD") an easy way to explore the possibility of work.

The site includes:

- **Information and resources** on state, federal and other disability benefit programs;
- **Tools** to show connections between work and benefits;
- **Tailored Plans** for moving forward; and
- **[Access and connection** to other coordinated services]

Opportunity to combine information usually located in disparate sites

Learning experience

A platform to connect into a more coordinated system

Window

Easy to understand

All the information you need for yourself to determine if you can go back to work or get a better job

DB101 ("Disability Benefits 101") is a comprehensive, interactive web site that provides people with disabilities ("PWD") an easy way to explore the possibility of work. The site includes:

- **Tools**, called *estimators*, that help estimate financial and benefit outcomes for different work scenarios and that generate planning documents; and
- **Information and resources** on state, federal and other disability benefit programs.
 - Explore the possibility of work
 - Explore the possibility
 - Understanding what benefits
 - The affect work has on benefits, and the benefits of work
 - The affect work may have

Who is DB101 for?

Primary Audience – People with disabilities and their families to explore the possibility of work and learn about work opportunities, incentives and benefits.

Secondary Audience – Employment providers, counties and professionals who can use the site as a tool to support their work with PWD regarding employment.

How can DB101 be used?

Independent use – the online site is available directly to PWD and their families to evaluate work opportunities, incentives and benefits

Facilitated use – the site can be used by employment providers and counties as they work with PWD to evaluate work incentives and generate benefit plans

Professional use – the site can be used by professionals and agencies to access comprehensive information on work incentives and benefits and/or to train staff on how work is possible for PWD

Why DB101?

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
<p>1. PWD don't know that working is an option, and that they could have better quality of life. PWD do not know that they can work *more* - concerned about limited benefits</p> <p>2. Public benefits are complicated, particularly when trying to identify impact to work</p> <p>3. PWD are potentially inhibited from working because they do not know and/or understand the impact of their benefits and work</p> <p>4. There are limitations on the number of benefits analysis that can be completed in the current system</p> <p>5. Given the quantity of pwd in the state of MN...there are extremely limited resources to ... the ratio of pwd:benefits analysis</p> <p>6. There are extremely limited resources to receive comprehensive, integrated system of benefit information that is "consumable" for PWD and providers. Information and the process is fragmented, siloed, complicated, not personalized.PWD and social service agencies do not have easy access to benefit information. Consequently information is inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate. FRAGMENTED, NOT-INTEGRATED INFORMATION PROCESS</p> <p>7. There is a growing demand for consumer-directed information gathering, yet there is no consumer-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on world of work, and possibility of work - Integrated system: multiple services to be comprehensive, packaged together - People-centered – focused on 'me' – putting tools, exploration directly in people's hands - Easy access - Comprehensive information – provided in an interactive way that enhances your learning - Consistent information - - Information that is presented and provided in such a way that provides the user with the 'world of work'; "connect the dots"; combines and presents multiple solutions - De-silos the information that is personalized so you can make specific decisions - - - Create a "one-stop" place that compiles - Provide a tool to which pwd and their providers have direct access - The tool will provide benefits analysis - Sustainable infrastructure – can manage large capacity - [Works for the provider] - Right information at the right time

<p>directed product/access to comprehensive benefit planning</p> <p>8. As policies shift further to creating competitive employment for PWD, there is a need for additional infrastructure to support PWD to have more immediate access to benefit planning information and planning</p> <p>9. consumer accessible information regarding work and benefits</p> <p>10. Consumers demand immediate information, and to be received in various ways</p> <p>11.</p> <p>-</p>	
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- PWD and their service providers don't think work is possible if they're on public benefits
- There is no comprehensive online coordinated resource
- Online = accessed directly by PWD where they can explore and direct
- Cumbersome process for pwd to get comprehensive plans;
- limited access

1. PWD have limited knowledge, resources in exploring work.

2. Resources to explore work can be cumbersome.

3. ddd

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- no person-centered working tool to explore work and benefits
- creating a single tool that comprehensively provides information, tools and resources
- providing direct access to it

DB101 Benefits

PWD	PROFESSIONALS / AGENCIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct access to a comprehensive resource and planning tool on work and benefits ○ Supports them wherever they are at in the process of exploring work and expanding work options ○ Brings together both content and tools to create a unique and effective learning experience ○ Presents in one setting both state and federal benefit content ○ Online platform is designed for the end-user, and is available anytime/anywhere ○ Safe and private way to explore the options of work (without sharing benefit information to others) ○ Accessible to PWD using screen readers ○ Free resource - no fees to use the tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tool that supports and streamlines current and potential work with PWD regarding work and benefits that saves them time and provides efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Simplifies their work functions around supporting PWD in exploring work ○ Connection to a broad network of resources to get the right information at the right time ○ A central online reference tool that maintains accurate and consistent information about both state and federal benefits, and how work may impact those benefits ○ Helps to provide timely, accurate and consistent information to PWD ○ Offers agency training opportunities about benefit planning and work ○ A platform for multiple systems and agencies to work together and begin discussing benefits counseling and information access from the consumer's perspective ○ Free resource – no fees to use the tool

Private – case worker will not be able to access; can be done without support

Development Plan

- Phase 1 – available January without Usability Testing
 - 2 estimators
 - B2W
 - MA-EPD
 - 8 content sections
 - MA-EPD (affiliated Estimator)
 - MA
 - Medicare
 - SSDI
 - SSI/MSA
 - Waivers
 - Life Situation

- Case Scenario 1
- Case Scenario 2
- Phase 1 to be tested
 - Unstructured Beta w/in DSD for – early January; internal email w/instructions with site feedback mechanism (Formal feedback??)
 - Content accuracy
 - Buy-in
 - Structured Beta – January 8, 9 & 13 – 3 hours
 - WIC – Jan. 8
 - B2W Estimator review
 - Buy-in
 - VR/EN/WFC Navigator – Jan. 9
 - Primary: usability (interface & workflow)
 - SSA PASS Cadre & WIL Group – Jan. 13
 - Primary: Content review
 - Buy-in
 - Usability – March
- Phase 2
 - 2 estimators
 - B2W
 - MA-EPD
 - 8 content sections
 - MA-EPD (affiliated Estimator)
 - MA
 - Medicare
 - SSDI
 - SSI/MSA
 - Waivers
 - Life Situation
 - Case Scenario 1
 - Case Scenario 2
-

Product Features & Benefits

2. Launch Plan

Overview

So as to strategically maximize adoption and utilization, the product will be rolled out in three phases:

- Phase 1:** Professional PWD Employment Providers (i.e. VR & EN) – [dates] Groups that are currently servicing PWD to explore work
- Phase 2:** Counties and other providers – [dates]
- Phase 3:** Direct-to-Consumer – [dates]

Phase 1 – Employment Providers for PWD (i.e. VR, EN)

Objective: Quickly get the product into the practices of this user group, and achieve high adoption and utilization that “institutionalizes” the product

Rationale: This is the most immediate audience that can adopt and benefit from the product and create product “traction” that can be leveraged for roll-outs to additional audiences

Goal: All VR and EN entities will be made aware of and trained on the product by x date

Strategies:

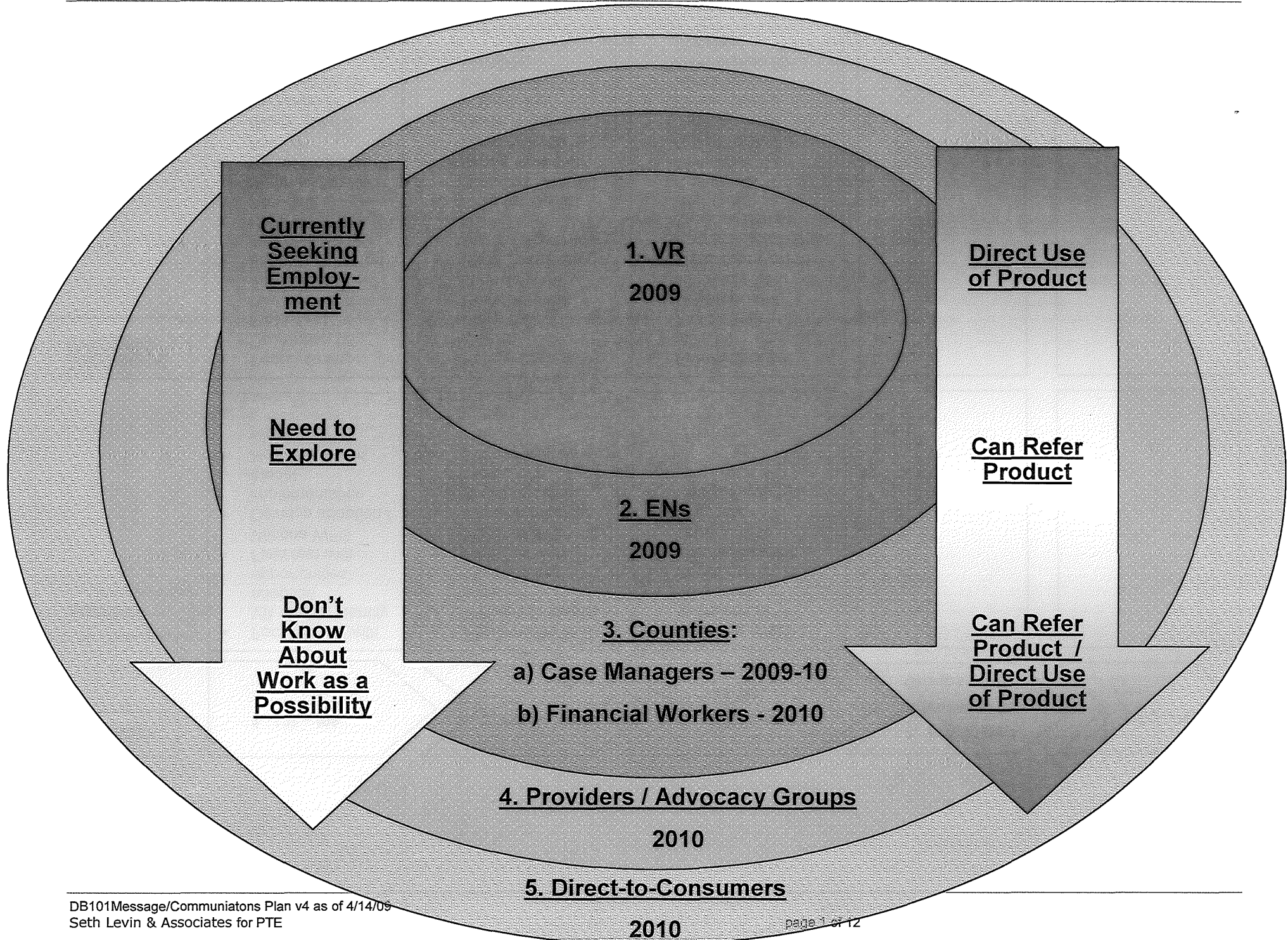
- o Work directly with department heads to garner buy-in
- o Train-the-trainer

Communication Venues:

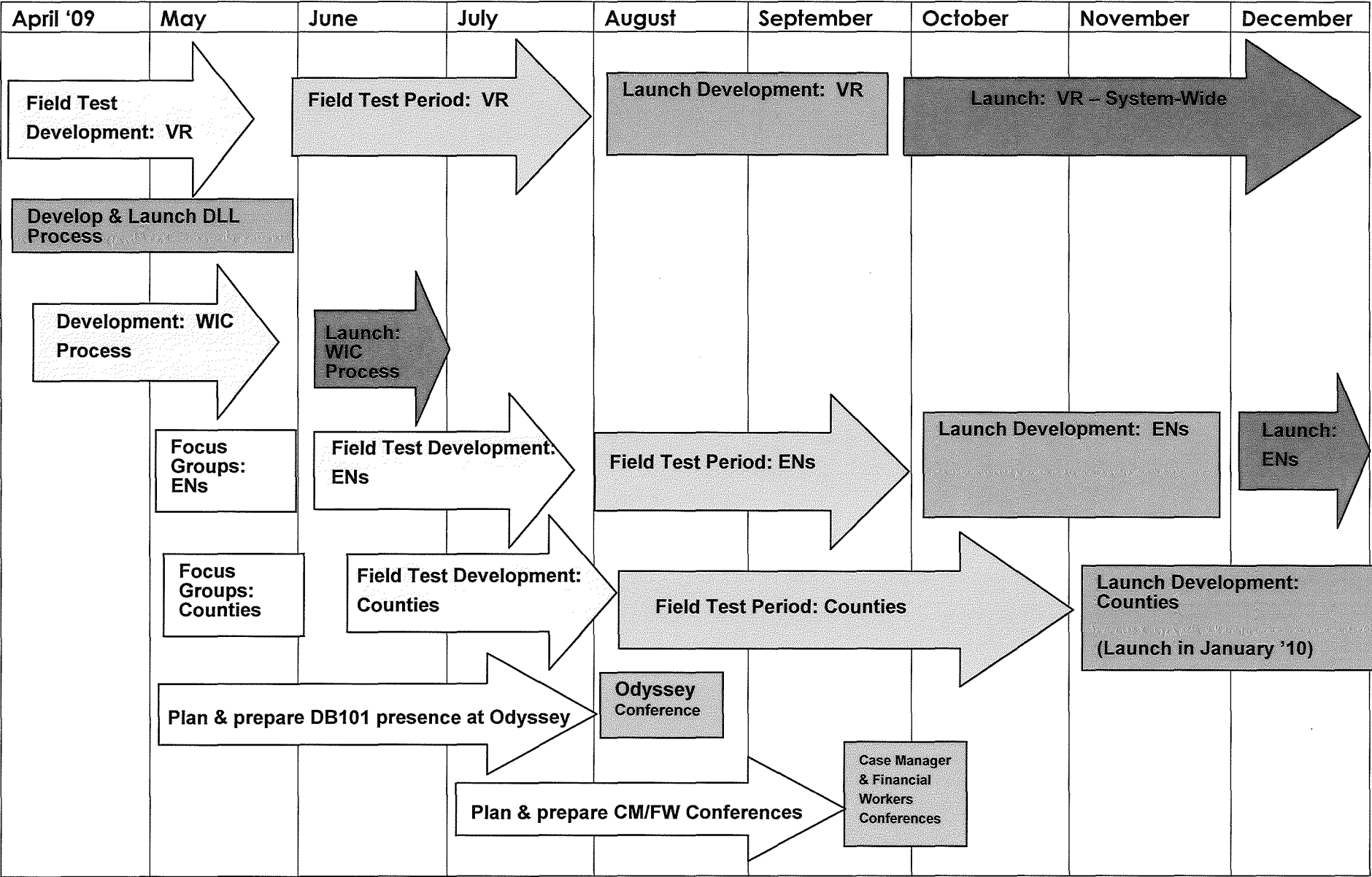
Materials/Tools Required:

DB101 Success Metrics – Phase 1

	PWD	Professionals / Agencies
Awareness		
Engagement		
Adoption		



Who/When	1. VR – ‘09	2. ENs – ‘09	3. Counties – ‘09-‘10	4. Providers / Advocacy Groups – ‘10	5. DTC – ‘10
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group with VR reps to identify adoption opportunities • Field test with Winona WFC • Develop adoption / implementation model • Roll-out system wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group with VR reps to identify adoption opportunities • Field test with Winona WFC • Develop adoption / implementation model • Roll-out system wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a) direct users and b) promoters • Focus groups to identify adoption opportunities • Field test • Roll-out system wide 		
Timeframes/ Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group: December ‘08 • Field Test Development: April-May ‘09 • Field Test Period: June-August ‘09 • Prep for Broad Roll-Out: Summer-Fall ‘09 • Broad Roll-Out: Fall ‘09 • <i>(Note: prep a workshop or presentation for Odyssey)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group: May ‘09 • Field Test Development: June-July ‘09 • Field Test Period: August-September ‘09 • Prep for Broad Roll-Out: Fall ‘09 • Broad Roll-Out: December ‘09 • <i>(Note: prep a workshop or presentation for Odyssey)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Groups: May ‘09 • Field Test Development: June-July ‘09 • Field Test Period: August - October ‘09 • Prep for Broad Roll-Out: November-December ‘09 • Broad Roll-Out: January ‘10 • <i>(Note: prep a workshop or presentation for Odyssey)</i> 		



Target Audience: Stakeholders: advocates, service providers, government staff

Goals:

1. Public accountability for PTE grant.
2. Enlist champions who will continue to advance PTE mission after grant funding ends.
3. Educate and enlist champions who can act upon the goals and recommendations of specific PTE initiatives.

Strategy 1: Use existing advisory group structures to reach stakeholders.

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
1. Introductory and update presentations at advisory group meetings.	1-2x / year	o PTE Management Staff	A, B, C, D, E, J, K
2. Provide PTE handouts at meetings of advisory groups.	4x / year	o Administrative Assistant	B, C, D, E, J, K
3. Include all members of targeted advisory groups on PTE LISTSERV	o Q1 '09 – added to list o Listserv messages: quarterly (and/or as needed)	o Lolly	H
4. PTE products and related information on PTE website	ongoing	o Communications staff o with DEED Web Manager o with managers of initiatives	G

Strategy 2: Disseminate information to State Legislature.

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
1. Respond to requests for information	ongoing	o PTE staff	all
2. Attend any existing events that would be dissemination opportunities	Ongoing	o PTE staff	B, C, D, E, J, K
3. Mail out or otherwise give to key members/staff	1-2x / year	o PTE Management Staff o PTE Policy Experts	B, C, D, E, J, K
4. Distribute information through partners' legislative liaisons	ongoing	o PTE Management Staff o PTE Policy Experts	B, C, D, E, J, K

Strategy 3: Engage DEED & DHS internal stakeholders.

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
1. Introductory and update presentations at staff department meetings (all levels) [specifics tbd with PTE Mgmt]	1-2x / year	o PTE Management Staff	A, B, C, D, E, J, K
2. Include DSD, Mental Health, HIV-AIDS, & DHHS staff on PTE LISTSERV	o Q1 '09 – added to list o Listserv messages: quarterly (and/or as needed)	o Lolly	H
3. Include Rehab Services & WF Development staff on PTE LISTSERV	o Q1 '09 – added to list o Listserv messages: quarterly (and/or as needed)	o Lolly	H
4. Insertions in inDEED & DHS Today	4x / year	o PTE Communications staff	I

	Product	Resources to Execute	Potential Budget
A.	PowerPoint "Bible"	Developer	\$5000
B.	Logic Model Print Handout	Graphic designer	
C.	End of Grant Report OR update to Strategic Plan Brochure	Writer; graphic designer	
D.	1-page description of major PTE initiatives	Writer, graphic designer	\$5000
E.	Employment of PWD Report Card	Manager; Researcher; writer; graphic designer – initial & then ongoing	
F.	Quarterly Progress Reports	Writer- ongoing	
G.	PTE Website	Writer; webmaster - ongoing	
H.	PTE Listserv	Writer - ongoing	
I.	Newsletter articles	Writer - ongoing	
J.	PTE Strategic Plan Brochure	<i>Completed</i>	
K.	Existing materials from DSD, MSCOD & DEED	<i>Completed</i>	

Define Website content, management
Define Listserv content, management

Target Audience: PWD, Family & Non-Employment Social Service Providers

Goals:

1. PWD have the information to support them in seeking, securing and retaining employment.

Strategy 1: Build upon existing information and assistance infrastructure and increase capacity to assist with employment.

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
1. Develop disability/employment resources and tools on MinnesotaHelp.info. / disabilitylinkage.info	Q2 '09	o Lesli	J
2. Train Disability Linkage Line (and other Linkage Lines) in employment related issues and resources.	Q2 '09	o Lesli	J, K, N
3. Increase capacity of Minnesota Work Incentives Connection to serve people with disabilities with training, tools and information	Q2 '09	o Lesli	J, K, N

Strategy 2: Increase awareness of and access to Information and Assistance (I&A) resources

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
1. Promote and train at conferences	ongoing	o Lesli	L
2. In mass media campaigns use DLL as referenced resource	ongoing	o PTE Communications	
3. Publish articles in newspapers and newsletters.		o	M

	Product	Resources to Execute	Potential Budget
J.	MNHelp website	Developer	
K.	Employment 101 Training	Developer	
L.	DLL Presentation	Developer	
M.	Articles	Writer – ongoing	
N.	DB101		

Target Audience: BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDERS

Goals:

1. Businesses will understand the challenges of a shrinking workforce and the potential value of workers with disabilities.
2. Businesses will have access to successful models, information and resources related to successfully recruiting, hiring and retaining workers with disabilities.
3. The “pipeline” between businesses and employment services providers will more effectively deliver workers with disabilities to the businesses that need workers.

Strategy 1: Increase the capacity of the Workforce Development structure within DEED.

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
1. Develop and launch business case and business oriented-materials on considering, hiring and retaining PWD for DEED distribution via public website and VRBSS/BSS organization	through Q3 '09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o PTE Communications Staff o DEED VRBSS Staff o DEED [John Fischer] o DEED Communications/Web Staff 	O, P, Q
2. Train DEED VR/BSS organization on business case for and ways to engage businesses on considering, hiring and retaining PWD	Q3 '09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o PTE Communications Staff & contractors o DEED staff 	O, P, Q, R

Strategy 2. Communicate directly with employers about people with disabilities as an underutilized resource for meeting workforce demand.

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
1. Create and execute a DTE campaign, utilizing DEED business database, to engage businesses about PWD as viable employees solutions, and direct them to Business Information Product and their BSS/VRBSS	Begin execution Q4 '09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o PTE Communications Staff o DEED 	O, P, Q
		o	

Strategy 3: Build upon existing activities and venues for businesses to promote workforce planning (partnering with other under-utilized populations when appropriate) to communicate to businesses that people with disabilities are an under-utilized resource for the upcoming workforce shortage.

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Timeframe for Execution</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Products to be Used</i>
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1. Presentations and exhibits at relevant business-oriented conferences	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PTE Staff ○ DEED Staff 	O, P, Q, S, T
2. Articles in relevant business-oriented publications	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PTE Communications Staff ○ DEED Staff (John Fischer) 	T

	Product	Resources to Execute	Potential Budget
O.	Business Module on DEED Website	Writer, Researcher, Designer, Webmaster	
P.	Print companion piece to online business module	Writer, Designer, Printer	
Q.	Promotional material for URL	Developer	
R.	Training on Business Case & Business Information Product	Developer	
S.	Ppt. presentation for Businesses	Writer, Designer	
T.	Articles	Writer	



**One Connection.
Real Solutions.**

Minnesota's
Disability Linkage Line® (DLL)
helps identify resources
and benefit options,
support decision-making
and find solutions.



**Disability Linkage
Line**
1-866-333-2466

Report to the Community

The Disability Linkage Line® (DLL)

Individualized

- A single toll-free number connects callers with a DLL specialist trained on disability benefits and available services.
- Specialists ask the right questions to clarify callers' needs and identify each individual's core concerns.
- The DLL specialist can quickly connect with program and benefit information specific to each caller, ensuring that information and resources are appropriate to each individual's needs.

Comprehensive

- The DLL is a unique partnership between government agencies and community organizations, providing immediate access to information on a full range of resources.
- The DLL specialist looks at how the pieces of the puzzle fit together, finding effective, comprehensive solutions.
- As part of the MinnesotaHelp Network™, managed by the Minnesota Board on Aging, the DLL draws upon a network of aging, veterans, disability and healthcare experts.

Efficient

- Innovative technologies and collaborative relationships create a powerful system of information and expertise that delivers results.
- DLL specialists provide real-time connections and field questions from people with disabilities and service providers, freeing caseworker time and alleviating the burden on counties.
- Built-in feedback processes enable continuous system, program and policy improvements.

"I called in despair and hopelessness. The DLL helped me deal with my county, Medicare, social security disability and my pharmacy to help me get my medications."

—DLL caller

"We establish relationships and build trust with our callers as well as organizations and service providers. Our goal is to make the whole system work for our callers."

—DLL specialist

In 2008:

- calls averaged 31 minutes and 3.6 issues per call
- 27,743 contacts on clients' behalf were made by DLL specialists to resolve issues
- 87 outreach events were conducted to build community relationships

Tailored Options & Solutions

A thorough approach from start to finish

The DLL specialists are trained to work with callers to identify all their concerns. People with disabilities each have unique and often complex needs, services and benefits. DLL specialists take the time to listen to callers, explore their full array of needs and educate about community options. The DLL's assistance doesn't end with the phone call. If warranted, the DLL specialist will make follow-up calls and continue to help until the situation is resolved or connections are made.

Statewide services from four regional centers

Regional DLL specialists who live within a client's region not only are knowledgeable about non-profit and government resources, but also are familiar with an area's informal community resources and other close-to-home options. These community relationships are critical to facilitating access to services and breaking down barriers.

Technology plus collaboration to get the right information

The DLL continues to increase capacity by harnessing the power of technology and collaborative partnerships to build a virtual network of experts for the DLL specialists to draw upon. Shared communications technology connects MinnesotaHelp Network staff (Disability, Veterans and Senior Linkage Lines) with each other to seamlessly move calls or securely live chat with the right expert to get answers. The network continues to expand. Healthcare and homecare policy experts are now on-line to provide real-time consultation to DLL specialists. Additionally, a new collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) gives DLL specialists quick access to callers' individual benefits information, which means quicker problem-solving.

People with Disabilities,
Family, Providers



DLL Specialist



Callers reach
a highly trained specialist
who works with them to
find solutions.

The DLL Experience

Fostering independence and consumer direction

The good news for Minnesotans with disabilities is the extensive array of services and healthcare options that support independent community living and integration. There has also been a positive move towards putting people with disabilities in the driver's seat, deciding for themselves which services, which providers and which locations work best for them.

Making the best decisions, however, requires accurate information and an understanding of how the pieces fit together. With ever-tightening state and local budgets, getting personal help can be hard to find. That's where the DLL comes in.

The DLL has become the safe, neutral, trusted source for many to turn to when looking for clear information and answers.

Supporting providers, creating efficiencies

Disability service providers find that the DLL is an invaluable service for them as well. In 2008, 45 percent of DLL callers were providers or people referred by providers. In a continually changing service landscape, those professionals found the DLL a reliable source for up-to-date information about programs and policies. Additionally, the information and problem-solving services that the DLL delivers to people with disabilities lessens the burden on providers, allowing them to focus on their core responsibilities.

Quick problem resolution

Often there are cases where a person with disabilities or a member of their support network is receiving confusing or contradictory information. Such issues are efficiently resolved through the DLL. The DLL specialist can use real-time methods such as three-way phone calls, live-chat or direct benefits look-up to connect required individuals, agencies, policy experts and information and quickly clarify and resolve problems. This efficiency helps to save time, money and frustration.

"The DLL specialist who helped me went above and beyond. He spoke in layman's terms so I could clearly understand him. Also, he took the time to explain anything in detail for my greater understanding."

—DLL caller

In 2008:

- 15,784 sessions— a 77% increase from the previous year
- 44% of contacts were problem-solving cases
- 100% of surveyed callers said they would recommend the DLL to a friend

A One-Stop Resource



Anyone is eligible for help at the DLL, and there are no wrong questions. A single, simple call connects people with up-to-date information about a comprehensive array of services.



"I thought I would have to quit my job just to find solutions to my problems. But one simple phone call about housing also helped me pay my medical bills and keep my job."

—Greg

Due to substandard living conditions, Greg developed severe bronchitis. His doctor said he needed to move as soon as possible and suggested that he call the DLL. The DLL specialist discovered that all of the money Greg earned from his job went towards housing and medical costs, leaving him unable to pay healthcare expenses and other bills. The DLL specialist helped Greg identify and access multiple programs, including Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD). Once in place, the programs provided Greg assistance to secure a new apartment as well as funds to help pay for Medicare premiums and prescription costs.

Seamless Connection of Experts

A simple, single access point

In today's complex world it is impossible for one person to have all the answers. That's why the DLL utilizes a network of subject matter experts to get to the best answers and the best solutions. The DLL is a gateway to the MinnesotaHelp Network which is comprised of the MinnesotaHelp.info® database, the DLL, the Senior LinkAge Line®, the Veterans Linkage Line™, DHS healthcare policy experts and access to individuals' benefits records.

The first expert a caller reaches

The DLL specialist is the first expert a caller reaches. Before they answer a single call, DLL specialists are trained to national and state standards to ensure that the service they provide is accurate, helpful and goes deeper than the problem at hand. Further, specialists receive extensive, on-going training year-round, refining their skills, learning new resources and keeping up-to-date on public benefits and community resources.

Underlying resource database supports the network

There are tens of thousands of resources available to support Minnesotans in need. But how are people to access them if they don't know they exist? Even the most knowledgeable helper can't single-handedly keep track of all those opportunities.

That's why the MinnesotaHelp.info database of resources is vital to everyone in the MinnesotaHelp Network. In 2008 the database contained more than 32,000 listings. DLL specialists use this on-line database to retrieve up-to-date resource information while fielding calls. This database is continually monitored and updated. The DLL contributes to the integrity of the database by submitting updated information it uncovers through its work with callers and the community.

"I never knew there were people out there that could help me understand my medical needs all under one roof."

—DLL caller

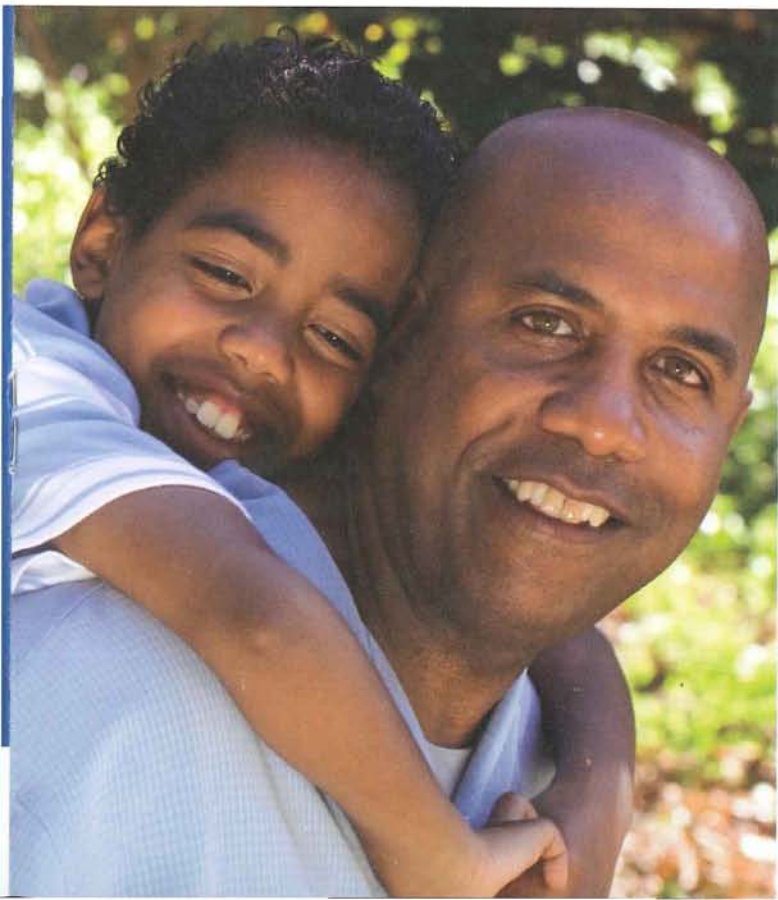
In 2008:

- DLL specialists received on average 80 hours of in-service training
- the DLL updated 686 resources in MinnesotaHelp.info®

MinnesotaHelp Network™



With administrative leadership from the State and supported by technology and a comprehensive database, a network of experts is available to help people with disabilities.



"It's very important that people with disabilities have a non-biased resource to make sure they're well-educated in their choices. The DLL is very important for that reason – I cannot say enough good things about it."

—Deborah Maruska, Program Coordinator for SNBC

When the Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC) program was introduced in 2008, for many people with disabilities this was the first time they had the option of a managed care product such as SNBC. It was expected that people would be confused about this new option and would need support to understand their choices. During the SNBC rollout, DHS promoted the DLL in all communications as the place to turn to for help.

Building an Information & Assistance Infrastructure

Technology powers quick response from the right expert

The power of the MinnesotaHelp Network technology prepares the DLL for growth, increased caller satisfaction and lower operating costs. This integrated technology offers presence ID, secure chat and email, voice-over-internet protocol (VOIP) and document management between the Linkage Lines and the DHS experts who support them. It enables DLL specialists to easily identify which experts are available at any moment, and quickly access county-based benefits information and case notes. With this system the DLL can deploy best practices for routing, queuing, logging and reporting calls. Additionally, the system can be accessed remotely, meaning that in the case of severe weather or natural disaster, DLL specialists can continue to work from home or set up operations at a community location.

Built-in feedback system

The DLL system can be monitored down to the contact level providing accountability and quality assurances. Calls to the DLL are recorded and randomly reviewed against customer service standards. DLL specialists also classify and record data on each call. This information is used to make improvements throughout Minnesota's service delivery system. For example, if DLL administrators detect recurrent policy misunderstandings, they can provide that information to state and county administrators who can make policy changes, increase training for staff, or clarify communications.

A platform for emerging needs

The MinnesotaHelp Network's structure was designed to support new information and initiatives. Development is already underway for a new planning tool for people with disabilities who are considering competitive employment. Scheduled for public launch in 2009, the online tool - Disability Benefits 101 (DB101) - is being built into the existing MinnesotaHelp.info framework. DLL specialists will provide the support DB101 users need to successfully interpret results and plan next steps.

"Thank you for helping me restore some dignity. The DLL is more like a knowledgeable best friend!"

—DLL caller

In 2008:

- benefits look-up capacity was added to the MinnesotaHelp Network™, supporting the DLL to help 8,696 people manage their Medicare Part D
- the DLL created disabilitylinkage.info – a public website for people with disabilities and their support network that can be accessed directly or through MinnesotaHelp.info

Integrated Systems Designed for Quality & Growth

Real-Time Communications

A state-of-the-art communications system finds the right expert at the right time for efficient solutions.



Central Database

Database is kept up-to-date with service and resource information that supports the MinnesotaHelp Network and its partners.

Unified Tracking & Reporting

Service and customer records are kept to track callers, their issues, referrals made, problem resolution and resource data errors. Reports and data are shared with MinnesotaHelp Network partners to inform system improvements.



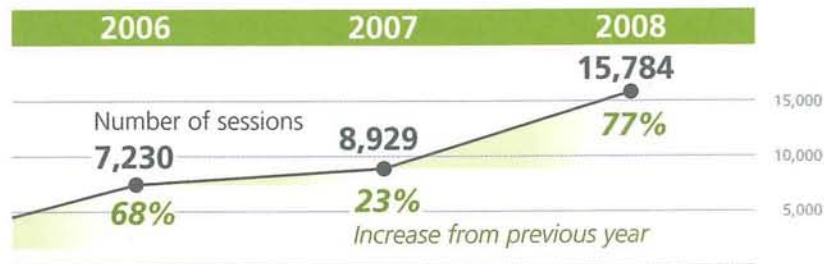
"The DLL was the perfect solution for us and for those we were trying to reach. They engaged callers in such a way that helped people realize new options they did not think possible. The DLL also was able to provide PTE data about the calls, helping us refine our future communications activities."

—Lori Lippert, Communications Coordinator, PTE

Pathways to Employment (PTE) is a federally-funded initiative to increase competitive employment of people with disabilities in Minnesota. In 2007 and 2008, PTE ran statewide media campaigns to raise public awareness about disability and employment. PTE was able to partner with the DLL to provide personalized information and resources to people who responded to the PTE ads and wanted to learn more.

Statistical Highlights 2008

Use of the Disability Linkage Line® continues to grow.



Who's calling:

- 70%** consumers with disabilities or long-term illnesses
- 15%** family, friend or caregiver
- 15%** service provider or employer

Top 3 consumer disability types:

1. physical
2. psychiatric
3. chronic illness

Average call time:

31 minutes

Number of needs or problems identified:

56,876 an average of 3.6 per session

Calls out:

27,743 additional calls to customer or on behalf of customer

Top 5 reasons why people called:

1. public benefits / health insurance*
2. advocacy
3. financial assistance
4. housing / shelter
5. health care

* nearly 20,000 needs within this topic were identified in 2008

Satisfaction survey results:

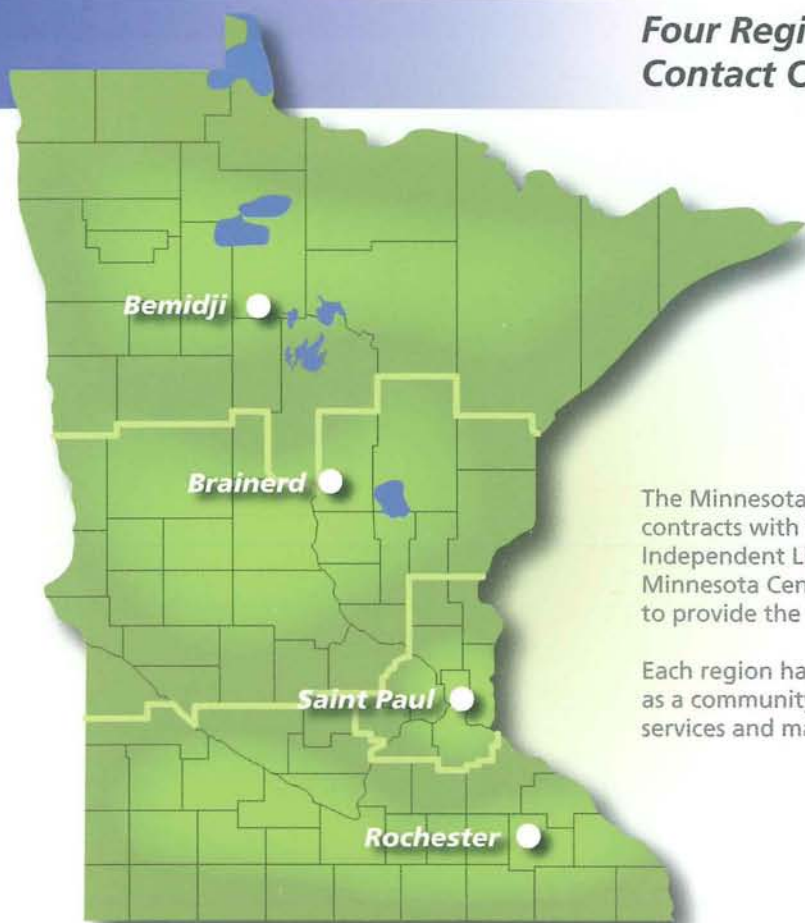
DLL customers are randomly mailed a satisfaction survey, which is returned to DHS.

- 100%** said they would recommend DLL to a friend
- 96%** said the staff was helpful (1% said No, while the remainder did not yet know.)

Level of service provided:

- 13%** answered request for information
- 40%** performed needs discovery, explored resources, provided education and information
- 44%** actively involved in resolving a situation and / or connecting people to chosen resources

Four Regional Contact Centers



The Minnesota Department of Human Services contracts with the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living and the Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living to provide the DLL's statewide services.

Each region has a DLL Coordinator who acts as a community lead in implementing the DLL services and managing the regional contact center.



"I was excited that for the first time in months I could visit family and friends!"

—Carl

A staff member from a State Representative's office called the DLL on behalf of a constituent named Carl who lived in rural Minnesota and needed help buying adaptive equipment for his van. The DLL made numerous phone calls to providers to see if they could help pay for the equipment. When funds could not be secured from these sources, the DLL turned to community resources, and the local Lions Club provided a donation that paid for the equipment, providing Carl access to his vehicle and the independence to manage his daily life.



Giving information the way you want it.

phone: 1-866-333-2466

web: www.disabilitylinkage.info
www.MinnesotaHelp.info

email: DHS.Disability-Linkage@state.mn.us



Disability Linkage Line

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Disability Services Division
P. O. Box 64967
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0967

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Printed with soy inks.

Improving Business Success



Through Disability Employment

A Reference Manual for Disability Employment Specialists

POSITIVELY
Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

positivelyminnesota.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Orientation

Introduction to the Materials	page 3
<i>Overview, principles, objectives and core sources</i>	
What Businesses Think	page 5
<i>Key ODEP studies informing this work</i>	
Outline of Material	Page 6
<i>Page-by-page review for quick reference and introduction</i>	

Ways to use the materials

Engaging the Business	page 7
<i>Suggested approach to engage businesses</i>	
Possible Approaches	page 8
<i>Possible ways to disseminate the information</i>	
Linear Approach	page 10
<i>Page-by-page series of key beliefs and facts for use in disseminating information in a staged, linear fashion such as in planned campaigns or classroom opportunities</i>	
Topics Approach	page 19
<i>Divides the information into 5 key topic areas based on what we know businesses believe about people who have disabilities, then matches key pages from the information with the topic area. Can be used for self study, or as a guide to responding to businesses at various stages of considering the hiring process.</i>	

Addenda

Publications	page 30
<i>Includes studies, publications, video and fact sheets housed at DEED</i>	
End Notes	page 33
<i>Notes of materials used in this information</i>	

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW In order to meet Minnesota business workforce goals, and increase the competitive employment of people who have disabilities, this disability employment resource was created to support existing business consultative processes. It was also designed to help businesses move forward in their understanding of people who have disabilities as a robust, talented pool of talent from which they can recruit and hire qualified candidates.

Parameters for developing *Improving Business Success through Disability Employment* include:

- A coordinated, comprehensive body of accurate information and resources.
- Delivered through a trusted relationship with the consultant.
- Delivered on a "just-in-time" basis.

OBJECTIVES The goal of *Improving Business Success through Disability Employment* is to help Disability Employment Specialists better serve the workforce needs of Minnesota businesses through education about the value of hiring and retaining people who have disabilities. The material will provide a framework for the Disability Employment Specialists approaches to business, increasing their capacity to find the resources businesses need on a timely basis.

Key goals in creating the material include:

- Establish common messages and language.
- Provide standard information.
- Increase business capacity to employ people who have disabilities.
- Generate connections to help businesses find qualified workers.

ORIENTATION

PRINCIPLES A set of standards guided the development of this disability employment resource. The core set of principles emerged from research, including focus group studies, surveys, small group discussion and consultation with business leaders.

The material has been designed under the following criteria.

- Written for a business audience using common business language.
- Material is topic driven, focusing on key concerns of businesses.
- Brief bullet point lists are preferred by businesses, and ideal for the web.

CORE SOURCES Research and statistics were drawn from a set of resources and studies deemed to be the most comprehensive, accurate and current. Information found in these core sources was supplemented with interviews with Minnesota businesses who employ people who have disabilities. The material was also read and reviewed by Disability Employment Specialists and independent business consultants specializing in human resource management with a focus on employees who have disabilities.

- Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA: <http://www.ada.gov/>
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - DEED: <http://www.deed.state.mn.us> (positivelyminnesota.com)
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - DEED: <http://www.deed.state.mn.us> (positivelyminnesota.com)
- Minnesota Business Leadership Network - BLN: <http://www.mnbln.org/>
- Office of Disability Employment and Policy - ODEP: <http://www.dol.gov>
- Society for Human Resource Management - SHRM: <http://www.shrm.org>

ORIENTATION

**STUDIES
SHOW WHAT
BUSINESSES
THINK**

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, the most significant hurdle to employing people who have disabilities is that managers and executives simply do not believe it will benefit the business to do so.

In a focus group study of private sector business executives and human resource professionals conducted by ODEP in 2005, and surveyed again in 2009, the following misconceptions surfaced as primary beliefs about people who have disabilities.

- They cannot perform the work, are not qualified.
- They perform poorly because of medical problems.
- They are absent and tardy frequently, or are unpredictable and unreliable.
- Safety issues arise both in performing the job, and in emergencies.
- They will feel entitled to special treatment and therefore create morale problems for employees who do not have disabilities.
- Accommodating people who have disabilities is too costly.
- Fear of being sued by a person who has a disability if employment does not work out.

Overcoming these misconceptions about people who have disabilities is a key element to helping businesses consider, decide, and follow through with hiring. However, businesses do not want to be pressured into social action. They want to profit. They also want to be sure that the best interests of their business comes first.

Delivering messages in bite-sized pieces with high-level, statistically driven information, can help alleviate business skepticism, turning their focus toward hiring.

The information assembled in *Improving Business Success through Disability Employment* has been written to speak to businesses quickly and positively about the profitability of hiring people who have disabilities. This guide will help you combine key messages and materials to systematically communicate with businesses over a 10 step educative selling cycle.

ORIENTATION

OUTLINE OF MATERIAL

Section 1 The Business Case	Section 2 Recognize the Talent	Section 3 Find Qualified Candidates	Section 4 Maximize Success
<p>The business case for considering, recruiting and hiring people who have disabilities provides concrete, statistical information about the positive impact employees who have disabilities have on business.</p>	<p>Presents demographics about Minnesotans who have disabilities, who they are, where they work, and what disabilities they have. These pages are intended to help foster greater understanding about people who have disabilities.</p>	<p>Introduces businesses to the recruitment process involved in hiring people who have disabilities, and show how businesses can move forward with services offered by Minnesota Disability Employment Specialists.</p>	<p>Highlights the ways businesses can maximize their success in hiring and retaining people who have disabilities and focuses on the similarities between employees who have disabilities and those who do not.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for Business • Qualified Workforce • Educated Pool of Talent • Demonstrated Productivity • Positive POI • Engaged Employees • Innovate • Attracts Markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Professions • Diverse Demographics • Diverse Conditions • Expanding Views • Minnesota Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to Specialist • Identify Staff goals • Prepare to Hire • Find Candidates • Resources • Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Employees • Training • Supporting Employees • Performance • Advancement • Resources

Section 5 Business Case Stories



WAYS TO USE THE INFORMATION

ENGAGING BUSINESSES

Businesses carry a high degree of risk and worry when recruiting, interviewing and hiring. Ask them to consider recruiting and hiring someone who has a disability, and those worries escalate.

They really don't know what they'll get working with recruiters to find employees who have disabilities. Further, employers fear that government entities operate with a hidden agenda of simply moving people off government benefits and placing the cost burden on business.

Businesses need a tangible factor they can point to that helps them feel confident in your services. The following practices are guidelines you already use to develop rapport with potential clients. Additional information is included here to aid you in understanding how to utilize the disability employment resource material as supplements to your existing process.

- **Introduction/Rapport to build relationship:** Follow your process of introducing yourself and taking time to establish common ground by talking about the business instead of your candidates. Utilize your research of the business history, successes, industry, products and/or services to launch conversation. Business leaders are flattered by your interest.
- **Find needs of organization surrounding hiring issues:** Ask relevant, probing questions about the business' hiring needs. For example, your knowledge about job carving can translate to questions about specific job tasks and how they're structured. Then you are able to provide the related informational print-outs or links from the material as references to support you.

Example: Ask a business if you can do an informational interview with them about recruiting and hiring. Explain that you are doing research to improve your recruiting services. During the interview, probe the business about problematic jobs, or difficult positions to fill.

- **Promote service features and benefits as products:** Look at the services you provide and itemize the benefits of those services in much the same way products are presented. Delineate how it will help the organization and supply supplemental materials.

Example: Package "Job Analysis Services" with "Customized Networking Services" to help businesses address high turnover positions.

- **Sell services that solve needs:** Focus on selling your consulting services instead of selling the individuals you are trying to place.
- **Follow-up with information flow:** Continue to feed information related to your accounts using DEED's business case for hiring people who have disabilities. The materials are packaged in a series of concise messages which can be delivered over time as a way of staying connected to your accounts. Studies show that the first 10 informative e-mail pieces are the most effective.

WAYS TO USE THE INFORMATION

While individuals may choose to read through these materials on their own, at their own pace, and according to their own needs, they were designed to be delivered by a trusted resource on a just-in-time basis. To do this, a Disability Employment Specialist must be familiar with the contents and where to find specific pieces of information.

Presented in this manual are two structured ways to utilize the information presented in *Improving Business Success through Disability Employment*.

LINEAR APPROACH

Although the disability employment resource wasn't necessarily designed to be read through in its entirety in a linear fashion, approaching the information this way can be useful for consultants and business leaders who would like to build an A-to-Z understanding of how hiring people who have disabilities positively impacts businesses.

Any time material is being used in a serial format, the linear approach might be helpful.

- Email and other **electronically delivered information campaigns** lend themselves to the linear approach.
- **Workshops**, mini-seminars or a series of brown bag lunch meetings are easily organized in a linear fashion.

The linear approach can be useful in assessing where a business is, and leading them toward successful integration of people who have disabilities in their workplace. The pages are outlined on page 12-19 of this manual with key points of each section and page of the information.

TOPICS APPROACH

Approaching the information as a series of related topics enables you to respond to a client's questions and concern with pages from various sections of the material, depending on what issue your client is grappling with.

For example, understanding how people who have disabilities is a qualified pool of talent draws key information from 2 or 3 different sections of the material. If your client is skeptical about the concept of hiring people who have disabilities, then relevant information from section 1 may fit the bill. If they have identified a challenge about a hard-to-fill position, they may be ready for information that typically comes later in the process, such as job analysis or recruiting resources from section 3.

Topics are outlined on pages 20-30 of this manual and include what businesses think about a given topic, and the opportunities that may present themselves in what businesses think. Studying this information by topic areas is a good way to elevate your own understanding of the material, positioning yourself as a strong resource to clients.

WAYS TO DELIVER THE INFORMATION

The following is a list of ways this information can be delivered to clients. The entire disability employment resource is hosted on *positivelyminnesota.com* and is available to the public at large. However, as key messengers about the positive impact of hiring people who have disabilities, you can consider the following strategies for continued engagement with your accounts as well as for attracting new accounts.

ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Develop and conduct your own e-mail campaign

You can create an email campaign by highlighting the key fact of each page and sending it with a link to the full information on *positivelyminnesota.com*. Keep emails to 5 sentences or less and they will likely be read.

Submit articles to newsletters and information sites

You can take any page and submit it to news sites or networking sites as a way of spreading the word about hiring people who have disabilities and circulating your name as a consultant in the field.

PRINTED MATERIAL

Print pages for business contacts

Before scheduling a meeting, draw out a key question or concern they might have. Print a relevant page or two from *positivelyminnesota.com* and bring it to the client meeting.

- Keep a handful of commonly used pages in your briefcase.
- Print pages to send as follow-up to conversations.
- Distribute pages at conference exhibits or workshops.

LIVE EXPERIENCES

Hosting small scale live experiences

Use topics and sections as starting points for building a live training using printed pages from *positivelyminnesota.com*. Bring in speakers who are subject matter experts and incorporate printed pages into the training. You can also create a one-page handout that directs clients to the web site for complete detailed information. Experiences might include:

- Informational networking events
- Mini workshop or extended meetings
- Brown bag lunch series
- Webinars

LINEAR APPROACH

INFORMATION
DELIVERED
IN A CONTINUUM

Improving Business Success through Disability Employment was written in a specific order that reflects a commonly expressed process businesses experience when engaging the topic of recruiting and hiring people who have disabilities.

The following diagram illustrates that process in a linear fashion.

PROCESS	Consider	Investigate	Recruit/Hire	Train/Develop
BARRIERS	No experience Stereotypes Myths Charity	Who Where How Why	Qualifications Cost Accommodations Speed	Training Morale Performance Litigation
RESPONSE	The Business Case	Focus on Ability	Find Qualified Candidates	Maximize Success
WEB PAGE TITLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for Business • Qualified Workforce • Educated Pool of Talent • Demonstrated Productivity • Positive POI • Engaged Employees • Innovate • Attracts Markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Professions • Diverse Demographics • Diverse Conditions • Expanding Views • Minnesota Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to Specialist • Identify Staff goals • Prepare to Hire • Find Candidates • Resources • Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Employees • Training • Supporting Employees • Performance • Advancement • Resources

Presenting the information in order can be useful when formulating an informational campaign, an email or electronic-based workshop or newsletter series. It can also be effectively presented in order for classroom experiences and presentations.

The following pages provide guided information for using the DEED materials in order.

LINEAR APPROACH

The Business Case

PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > The Business Case

Hiring people who have disabilities is good business.

Businesses that hire people who have disabilities are more likely to be successful. In fact, a study by the U.S. Department of Labor found that companies that hire people with disabilities are 28% more likely to be profitable than those that do not.

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Good for Business – explains how hiring people who have disabilities positively impact the bottom line.

Key myths: Few people have disabilities. They are non-productive.

Key fact: 20% of the population have disabilities. They are qualified productive members of the workforce.

Hiring people who have disabilities

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the total U.S. workforce will grow by 24% over the next decade. However, only 10% of that growth is expected to be filled by new hires. This means that 14% of the workforce will be unfilled, creating a significant labor shortage.

Businesses that hire people who have disabilities are more likely to be successful. In fact, a study by the U.S. Department of Labor found that companies that hire people with disabilities are 28% more likely to be profitable than those that do not.

Qualified Workforce – outlines the projected labor shortage and how workforce demands can be filled with an underutilized population.

Key myths: Projected workforce shortages are overblown.

Key fact: The workforce shortage presents a 24% gap in jobs filled over the next decade. People who have disabilities have been overlooked, but represent a viable, qualified pool of talent.

People who have disabilities are the diverse talent

Businesses that hire people who have disabilities are more likely to be successful. In fact, a study by the U.S. Department of Labor found that companies that hire people with disabilities are 28% more likely to be profitable than those that do not.

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Educated Pool of Talent – shows how this fast growing population is a significant resource to expand the talent pipeline.

Key myths: People who have disabilities don't go to college.

Key fact: People who have disabilities graduate at nearly the same rate as their non-disabled peers. They are as diverse in their fields of study at the population at large.

Employees who have disabilities

Businesses that hire people who have disabilities are more likely to be successful. In fact, a study by the U.S. Department of Labor found that companies that hire people with disabilities are 28% more likely to be profitable than those that do not.

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Demonstrated Productivity – makes clear the above-average performance of people who have disabilities.

Key myths: People who have disabilities don't perform like their peers.

Key fact: 90 percent of employees who have disabilities are rated above average in performance. Coworkers believe their performance improves when working with people who have disabilities.

LINEAR APPROACH

The Business Case

PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > The Business Case

Positive ROI – illustrates how increases in productivity yield high returns through reduced costs and improved efficiencies.

Key myths: People who have disabilities are costly.

Key fact: People who have disabilities yield high ROI because they stay in their jobs, have low rates of absenteeism and tardiness, and high rates of productivity.

Engaged Employees – describes ways inclusion of diverse groups connects and motivates employees.

Key myths: People who have disabilities will bring down company morale.

Key fact: People who have disabilities exhibit high levels of engagement, and have a positive impact on their coworkers.

Innovate – confirms how problem-solving skills foster inventive thinking and lead to improvements.

Key fact: Companies that hire people who have disabilities attract talent, and realize innovative outcomes from inclusive teams and workgroups.

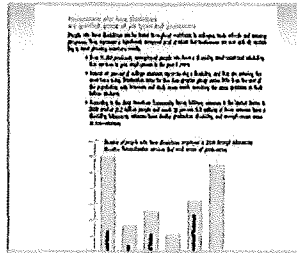
Attract Markets – demonstrates the buying power of people who have disabilities' network.

Key fact: Companies that hire people who have disabilities are better able to tap the \$1.5 trillion market represented by this group. These companies frequently outperform their competitors.

LINEAR APPROACH

Recognize the Talent

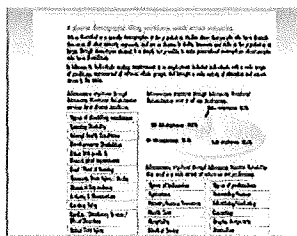
PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > Focusing on Ability.



Diverse Professions – shows the various careers and professions of Minnesotans who have received vocational rehabilitation services.

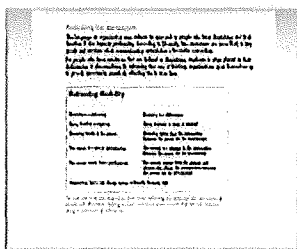
Key myth: People who have disabilities are limited to retail and food industries.

Key fact: Minnesotans who have disabilities work across all industries and professions.



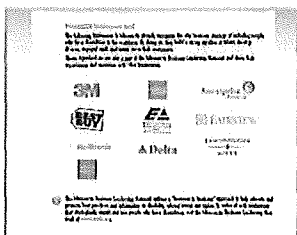
Diverse Demographic – presents the many Minnesota industries benefiting from employing people who have disabilities.

Key fact: People who have disabilities are as diverse as the population at large, working in a wide variety of jobs and professions.



Expanding Views – demonstrates different frameworks for understanding disability.

Key fact: Rethinking stereotypes through language and policy changes helps businesses consider tapping people who have disabilities.



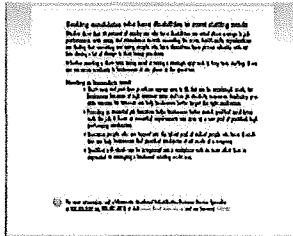
Minnesota Success – highlights the Minnesota businesses leading the way as part of the Business Leadership Network.

Key fact: Minnesota businesses are networking to help each other learn more about hiring people who have disabilities.

LINEAR APPROACH

Find Qualified Candidates

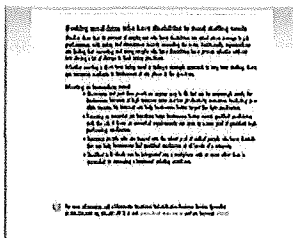
PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > Find Qualified Candidates.



Connect to Specialists – describes the benefits of working with a consultant and how to get the most out of the relationship.

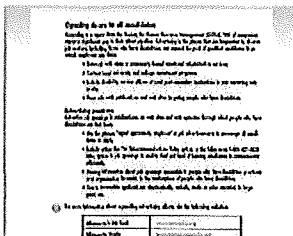
Key myth: Using consultants and recruiting agents is too costly.

Key Fact: Minnesota VRBSS provide consulting and recruiting services at no charge to the business.



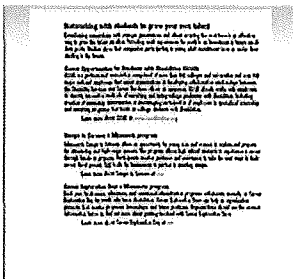
Identify Staffing Goals – makes the point that businesses can invest a little by filling single positions, or can make a large commitment in implementing a strategic approach.

Key Fact: People who have disabilities perform well and intentionally recruiting them for either a single position, or as a wider-reange staffing strategy is good for business.



Prepare to hire – illuminates the processes of a job analysis and flexible hiring options that lead to successful hires.

Key Fact: Flexible employers attract quality candidates with or without disabilities. Helping employers find ways to better match candidates to essential job functions results in greater employee return.



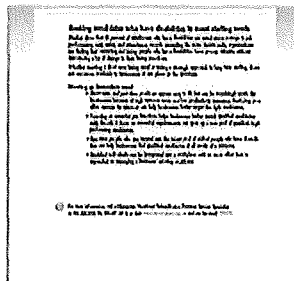
Find Candidates – highlights options for recruiting candidates through advertising and networking.

Key Fact: Businesses identify turnover and recruitment as a top business concern. By implementing inclusive recruiting practices, businesses increase their chances of finding qualified candidates.

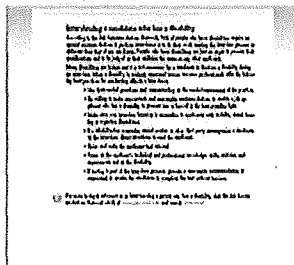
LINEAR APPROACH

Find Qualified Candidates

PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > Find Qualified Candidates.



Resources – includes the descriptions of the many resources applicable to finding and recruiting candidates.



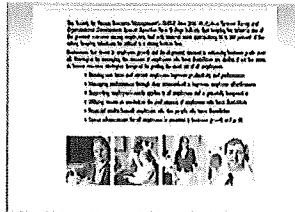
Interview – illustrates how a company's ability to interview leads to successful hiring.

Key Fact: Disability awareness can help a business conduct successful interviews that focus on applicant skills.

LINEAR APPROACH

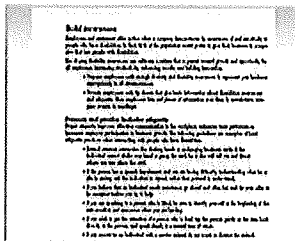
Maximize Your Success

PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > Maximize Your Success.



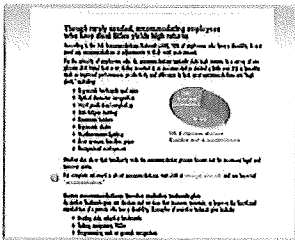
Integrate Employees – identifies the cost benefits of dedicating resources to employee development.

Key Fact: Effective management can build cohesive teams and have a positive effect on both coworkers and the bottom line.



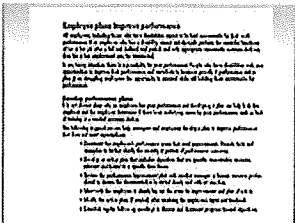
Training – describes the practices of creating awareness, providing etiquette information, and the effects of preparing employees.

Key Fact: Training improves productivity and performance overall.



Supporting Employees – covers the typically minimal accommodations and supports used by employees who have disabilities.

Key Fact: Most employees who have disabilities require no accommodations.



Performance – describes universal design and related adjustments as well as the benefits of employee performance plans.

Key Fact: All employees benefit from universal design elements that streamline business processes. The bottom line is often improved.

LINEAR APPROACH

Maximize Your Success

PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > Maximize Your Success.

Ways to find training support and other resources
Use pointer of arrow to open specific links. Select resource on page. Use
 buttons to go back to previous page or home. Go to the top of the page.

	Available	Active Status	Timing	Cost
All Minnesota Support (MS) - www.msnet.org	✓		✓	✓
Business Resource Development Agency - www.brda.org	✓		✓	✓
Business Resource Learning Lab - www.brllab.org	✓		✓	✓
Small Business Loans - www.sba.gov			✓	✓
Employee Resource Hub - www.dhs.gov	✓		✓	✓
Employment Development Agency - www.eda.gov	✓		✓	✓
Business Resource Support - www.brda.org	✓		✓	✓
Small Business Loan Hub - www.sba.gov			✓	✓
Small Business Learning Lab - www.brllab.org			✓	✓
Small Business Loans - www.sba.gov			✓	✓

Advancement – highlights personal development options such as reassignment, job shadowing, and mentoring.

Key Myth: Employees who have disabilities can't advance.

Key Fact: People with disabilities have career goals just like any employee. The same career development methods benefit all employees.

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry
The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry is the state's largest employer and employee
 resource and training provider. We provide resources through the online portal
 to help you find the right job, learn new skills, and connect to other people
 and the state workforce.

- **Advancement:** Business Resource Learning Lab is a free online tool that helps
 you learn new skills and connect to other people. It is available in both
 English and Spanish. You can also find information on other programs,
 such as job training and career counseling.
- **Business Resource Learning Lab:** This website offers information on a variety of
 topics, including job training, career counseling, and job search tips. It
 also provides information on other programs, such as job training and
 career counseling.
- **Job Training:** Find out more about the state's job training programs and
 how to get into a training program. You can also find information on
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 other programs, such as job training and career counseling.

Resources – provides a quick reference and description to training, tax, and employee resources.

LINEAR APPROACH

Case Stories

PositivelyMinnesota.com > Hiring People Who Have Disabilities > Case Stories.

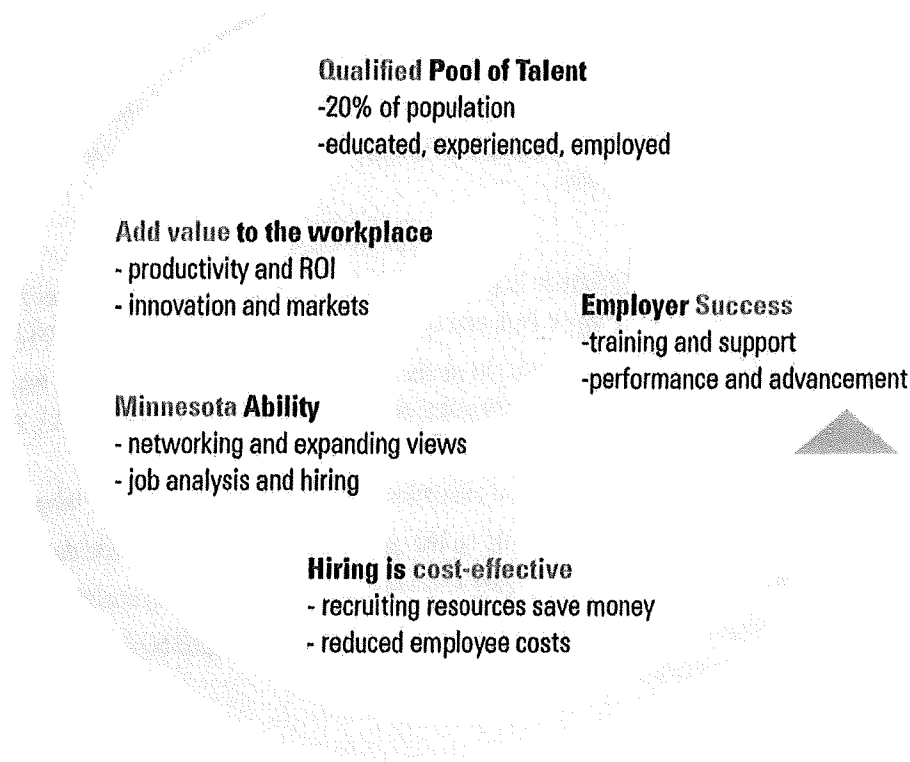
- **Productivity Gains** – Describes how Walgreens experienced high return on hiring people who have disabilities in their Anderson facility.
- **Skilled and Talented** – Human resource professionals are focusing on how businesses can prepare for upcoming shortages by learning to tap into underutilized talent.
- **Goals Lead to Hiring** – Illustrates how one business found success through strategic initiatives in hiring people who have disabilities, including improved hiring processes and employee training.
- **Successful Interview** – Shows how a company was able to land the right person for the job because they could effectively interview him.
- **No Difference** – Shows how integrating employees who have disabilities required minimal accommodations for one company, and how Disability Employment Specialists have been a successful resource for finding qualified candidates.
- **Advancing a Career** – Illustrates the career path of a talented Medtronic professional who has a disability.

TOPICS APPROACH

INFORMATION BY TOPIC AREA

The following outline presents *Improving Business Success through Disability Employment* divided into 5 topic areas, with 2 key messages per topic. Each topic and key message utilizes pieces from the material, addressing broad topic areas to address business concerns.

This approach to the information can help you think about responding to business questions with an array of answers and ideas from any point on the continuum that is appropriate for the business needs.



Following are two pages per topic. The first page identifies the topic, what businesses believe about the topic, and the communications opportunity that may grow out of the business belief.

The second page of each topic illustrates which web pages and key messages you can effectively use to educate clients about the topic.

TOPIC: QUALIFIED POOL OF TALENT

TOPIC **People who have disabilities are a significant qualified pool of talent who are qualified and educated across diverse industries and professions**

WHAT BUSINESSES THINK The 2005 ODEP focus group found that business leaders are hesitant to believe that people who have disabilities comprise nearly 20% of the population. Focus group facilitators speculate that because many conditions classified as disabilities are hidden, employers are surprised by these numbers.

The study showed that business leaders tend to associate disabilities with limited stereotypes, and when given further information about the spectrum of disabilities, they were admittedly naive, and somewhat confused by what constitutes a disability.

Because their images of what constitutes a disability were narrow, the group tended to believe that people who have disabilities are very limited in ability, under educated or not experienced enough to succeed in their organizations.

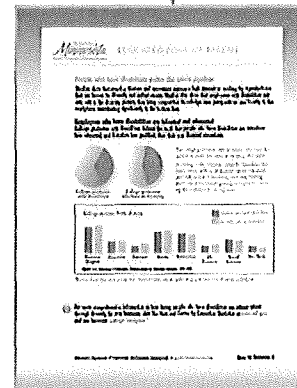
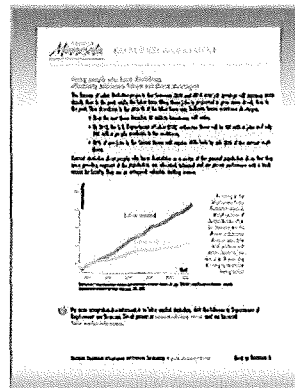
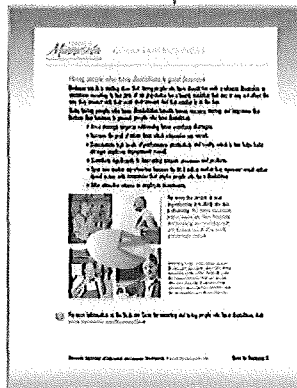
OPPORTUNITY The need for qualified candidates is your opportunity to emerge as a recruiting resource. Position yourself as a recruiting resource first, and Disability Employment Specialists second.

Talk to businesses about people who have disabilities as a rich pool of qualified, experienced employees, and that tapping this sector of the population casts a wider recruiting net, yielding greater chances of finding the right person for the job.

- Expose the population and education statistics about people who have disabilities.
- Ask employers to elaborate on the qualifications they seek in candidates.
- Leverage the specific talents of your candidates by matching qualifications to jobs.
- Share examples of how your past candidates have helped businesses meet hiring needs, revealing the benefits of hiring to the employer.

TOPIC: QUALIFIED POOL OF TALENT

Good for Business

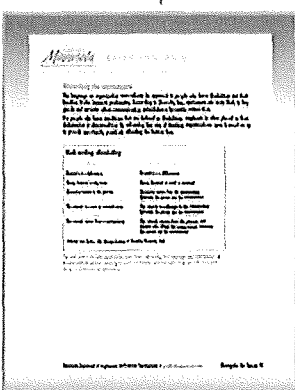
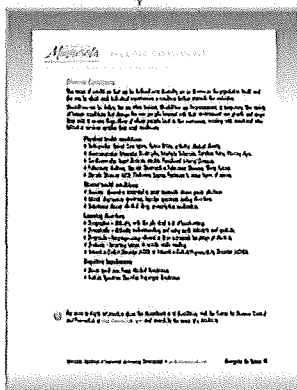


Twenty percent
 52 million people in the United States have a health condition that can be classified as a disability, and that number is on the rise, making them the hidden pool of talent from which businesses can draw.

Qualified
 The need for workers will increase more rapidly than in the past, while the labor force filling this need is shrinking. **Sec. 1:3**

Educated
 People who report having disabilities graduate at nearly the same rate as the population at large.

Recognize the Talent



Understand
 Understanding the breadth of disabilities and expanding views about people are effected by disabilities helps employers consider this untapped pool of talent.

Expand views
 Understanding the breadth of disabilities and expanding views about people are effected by disabilities helps employers consider this untapped pool of talent.

TOPIC: ADD VALUE TO THE WORKPLACE

TOPIC **Employees who have disabilities** add value to the workplace

WHAT Among the top three staffing concerns for businesses is turnover and employee performance.
BUSINESSES Findings from both 2005 ODEP focus group and its 2009 survey found that most employers surveyed had
THINK little or no experience with people who have disabilities, and are likely to believe that people who have disabilities are unable to yield high productivity levels. In fact, business leaders tended to think that people who have disabilities may even bring down the productivity levels of other employees.

Employers participating in the ODEP 2005 study and 2009 survey believe that people who have disabilities are hindered by medical needs that get in the way of their ability to work. Fears about performance, entitlement, and litigation emerged as key concerns when hiring people who have disabilities.

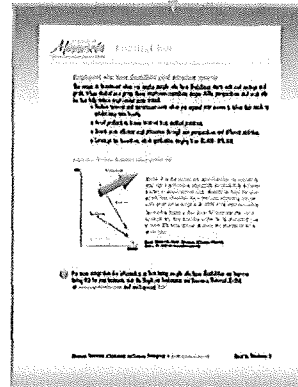
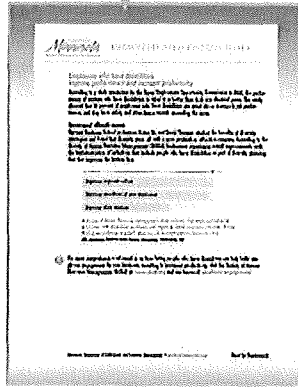
OPPORTUNITY Your opportunity lies in asking a business person about their goals surrounding productivity and profit. Speak to the heart of the business by determining their goals and dreams for the business.

- Ask about turnover costs the business might be experiencing. Turnover can cost as much as 90 - 200% of the wages of the position.
- Ask how the business perceives its return on employee investment.
- Ask about marketing, market representation and market share.
- Ask about processes for innovating workflow, products or services.

Then follow their response with concrete examples of how using you as a recruiting resource can help them accomplish their goals. Solutions are not always obvious and brainstorming, formally or informally, will help reveal opportunities for you to introduce people who have disabilities as a viable option.

TOPIC: ADD VALUE TO THE WORKPLACE

Good for Business

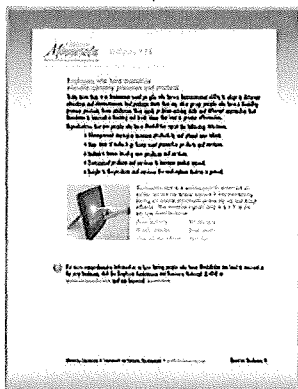


Productive

Profitable ROI

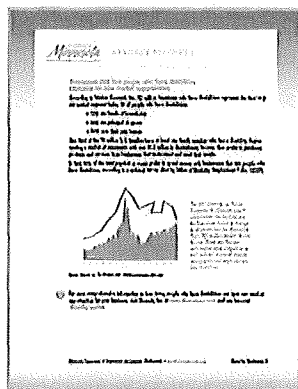
Overall, people who have disabilities are rated above average in productivity, safety and attendance. They are absent and tardy less often than their non-disabled peers, and have a positive impact on their coworkers.

Good for Business



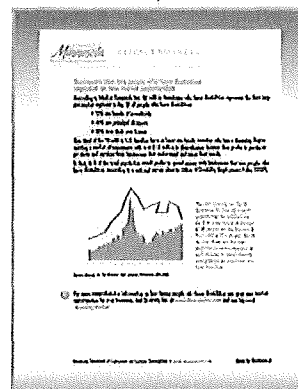
Engaged

Hiring people who have disabilities fosters inclusion, which in turn advances business goals for growth.



Innovation

Outcomes associated with increased employee engagement include greater innovation in workflow, service and product development.



Markets

Organizations who consistently include people who have disabilities in their workforce tend to outperform their competition. 93% of the total population would prefer to spend money with businesses that hire people who have disabilities.

TOPIC: MINNESOTA BUSINESSES LEAD

TOPIC Minnesota **businesses are among those** leading the way

WHAT BUSINESSES THINK The 2005 ODEP study confirms that businesses want to establish credibility on two levels when thinking about recruiting and hiring people who have disabilities.

- Businesses want to know what “big name” organizations are doing it.
- Businesses like to hear about businesses like their own that succeed with hiring.

Working with “the government” was a significant concern expressed by ODEP study participants, and was confirmed by interviews with Minnesota businesses. Small businesses in particular are wary of becoming steeped in government processes that are time-consuming, complicated and self-serving, while larger businesses do understand and trust the system a little better.

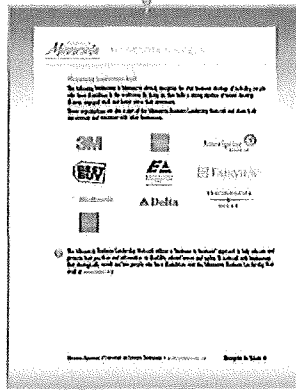
OPPORTUNITY Take the opportunity to promote the Minnesota Business Leadership Network, and the groundbreaking hiring strategies of the businesses who are members. By associating with the business community, you can ease your clients beyond the “government” hump and get down to the business of doing business.

Businesses are interested in solving problems quickly, reducing costs efficiently and making processes faster. They want to see the information that will alleviate their unspoken fears about people who have disabilities.

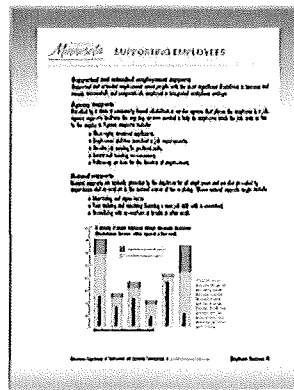
- Create awareness about how people who have disabilities statistically yield positive results in business.
- Show the employer how people who have disabilities fit into their current process with small adjustments.
- Emphasize your role in helping meet their needs in hiring.
- Share stories and anecdotes.

TOPIC: MINNESOTA BUSINESS SUCCESS

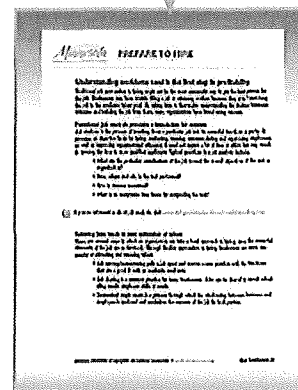
Recognize the Talent and case stories



Minnesota Businesses
Minnesota businesses demonstrate leadership in recruiting and hiring people who have disabilities.

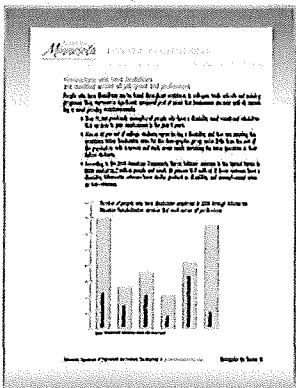


Paper Depot
Businesses are interested in stories about how other large and small businesses effectively target, recruit and hire people who have disabilities.

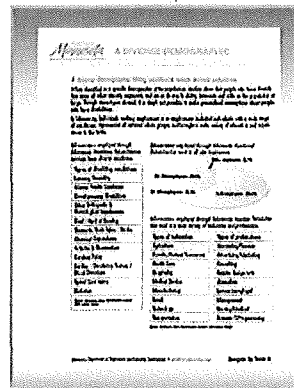


Mackin

Recognize Talent



All professions



All Industries

People who have disabilities already work across all professions and industries.

TOPIC: HIRING IS COST-EFFECTIVE

TOPIC Hiring people who have disabilities is cost-effective

WHAT BUSINESSES THINK The focus group study of private sector business executives and human resource professionals conducted by ODEP in 2005 found that businesses seldom use recruiting services for hiring, unless narrowing a large group of qualified candidates, or for very specialized situations. Cost and time were cited as the primary reason recruiting services are not used.

Conversely, businesses do report networking with colleagues to find qualified candidates informally. In fact, more than 85 percent of candidates are hired through this type of networking. That's why the Minnesota Business Leadership Network is an important component in introducing businesses to the concept of recruiting and hiring people who have disabilities as a business strategy.

OPPORTUNITY This is your opportunity to open the eyes of employers to the recruiting opportunities they are missing. Not only can you inform them about the breadth of people who have disabilities, you can offer to help them recruit with no fees to the business.

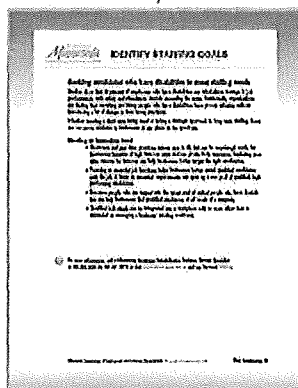
Determine how far an organization wants to go in implementing new recruiting and hiring practices. Do they want to fill one job, or begin to develop new staffing strategies? Adjust your approach to the needs of your clients and deliver information that not only sells the concept of hiring people who have disabilities, but also sells you as a cost-effective recruiting resource.

Here's what businesses want to know.

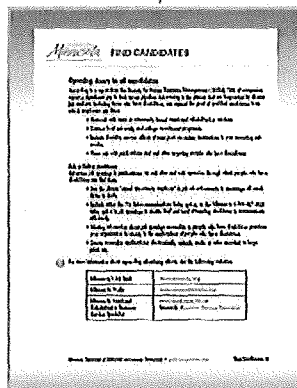
- What happens when they call you with a job opening?
- How large is your pool of candidates? Do you screen and provide background checks?
- What industries do you serve? What are your credentials?
- What happens if the person doesn't work out?
- What other businesses are using DEED services now?

TOPIC: RECRUITING IS COST-EFFECTIVE

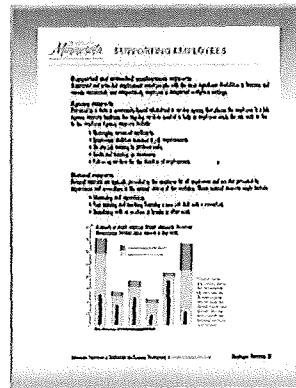
Find Candidates



Identify goals
Identifying staffing goals helps businesses effectively meet an immediate staffing need, or engage a broader, strategic approach to hiring.

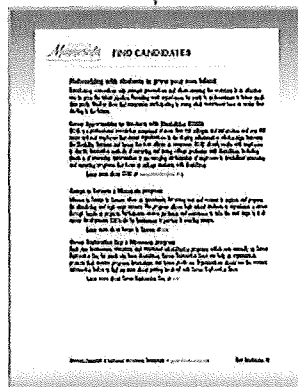


Prepare to hire
Traditional approaches to hiring can be enhanced with job tailoring and carving to help businesses maximize recruitment.

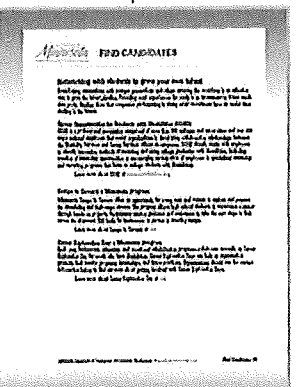
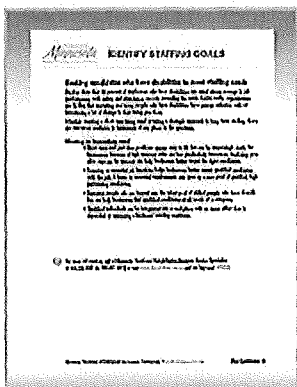


Paper Depot

Find Candidates



Advertise Resources
Organizations that extend recruiting efforts to nontraditional sources will increase their chances of finding qualified candidates, with or without disabilities.



Interview
70% of people who have disabilities require no change to the interviewing process.

TOPIC: EMPLOYER SUCCESS

TOPIC Employers succeed regularly **with minor change, or by making strategic investments**

WHAT BUSINESSES THINK According to the ODEP study, one of the most frequent issues businesses cited was retaining qualified employees, second only to finding them. And with turnover costs approaching 90 to 200 percent of the salary, keeping talent can be critical to a strong bottom line.

Cascading quickly behind the retention concern is was a list of concerns related to business perceptions about employees who have disabilities, including:

- Cost of benefits, training and accommodations will be prohibitive.
- Employee morale will be adversely affected.

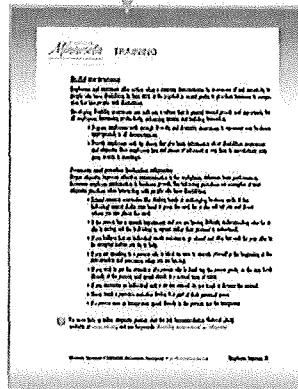
OPPORTUNITY ODEP participants cited that statistics and testimonials geared toward **alleviating fears** would be most helpful in creating hiring change within organizations. You can help by letting businesses know that strategies for managing the success of employees who have disabilities are similar, if not the same, as strategies designed for getting the most out of any employee.

- Help employers see employees who have disabilities as a quality investment.
- Whether it concerns money or time, approach the organization with options that will best fit into their existing processes and culture.
- Position yourself as someone fighting for their best interest.
- Let businesses know that if they employ someone who has a disability, you can help them maximize the profitability of that employee.

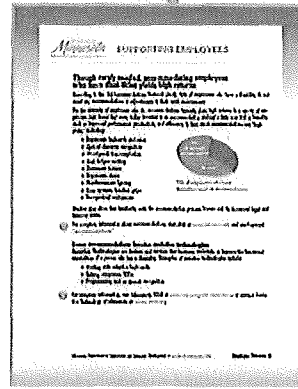
There are always many potential adjustments an organization can make to improve processes, culture, and environment. The goal here is to make any necessary adjustments as easy and beneficial as possible as the consultant to the organization. You are the expert providing information and resources.

TOPIC: EMPLOYER SUCCESS

Employer Success

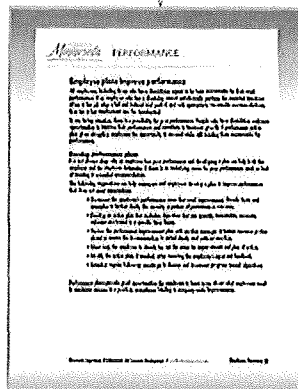


Training
 Training can cultivate a culture that is geared toward growth and opportunity for all employees, increasing productivity, enhancing morale, and building innovation.

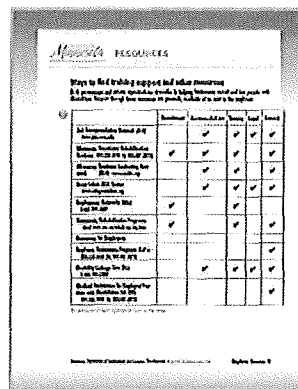


Support employees
 70% of employees who have a disability do not need any accommodations or adjustments to their work environment. Accommodations yield 10 to 1 returns.

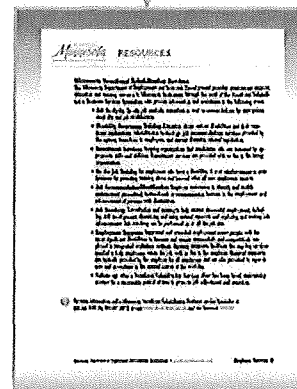
Employer Success



Performance
 People who have disabilities welcome opportunities to improve their performance and contribute to business growth.



Advancement
 Career development plans for all employees, including those who have disabilities, increase employee retention.



Resources
 There are resources for employers of people who have disabilities that make the hiring process easier.



WEB NOTES

The following web sites were used as resources and references in developing *Improving Business Success through Disability Employment*. You may find these sites useful for further research and reading on your own.

Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA: www.ada.gov

Provides comprehensive information and technical assistance on the American with Disabilities Act.

Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute: www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi

Complete information on the projects, training, technical assistance, research, and publications sponsored by Cornell Employment and Disability Institute, which seeks to advance knowledge, policies, and practices to enhance the opportunities of people with disabilities.

Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN): www.earnworks.com

One of the first web sites to publish a business case for hiring people who have disabilities, this site provides employers with free consulting services and resources to support the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities.

Job Accommodations Network (JAN): www.jan.wvu.edu

Provides information on job accommodations, entrepreneurship, and related subjects in support of the employment and small business ownership of people who have disabilities. JAN is a project of U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

Minnesota Business Leadership Network: www.mnbln.org

The site promotes best employment practices and showcases Minnesota businesses who are involved.

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development:

www.positivelyminnesota.com/Business

Publishes *Improving Business Success through Disability Employment* pages.

Office of Disability Employment and Policy (ODEP): www.dol.gov/odep

The comprehensive web site on disability employment policy delivering authoritative and credible data on employment of people with disabilities.

Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM): www.shrm.org

The HR professional web site includes categories of information specific to inclusion, universal design, and employees who have disabilities.

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