

Lesson Three: Learning From Other Businesses

By connecting to business organizations, such as the U.S. Chamber's Institute for a Competitive Workforce, the U.S. Business Leadership Network, the Society for Human Resource Management and your local chamber, your company can learn from other employers about the best strategies for finding, accommodating and retaining employees with disabilities. Local business executives who understand your bottom-line priorities and who have direct employment experience with people with disabilities are often the best sources for real-world answers to all your hiring questions.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce

In 1990, the Chamber of Commerce created the Institute for a Competitive Workforce (ICW) to help build workforce development leadership in local chambers. ICW helps chambers across the country to develop innovative and effective workforce development initiatives that assist their member companies in recruiting diverse and underutilized labor sources such as people with disabilities. A major part of ICW's effort is the dissemination of best practices and the formulation of strategic peer networks to support workforce development activities among state and local chambers. By connecting to ICW, you can learn how to partner with your local chamber to help improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities and to satisfy your company's workforce needs.

U.S. Business Leadership Network

The U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN) is the only national employer-led organization that provides a corporate perspective to businesses regarding hiring people with disabilities and marketing to customers with disabilities. With chapters in 31 states and the District of Columbia, the USBLN is the nationally recognized disability voice for the business community because it makes the inclusion of people with disabilities a business imperative. A nonprofit trade association, the USBLN provides best practices strategies, specific industry perspectives, tool kits and resources to employers and its 43 BLN chapters seeking to diversify their workforces by including people with disabilities.

The Society for Human Resource Management

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 200,000 individual members, the society's mission is to serve the needs of human resource professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available, including surveys of members on disability-related topics. As an influential voice, the society's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that human resources is recognized as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 550 affiliated chapters and members in more than 100 countries.

Lesson Three: Strategies

Strategy 1:

Become a member of a USBLN chapter to network with other disability-friendly employers who are actively engaged in outreach, employment, retention and marketing efforts to individuals with disabilities. To learn more, visit www.usbln.org and connect with the regional board member responsible for your area.

Strategy 2:

Connect with your local chamber for information and resources about

- ✓ job skill requirements and industry trends;
- ✓ quality of training and job placement services provided by your local Vocational Rehabilitation program and other service providers;
- ✓ local economic development indicators; and
- ✓ links to other members that have partners with local disability organizations.

Visit the U.S. Chamber Web site at www.uschamber.com for a listing of Federation chamber members by state and region.

Strategy 3:

Access information and linkages about workforce development at ICW's Web site by visiting www.uschamber.com/icw.

Strategy 4:

Learn about available training that will help staff with the recruiting, hiring and advancement of people with disabilities. One source of information is SHRM's Web site at www.shrm.org.

