

Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion

Disability Equality Index Best Practices

These best practices enable a culture of inclusion that promotes increased self-identification, employees feeling truly welcomed to be their authentic selves, and innovation sparked by disability inclusion being built into products and services.

A PROVIDE RESOURCES, IN A VARIETY OF FORMS, THROUGH:

Leadership Training: Various levels of specialized disability inclusion training can help foster a culture of inclusion. One top-scoring company found a development session targeting senior leaders, directors, and other management especially successful. They also deliver training to all new leaders joining the company with an award-winning, scenario-based program.

Meetings & Events: A series of protocols on how to plan and run accessible, inclusive meetings and events empowers employees to be inclusive. A top-scoring company found that protocols posted on their internal and external abilities sites, and shared with those who are planning gatherings such as volunteer days, team-building activities, and holiday parties, increased accessibility. The protocols for inclusive meeting behavior are often included with the agenda in presentations, reviewed by facilitators at the start of meetings, and printed in programs. In October, the company produced table tents that outlined how to set up an inclusive meeting room and protocols for running inclusive meetings, and placed them in all conference rooms for National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Workshops: As mental health increasingly becomes a priority, one company found success in hosting a 2.5-hour interactive in person workshop designed to teach employees how to facilitate sensitive conversations with people who may be at risk for suicide, while encouraging employees to step out of their comfort zone to address stigma associated with mental health conditions.

Guidebooks: Another corporation launched a series of one-page guides to increase awareness among employees about specific disability communities, as well as to build relationships with community-based organizations who serve those individuals. The guides are used to educate about etiquette, to spread employment insights, and to dispel myths. The one-page briefings are followed up by informational interviews with job-seekers. The goal is to raise awareness of employment opportunities at the company, connect individuals with disabilities to employees, and promote networking.



**ADVANCE
ACCOMMODATIONS
BY
UNDERSTANDING
THE DISABILITY:**

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHoH): Under the guidance of a recently hired DHoH Program Manager, one company hired additional sign language interpreters and updated the company website to highlight available resources, which include video remote interpreting, real time captioning, video relay services, captioning phones, video phones, assistive listening devices, and how to obtain an informational poster campaign. Most recently, a cross-functional leadership team deployed captioning guidelines for enterprise-wide audio content. DHoH employees have played an integral role in the development and improvements of the services provided, and are consistently invited to provide input and direction.

Substance Abuse: One company offers a program for employees who test positive for drugs or alcohol on a first offense. This program provides an opportunity to maintain employment if they remain compliant through intervention and support. The program can be used in any language, which is especially essential in rural communities where immigrants make up a large percentage of employees. The company has developed an extensive network of providers in areas where their facilities are located in order to offer phone and outpatient services, when appropriate, so that employees do not need to pay for health insurance co-pays or specialized treatment.



**AIM FOR
INCLUSIVE
DESIGN THROUGH
PARTICIPATORY
APPROACHES,
BY:**

Creating a Disability Roundtable: A Disability Roundtable, or a working team that examines the needs and experiences of employees throughout the employment lifecycle, is a great way to gain insight of employees that hold a spectrum of abilities. One company composed the Roundtable with a number of Human Resource professionals and partners from Technology and Innovation, Legal, Realty Services, and the Employee Resource Business Groups (ERBGs).

Utilizing an Accessibility Team: One corporation has an Accessibility Team that works closely with the company's Customer Experience Team to ensure that the needs of customers with disabilities are surfaced and addressed. The teams partner to include people with disability on panels at regional and divisional company meetings. Customers with disabilities are also included in customer focus groups and their beta tester registry to ensure that people with disabilities are represented in all feedback that the company receives on how they can improve their customer experience.

Inviting NextGen to innovate: One business invites students with disabilities to participate in a lab experience that includes a hands-on classroom with an art studio and engineering lab. The lab provides a "makerspace" environment where students are led by an engineer as they create, manipulate, collaborate, and present their electronic experiments findings and insights.

Supplier Diversity Best Practices

In the evolution of supplier diversity efforts, today is a pivotal time for supplier inclusion with many corporations and government agencies in the formative stages of recognizing, promoting and utilizing disability suppliers.

Disability-owned business enterprises have joined the ranks of minority-, woman-, LGBTQ-, and service veteran-owned businesses in supporting global supply chains. We are encouraged by this progress and wish to highlight leading business practices as examples for others to adopt.



MAKE IT A CORPORATE PRIORITY:

While the utilization, along with the development of disability-owned business enterprises is certainly a primary goal, the practice of using contract language to influence prime contractors (Tier II), providing technical and business assistance to disability and service-disabled veteran suppliers, and creating forums at the executive level to strategize specifically on disability supplier inclusion, are all examples which demonstrate an advanced level of inclusion.



UTILIZE THE BILLION DOLLAR ROUNDTABLE (BDR):

The recognition and acceptance of the Disability:IN certification continues to grow as evidenced by the increased number of corporate partners actively engaged in Disability:IN's Supplier Diversity program and the addition of Disability-Owned Businesses Enterprises (DOBEs®), Service-Disabled Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (SDV-DOBEs™) and Veteran-Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (V-DOBEs™) to the membership criteria of the BDR, a decision which will significantly increase contract opportunities and spend for disability suppliers among the BDR's member corporations.



STRIVE FOR GLOBAL INCLUSION

Within one company's global supplier inclusion and diversity practice, their corporation includes language in their agreements with Tier I suppliers that they will commit to working with disability owned suppliers and/or suppliers that employ persons with disabilities.

Knowing that most diverse/disabled businesses are small, another company implemented a Buy Local/Grow Global program in 2017 which allows them to focus on buying products and services with small diverse/disabled businesses in targeted US cities where they have a presence.



ADVANCE ACCESSIBILITY IN PROCUREMENT

One company's innovation in this space is to move beyond ownership to advancing disability inclusion with their suppliers and employees. They have and are currently working on publishing disability awareness and action kits. This resource is distributed throughout their supply chain. They also recognize that their products can be empowering for people with disabilities, so they have many programs requiring and advancing accessibility with their suppliers.



ENABLE INTERNAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

One corporation held a summit for Service-Disabled Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (SDV-DOBEs™) that was attended by 100 service-disabled veteran business owners and facilitated by 30 internal employees. The summit successfully 1) provided a forum for SDV-DOBEs™ to engage in a dialogue with corporate purchasing decision makers, 2) created a foundation for a SDV-DOBE™ advocacy organization and 3) served to increase corporate spending with SDV-DOBEs™.

Another company has created a Victory March and a service disabled veterans Taskforce to support targeted goal achievement. The Victory March is a targeted initiative to help their company achieve its supplier diversity goals. The initial monthly meeting involves sourcing leadership and begins with brainstorming to identify key diverse supplier opportunities. To execute these opportunities, action plans, owners and deliverable dates are documented.

At each subsequent meeting, the Supply Chain Responsibility team and Sourcing leaders review the progress towards meeting these deliverables. Like the Victory March, the service disabled veterans Taskforce is a specific team that is focused on identifying and executing opportunities for service disabled veterans. The team includes individuals with the passion, knowledge and expertise to engage with and enable service disabled veterans to be successful. The team generates ideas, identifies key stakeholders and executes on identified actions. When there is a need, the Taskforce is called into action.



**PROMOTE
EDUCATION AND
SPONSORSHIP
FUNDING**

In the past three years, one company has sent fifteen disability-owned business enterprises and service disabled veteran-owned business enterprises to the Tuck Executive Education Program at Dartmouth. Their corporation was a primary funder of Disability:IN's Certification & Sourcing HUB (an advanced technology tool) which provides certified disability-owned and service-disabled veteran disability-owned businesses the opportunity to promote their cost-competitive businesses and be sourced by corporate buyers and decision makers.