On the Job: Promoting Accessibility, Retention and Equity

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Presentation Overview

• “On the job” factors to consider:
  o Accessibility and accommodation
  o Retention and advancement
  o Culture, climate, and inclusion
  o Disability disclosure considerations

• Measurement of “on the job” factors

• Implications for workplace policy & practice

• Related Cornell University resources

Accessibility and Accommodation

- Physical facility
  - Within a particular building
  - Across buildings/corporate campuses

- Workstation
  - Ergonomic design

- Communication
  - Day-to-day interactions for job tasks
  - Online benefits, new job postings, career opportunities
  - Informal/social communication (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)

- Social events/activities
Retention and Advancement

- Regular & consistent performance management
- Regular re-evaluation of accommodations
- Effective disability case management
- Information about career opportunities
- Professional development and training
- Formal and informal mentoring
- Special assignments and project work
- Facilitating group/team project opportunities
Culture, Climate and Inclusion

- Messages “from the top” about diversity priority
- Identify advancement opportunities’ disparities
- Be vigilant for overt discriminatory behavior
- Also for covert discriminatory “micro messages”
- Educate supervisors about their unique role
- Maximize team project opportunities
- Create across unit/department exposure
- Facilitate social networking opportunities
Measures of Workplace Equity and Discrimination

- Organizational data
- Employment discrimination claims
- HR professionals’ perspectives
- Supervisors’ perspectives
- Employees’ perspectives
- Workplace culture, climate, and inclusion
- Disability disclosure considerations
Organizational Data

• **Measures**
  o Metrics on recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention
  o Disability accommodations or disability-related initiatives

• **Strengths**
  o More leading-edge companies are collecting metrics
  o Archived HR data can show whether discrimination is occurring

• **Limitations**
  o Still often not as informative as needed (few companies measuring impact of diversity overall)
  o Disability still not always included in diversity metrics
Employment Discrimination Claims

• Measures
  o Internal grievance records
  o Claims or charges of discrimination (local or national records)

• Strengths
  o Can identify specific issues for attention, vulnerable populations
  o Illustrate needed changes in policy/practice, or assess impact over time of changes which have been made

• Limitations
  o Includes all charges filed, not just meritorious
  o Represent perceptions of discrimination
  o Does not capture disputes that do not rise to level of grievance
  o Inconsistent filing standards across organizations and regions
HR Professionals’ Perspectives

• Measures
  o HR policy manuals, policy memos, interviews with HR staff
  o HR professionals’ surveys (within company; HR associations)

• Strengths
  o Interviews with reviews of printed policies provides more accurate portrayal of actual practice than organizational data alone
  o HR association surveys provide across company comparisons

• Limitations
  o Interviews only a proxy for observations of practice
  o Policies not always implemented fully or correctly
  o Organizations may prevent interviews or access to policies
Supervisors’ Perspectives

• Measures
  o Supervisor interviews regarding daily practice

• Strengths
  o Many necessary workplace conditions for inclusion are under direct control of managers
  o Managers have direct knowledge of what is happening in workplace and how policies are being implemented

• Limitations
  o Difficult to reach supervisors for research purposes
  o Concerns about confidentiality, retribution, and social desirability may influence candor of respondents
Employees’ Perspectives

• **Measures**
  - Interviews/surveys of employees inside companies

• **Strengths**
  - Actual experiences of employees with and without disabilities can differ from HR reports
  - Can provide needed comparison of perspectives

• **Limitations**
  - Direct access difficult due to employer concerns
  - Concerns about confidentiality, retribution, and social desirability may influence responses
  - Disability advocacy orgs. possible alternative
Measures of Workplace Culture, Climate, and Inclusion

• Measures
  o Employee surveys; focus groups; network analyses

• Strengths
  o Qualitative data not available from other sources
  o May assist in pinpointing areas for intervention

• Weaknesses
  o Reliant on self report and thus subjective
  o Understatement of real issues due to concerns about confidentiality, retribution, and social desirability bias
“Very important” factors when deciding to **NOT** disclose a disability to an employer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Persons with a disability (N=598)</th>
<th>Persons without a disability (N=207)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of being fired/not hired</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>67.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer may focus on disability</td>
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<td>Risk of losing health care</td>
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<td>Fear of limited opportunities</td>
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<td>42.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor may not be supportive</td>
<td>60.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk being treated differently</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk being viewed differently</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>51.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>No impact on job ability</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>47.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire for privacy</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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Policy and Practice Implications

- Visible top management commitment a must
- Incorporate into performance management
- Attention to accessibility and accommodation throughout the employment process
- Targeted disability initiatives (community outreach, mentoring, training, ERGs, CSR, etc.)
- Develop more robust diversity and disability metrics across the employment process
- Attend to climate for inclusion considerations
Related Cornell University Resources

- Employer Assistance Resource Network – www.askEARN.org
- Online repository for related Cornell research http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/
  - Including disability disclosure survey report
- U.S. Disability Statistics www.disabilitystatistics.org