

Making the Business Case for Employing People with Disabilities

Hiring individuals with disabilities is good for business. It improves a company's bottom line through lower costs, higher revenues, and increased profits. It opens up the business to new markets and innovations. Hiring people with disabilities fosters a culture of diversity, building a stronger workforce and improving overall employee satisfaction and productivity.

Hiring a Person with a Disability Makes Business Sense

Reason #1: A Better Bottom Line

The return on investment of employing people with disabilities is seen through reduced costs and increased revenues. People with disabilities are loyal and valuable employees. They have incredibly low turnover rates, leading to reduced hiring and training costs and increased retention. In fact, Pizza Hut recently stated that their turnover rate for people with disabilities was only 20% compared to a 150% turnover rate among employees without disabilities.² Businesses also see higher profits as they gain access to new markets. People with disabilities and their networks represent a trillion dollar market segment.³ A benefit of employing people with disabilities is increasing your opportunity to access this market segment and gain a lasting customer base. Also, 87% of customers say they prefer to shop and do business with companies that hire individuals with disabilities.⁴

Reason #2: Increased Innovation

Innovation is key to business success. Employees with disabilities bring unique experiences to the workplace that can improve productivity, determine how to do things for less cost, and enhance products and services. For example, Dr. Temple Grandin, an Agricultural scientist who also has autism, revolutionized the farming industry through her design of livestock handling systems, which improved efficiency and animal welfare.⁵ Thomas Edison, a great inventor with over 1,000 patents, also had a learning disability and was partially deaf.⁶ Companies who hire individuals with disabilities set themselves apart from their competitors, improve their public image, and enhance their brand identity by being inclusive. Businesses also see improved customer satisfaction.

Reason #3: A Stronger Workforce

Hiring people with disabilities creates a more diverse workplace and promotes a culture of inclusiveness among employees. Employees with disabilities can be good ambassadors for a business/brand and improve overall employee morale. Workplace diversity breaks down silos and helps all employees feel included and accommodated, leading to lower employee turnover and improved productivity. Since HR experts estimate the cost of a single turnover ranges from 93-200% of the employee's annual salary, a strong and dedicated workforce means a better bottom line for a business.⁷

² Arizona Department of Economic Security Division of Developmental Disabilities, "Why Hire People with Disabilities," <https://www.azdes.gov/InternetFiles/InternetProgrammaticForms/pdf/DDD-1482APAMNA.pdf>.

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy via Think Beyond the Label.com, "The Business Case," <http://www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com/Learning-Tools/BusinessCase.aspx>.

⁴ Arizona Department of Economic Security Division of Developmental Disabilities, "Why Hire People with Disabilities," <https://www.azdes.gov/InternetFiles/InternetProgrammaticForms/pdf/DDD-1482APAMNA.pdf>.

⁵ Dr. Temple Grandin, "Biography: Temple Grandin, Ph.D.," <http://www.grandin.com/temple.html>.

⁶ Thomas Edison.com, "The biography of Thomas Edison," <http://www.thomasedison.com/biography.html>.

⁷ Arizona Department of Economic Security Division of Developmental Disabilities, "Why Hire People with Disabilities," <https://www.azdes.gov/InternetFiles/InternetProgrammaticForms/pdf/DDD-1482APAMNA.pdf>.