Factors that Influence Employer Decisions in Hiring and Retaining an Employee with a Disability

Article Summary

Graffam, Shinkfield, Smith, & Polzin (2002) investigated factors that influence employer decisions when hiring or retaining persons with disabilities. Employers in Australia completed a questionnaire that ranked 38 different factors. Employers participating in the study had employed a person with a disability through a funded disability employment service during the preceding three years (1996 - 1998).

Graffam et al. (2002) found that factors related to the individual were rated most important to employers. Appropriate grooming and hygiene received the highest ranking by employers. The individual's ability to work at a satisfactory standard as well as the individual's ability to undertake all the assigned tasks also ranked highly among employers. Management factors were rated second most important to employers. Employer involvement in planning work integration of employee with a disability was the most important whereas the availability of a large skilled workforce and employer reluctance to take a chance were the least important of the management factors. Cost factors were also rated of moderate importance to employers. The need for extra supervision was the highest rated cost factor while possible higher absenteeism was rated the least important of the cost factors. Social factors were the least rated factors by employers. Social pressure to employ a person with a disability was rated last of all the 38 factors by employers.

Graffam and colleagues believe the findings of this study indicate that employers place a much greater emphasis on work performance than disability related issues or social responsibility. They conclude, "developing and maintaining a partnership approach with employers starts with sensitivity to the beliefs, values, attitudes, and needs of the employer and the employing organization."

Reference


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