



Research Summary

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Predictors of Employer Attitudes Toward Blind Employees, Revisited

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McDonnall, M.C. & Crudden, A. (2018). Predictors of employer attitudes toward blind employees, revisited. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 48(2), 221-231.

A quick look: ■

Hiring an employee can be a daunting task for employers with many factors to consider. Did they make a good first impression? Will they make a good fit for the company and the company culture? When an employer has a negative attitude toward a candidate, it's likely that person will not be hired. When it comes to employer attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, specifically those who are blind or visually impaired, negative attitudes of employers has been identified as a barrier to employment for this population. The authors of this article sought to discover what influences those attitudes.

Key Findings: ■

Using a national online survey of hiring managers across industries, the authors discovered common themes among employers when making decisions about hiring blind or visually impaired individuals. Here are some of the findings of the 379 respondents:

- ▶ Very few hiring managers who did not communicate with a Vocational Rehabilitation agency hired a person who is blind or visually impaired.
- ▶ Having hired someone from this population in the past was a significant predictor of the attitudes of employers toward the population.
- ▶ Knowledge about how blind or visually impaired people perform work and tasks was also an important factor.
- ▶ 87.5 percent of employers who worked with and had an ongoing relationship with VR agencies had hired someone with the disability in the past.
- ▶ Female employers tend to have more positive attitudes toward people with disabilities in general.

Putting It into Practice: ■

- ▶ It is important for VR professionals to interact with employers and have ongoing relationships and communication with them.
- ▶ VR professionals should encourage and educate employers about employees who are blind or visually impaired and how they can perform work and tasks.
- ▶ Informing employers that accommodations are available and obtainable can have a positive effect on employers' attitudes about hiring someone who is blind or visually impaired.
- ▶ Employers should feel confident that ongoing support and assistance can be provided to the employee.

More about this Article (What did they say?) ■

- ▶ Research has shown that employers are more cautious and have more of a concern when hiring someone who is blind or visually impaired than individuals with other disabilities.
- ▶ Employers tend to have more concern about providing job accommodations if they have never hired someone with a disability.
- ▶ Only 32.3% of working aged people with a visual impairment are currently employed.

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