

GOING FOR THE GOLD

US Business Leadership Network

Strategies for an Effective Self-Identification Campaign

Introduction

In March 2014, the US Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) finalized the revised rule for Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended). The rule requires covered federal contractors to invite applicants and employees to inform the contractor whether they are an individual with a disability. OFCCP has created a "Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability" form that contractors must use in asking applicants and employees to self-identify.

OFCCP also established a utilization goal of 7% for the employment of individuals with disabilities for each job group in the contractor's workforce. If the contractor has 100 or fewer employees, the goal applies to the contractor's entire workforce.

"Companies have to address disability-inclusion holistically. They can't just send out a periodic survey."

The Conference Board Presentation,
Do Ask Do Tell, September 2014

Conference Board Findings on Self-Identification

According to 2014 research conducted by The Conference Board, organizations that have achieved the target of 7% or greater for the employment of individuals with disabilities:

- Use both methods of self-id – anonymous and identification by name
- Have more than 20 disability inclusion practices
- Are more likely to do two things:
 - Offer training and resources to improve disability awareness
 - Hold managers accountable for meeting disability-inclusion goals

For more information on the USBLN, please go to: www.usbln.org.

For more information on the USBLN's Going for the Gold program, please go to the USBLN's website:

<http://www.usbln.org/going-for-the-gold.html>

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast...”

Peter Drucker

- Rate their training and resources to improve disability awareness as “very effective”
- Are in the government and nonprofit sector

Recommendations for Effective Self-ID Campaigns

Based on research conducted by the USBLN’s Going for the Gold team,

the following are recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of self-id campaigns and creating a culture inclusive of applicants and employees with disabilities.

- **Develop a Communication Plan with Deadlines and Assignments:** One company developed a detailed communication plan that outlined every step of the upcoming self-id campaign, taking into consideration how wired and non-wired employees will receive and send information. Another ensured that all of its leaders/supervisors/managers had an understanding of why and how the company was requesting employees to self-identify *before* they asked. “Frequently Asked Questions” documents for leaders were also developed. If your company has a disability resource group, encourage its members to become actively involved in developing and launching the plan.
- **Create a Memorable Campaign with a Catchy Slogan:** One company’s intranet features a video and article about a popular veteran who recently identified as an individual with a disability. He did not disclose his disability, which makes it clear to other employees that you do not have to reveal the type of disability, if you check the box ‘yes’. Regularly featuring talented employees as the face of the campaign sends a positive message. Another company is using employees and a caricature so all electronic and print materials will reinforce the message. An example of a catchy campaign slogan might be “Diversity Works.”
- **Communicate Why the Company is Asking and Assure Confidentiality:** Frame regulatory requirements in a way that employees realize there is a benefit to them and others, for example, “Self-identifying will help our company remain competitive for government contracts.” Ensure that employees with disabilities understand they are vital to the company’s growth as members of the country’s largest minority group, e.g., “Inclusion of people with disabilities is essential to the well-being of our company because it fosters creativity and innovation.” Be sure to also communicate how the information will be used and protected.

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- **Raise awareness of the ADA's definition of disability:** Many people are not aware that what they have is a disability and not all disabilities are included in the OFCCP's self-identification form. Prudential used a tree with little-known disabilities depicted as leaves. Some of the leaves were labeled, "No Disability."
- **Provide Training and Resources to Improve Disability Awareness:** This is critical for talent acquisition teams who are responsible for identifying prospective employees and for supervisors/managers who will be working with more employees with disabilities. Create training with an open dialogue that permits leaders to safely ask questions. Making existing staff feel more comfortable will pave the way for successful inclusion of existing and new employees with disabilities.

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