One of the challenges of employing people with disabilities is dispelling myths and misconceptions. Employing people with disabilities begins with a strong understanding and commitment from top management. Prior work experience or personal relationships with individuals with disabilities have the most significant influence on perceptions and attitudes.

A 2009 survey conducted by Wilson Resources found that "attitudes at all corporate levels" were the leading impediment to the employment of people with disabilities. Front line staff and hiring managers most often had reservations about hiring workers with disabilities. Business leaders were asked what recommendations could be beneficial for overcoming attitudinal barriers. Recommendations included training, exposure to people with disabilities in their workplaces, and information on employer best practices.

EARN

Employer Assistance and Resource Network

www.AskEARN.org
1-855-AskEARN
(855-275-3276, Voice/TTY)

Confidential, no-cost consultation, customized training and resources to support the employment and inclusion of workers with disabilities.

The National Technical Assistance, Policy, and Research Center for Employers on Employment of People with Disabilities is funded by a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy to Cornell University.

EARN HAS THE ANSWERS!

Employing people with disabilities

Myths and Facts

Ask the Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) about recruiting, hiring, advancing, and retaining employees with disabilities.

What are some common misunderstandings about employing people with disabilities?

MYTH: People with disabilities do not have the knowledge, skills, and abilities for the positions I am trying to fill.

FACT: According to the American Community Survey (ACS), there are 2.3 million working age adults with disabilities who have a Bachelors degree or higher; an additional 2.2 million are currently in college. Many others have vocational training and relevant prior work experience.

MYTH: Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.

FACT: Employees with disabilities have lower rates of absenteeism and less turnover than employees without disabilities, according to a 2008 corporate practices study conducted by Rutgers University. Better attendance records and longer tenures directly correlate to increased productivity and revenue.

MYTH: Employing people with disabilities will increase my business's health care costs.

FACT: Most large and medium-sized businesses report no significant increase in costs with the addition of employees with disabilities, according to the 2008 national Employer Perspectives study.

MYTH: The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act will make my company more vulnerable to lawsuits.

FACT: The majority of ADA employment disputes are resolved through informal negotiation or mediation. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) carefully investigates the merits of each case and offers many alternatives to litigation as a way to resolve any potential problem. The number of ADA cases, whether filed privately or by the EEOC, represents a small percentage of the millions of employers in the U.S.

MYTH: Hiring people with disabilities will increase workers' compensation rates.

FACT: Workers' compensation costs are based solely on the type of business operations and loss history and not on the demographics of employees.

MYTH: Accommodations are expensive.

FACT: Almost half of all accommodations cost nothing and most cost under $600. There are numerous employer resources available including the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), which can provide information and resources on accommodating workers with disabilities.