



Accommodations and Your Business



The **Inclusive**
Workplace

As an employer, you are probably familiar with accommodations and open to providing them. Perhaps you've provided a tool or resource to support an employee to succeed in their job. Perhaps you've agreed to a request for flexible work arrangements such as modified hours or the ability to work from home. Or perhaps you've adapted an interview format in response to a candidate's request. In fact, at times you may have provided an accommodation without even realizing you were doing so.

Duty to Accommodate

Employers have a duty to accommodate up to the point of undue hardship. This means that any request must be possible to grant without excessive expense, significant modifications to the property, or negative impacts on others.



This guide is designed to help you better understand the business case for providing accommodations, including to persons on the autism spectrum or with an intellectual disability, and to think more about the culture you are building around accommodations.

The value of accommodations

Accommodations add value through recruitment, retention, and skills development. This is important because many managers and key decision makers frequently overstate or emphasize the cost of accommodations. The reality is that most accommodations involve little or no cost, and actually result in increased productivity or benefits to a firm.

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Most are free... Studies have consistently shown that the majority of accommodations (59%) do not cost anything (JAN, 2019).

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Or cost less than \$500... In cases where there is a cost, the typical outlay is less than \$500 (Bonnacio et al., 2019, 147).

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They cost the same for employees with and without disabilities.

Accommodations are frequently requested by workers without disabilities, and these cost the same as those for employees with disabilities (Bonnacio et al., 2019, 147).



The earlier the better... The earlier an accommodation is provided, the lower the costs (Bonnacio et al., 2019, 147).

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Accommodations save money... Accommodations are usually cost-effective, with an estimated savings of \$40 for every \$1 invested in accommodation (Kaye, 2001). And the costs to accommodate are generally much lower than hiring and training a new employee (Bonnacio et al., 2019, 147; O'Connell & Kung, 2007).



Accommodations Build a Healthier Workforce and Workplace Culture...

Providing accommodations to all employees, regardless of ability, can have clear benefits for your business and workplace culture. Accommodations demonstrate a commitment to support staff, which can increase job satisfaction, employee morale, and decrease turnover. This, in turn, can help create a culture where co-workers understand and are supportive of accommodations as part of doing business (Schur et al., 2014; JAN 2018; Bonnacio et al., 2019, 147).

Be proactive about accommodations

While it is the responsibility of an employee to request an accommodation, inclusive employers demonstrate that they are willing and able to accommodate at all stages of the hiring and training journey:



During the job application process

Provide clearly written job descriptions using plain language; provide multiple ways to apply, post a statement on your website, social media, and job postings about your commitment to inclusion. You can also clearly state that your company provides accommodations, and provide contact information for the person who handles requests.

Tell all candidates about accommodations that are available, such as consulting notes or taking breaks during interviews. Offer questions in advance. Use plain language. Consider flexibility in the interview format. And be clear that a job coach or support person is welcome to join them in the interview.



During the selection and interview process



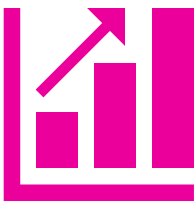
In the workplace

Provide information about accommodations in the hiring package. This can be as simple as your company statement about accommodations, along with the contact information for the person in charge. Consider developing a brief guide about accommodations. Offer diversity and inclusion training, including sections about accommodations, to all your staff. And be sure to communicate regularly that accommodations are a part of your workplace culture and the company's success.

By repeatedly signalling to individuals that it is okay to request accommodations, and giving examples, you show applicants and staff that your workplace culture is adaptable and healthy.

Some individuals with an intellectual disability or on the autism spectrum may choose to not disclose their status. As an employer, you cannot ask if someone has a disability. You can only create a healthy environment where people feel safe asking for the supports they need.

Normalizing accommodations creates higher-performing firms



Normalizing accommodations means making reasonable accommodations available to all employees, and using requests for accommodations as an opportunity to look at improving how all employees do their work. Recent evidence has shown that companies that embrace best practices for employing and supporting more persons with disabilities in their workforce have outperformed their peers in profits, net income, and revenues (Accenture, Getting to Equal, 2018).

But the evidence is clear that businesses benefit when they prioritize providing employees with disabilities with accessible tools and technology and/or a formal accommodations program.

Accommodations are a key part of building your company's inclusive culture. And for many businesses, they are already a normal part of doing business. This is a shift in our way of thinking that we can apply to accommodations on an ongoing basis!

Next steps

If you're looking for more information on accommodations, and how to navigate them as an employer or inclusion specialist, visit www.theinclusiveworkplace.ca

If you're considering hiring and expanding your recruitment to be more inclusive, visit www.readywillingable.ca and connect with your local Labour Market Facilitator.



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