



News From The Navigator



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Welcome to another issue of *News from the Navigator*. With Spring just around the corner, let's take a fresh look at what is new in the area of disability and employment. Enjoy!

If anyone would like a particular disability-related subject covered or has a specific disability-related question you would like to see addressed, just send it along to me at the e-mail address listed below. I hope everyone will continue to enjoy the newsletter, and, as always - Feedback is welcome! If you would like to be put on the Navigator's Newsletter List, send an e-mail to: ccfi@ccfi.us.

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Help a VET! Hire a VET!



As more and more veterans with disabilities return home to begin their lives anew, or to pick up where they left off, it is important to remember that employment is a key component in their goals. Employers can support their goals and efforts by becoming knowledgeable of what services are available to assist our veterans upon their return. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has a program called the "Disabled Transition Assistance Program" or DTAP. This program, also known as "VR&E Services" or the "Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program," has the primary function of assisting "veterans who have service-connected disabilities become suitably employed, maintain employment, or achieve independence in daily living."

To be eligible for the program, a veteran must:

- Have received, or eventually receive, an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge;
- Have a VA service-connected disability rating of 10% or more;
- Apply for vocational rehabilitation services.

Visit their website for a captioned introductory video on the program, as well as videos on the five focus areas: Re-employment, Rapid Access to Employment, Employment through long-term services, Self-employment, and Independent Living.

Information taken from the US Department of Veterans Affairs at:
<http://www.vetsuccess.gov/dtap>



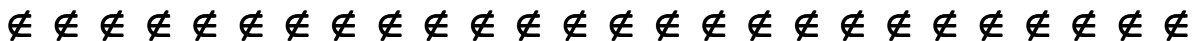
Business Owners Share Strategies for Success with Workers with Disabilities

“A report has been released on a Business Dialogue on Accessible Technology and Disability Employment held recently in Florida. Sponsored by the Assistive Technology Industry Association and the US Business Leadership Network, it included business leaders across a wide range of companies in size--from Fortune 500 to small family-owned businesses. The report identified four successful strategies that enhance the employment of persons with disabilities through accessible technology:

- Securing leadership by CEOs and other high level corporate executives and by a network of other internal "champions."
- Making the business case including return on investment and benefits to the company, solving labor shortages or employee turnover problems, and improving productivity and/or reducing costs.
- Refining and advancing corporate policies, practices, and programs to include people with disabilities in the corporate mission statements and programs.
- Implementing corporate infrastructures and strategies that enable the company to realize promises such as: establishing an employees with disabilities affinity group; creating cross-functional teams; establishing centralized accommodations strategies; and establishing accountability mechanisms.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.usbln.org>

This article is quoted from the **DBTAC- Northeast ADA Technical Bulletin: February 2008**: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/extension/ped/northeastADA/bulletin/index.html>



Traumatic Brain Injury Accommodations: Individual Process Essential to Solution

“According to the Brain Injury Association (2005), a traumatic brain injury (TBI) can be caused by a hard hit or jolting impact to the head (closed head injury) or by a penetrating object, such as a bullet (open head injury). Specific statistics of interest include:

- Although not all insults to the head result in a TBI, approximately 1.4 million people experience a TBI every year;
- The majority of individuals affected by TBIs, 79%, receives medical attention and is (sic) subsequently discharged from the emergency department;
- Seventeen percent of individuals with TBIs are hospitalized for further treatment and rehabilitation, while the remaining four percent (about 50,000) do not survive;
- The most common causes of TBI include falls, motor vehicle accidents, motor vehicle/pedestrian accidents, and assaults;
- Children from birth to age four and adolescents aged 15-19 are most at risk, with males being more likely than females to sustain a TBI;
- African Americans suffer more deaths from TBI than any other group; and

- Military personnel frequently experience TBI from blast injuries inflicted by Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's) (Brain Injury Association, 2005).

Depending on the severity of the injury, a TBI survivor may not have any limitations, while another may struggle with daily living. Even if two people have the same type of brain injury, their outcomes may differ based on physical health and cognitive ability prior to the injury, the quality and duration of rehabilitation services, and family support.

Specific limitations hinge on what part of the brain was damaged by the injury, and any bodily system may be impaired as a result. Some survivors may have impairments related to gross motor limitations (walking, balancing, coordination); fine motor limitations (handling, fingering); sensory limitations (seeing, hearing); bowel and bladder control; handling stress and emotions; and speech impairments. Cognitive limitations may involve difficulty with memory, problem solving, math, reading, or “executive functions,” such as planning/organizing/prioritizing/decision-making. In some cases, because the parts of the brain that process auditory and visual information were damaged in a TBI, a person may have trouble comprehending what is seen or heard despite intact vision and hearing.

Accommodations for employees with TBI depend on the nature of their limitations, what bodily systems are affected, and essential job functions. Suggestions for accommodating cognitive deficits, psychological issues, motor impairments, sensory deficits, and speech difficulties due to TBI can be accessed at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/brai.htm> or by using the Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/soar>.”

Quoted from: Brain Injury Association. (2005, August). *Facts about traumatic brain injury*. January 17, 2008, from <http://www.biausa.org/elements/aboutbi/factsheets/factsaboutBI.8.29.05.pdf>



Website of Interest:
United Cerebral Palsy Employment Fact Sheet
<http://www.ucp.org>

“An accommodation in the workplace is a reasonable adjustment to a job or work environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to perform job duties. Put another way, an accommodation is an investment an employer makes in his or her business in order to make the business more efficient or profitable.”

This statement is the beginning of an article entitled, “Making Management Decisions about Job Accommodations.” When an employee makes a request for a reasonable accommodation, it should be looked upon as an opportunity for a conversation to be opened up between the employee and the employer. However, employers may feel a bit panicky when the subject of employee accommodations is brought up. They often cite concerns over having to make drastic changes to the workplace or having to pay for costly accommodation products. This is not the

case and many employers are surprised at how easy and inexpensive accommodating an employee can be. Visit the following website for the entire article that includes some examples of cost-effect accommodations and how to handle a request:

http://www.ucp.org/ucp_channel.doc.cfm/1/17/11928/11928-11928/4608

For more information on hiring and accommodating employees with disabilities, contact the Disability Program Navigator at the Catskill Center for Independence at 607-432-8000 or by e-mail at ccfi@ccfi.us.



Accommodation Idea of the Month: Simplest is Best!

One of the most common categories of disabilities is a Learning Disability (LD). LDs typically can affect writing abilities, math abilities and/or reading abilities.. Accommodations in the workplace can be simple and inexpensive for employers who need to provide a reasonable accommodation to employees with learning disabilities. Here are some reasonable accommodation ideas:

- Record text on audio – in other words – record written documents on a tape player.
- Read a written document to an individual.
- Provide a calculator – one that is easy to use with simple, sizable buttons.
- Provide an electronic talking dictionary – they are not as expensive as one might think!
- Provide a note taker at trainings and meetings.

These are very simple and quite inexpensive accommodations that could make the difference between success and failure in employment for a person with a disability.



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