

Studies Related to the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities, (1948-2000)

Lots of Reasons Why Employers Ought to Hire the Disabled

The ELS Study (1948)

Coverage: One hundred and nine manufacturing plants covering 11,000 "impaired" workers and 18,000 "unimpaired" workers & comparative study.

Findings: In terms of total work performance, quality of the work, work injury, turnover and absenteeism, there was very little difference between the impaired and unimpaired workers. The only exception was a slight increase in absenteeism, but it was not statistically significant.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce & National Association of Manufacturers Joint Study (1949)

Coverage: Six hundred companies surveyed with 279 reporting.

Findings: There was no effect on insurance costs as a result of hiring people with disabilities. Workers with disabilities had lower rates of absenteeism and turnover, than their counterparts. On the average, the employees with disabilities received "good job performance" ratings.

The Du Pont Study (1973)

Coverage: 1,452 employees of Du Pont, including individuals with such disabilities as blindness, heart disease, vision impairment, amputation, epilepsy, paralysis, hearing impairment, and total deafness.

Findings: (for workers with disabilities)

- * **No lost time due to disabling injuries**
- * **Salary: 93% of their colleagues**
- * **Job stability: average or better**
- * **Special privileges: none.**
- * **Attendance: 79% were average or better**
- * **Job performance: 91% were average or better**

- * **No increase in insurance costs**

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce Study (1976)

Coverage: 195 Chamber members responding to the question: "Why has your company not considered hiring the handicapped?"

Findings: Employers were uninformed about their capabilities.

The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago Study (1976)

Coverage: Based on follow-up calls on 275 placed clients, mostly with paraplegia, employed by over 100 companies.

Findings:

- * **Accident rates were lower among the clients placed than among other employees**
- * **Job performance was the same or better than other workers**
- * **Insurance costs did not go up**
- * **Turnover was exceptionally low**
- * **Absenteeism was lower than the average**
- * **There was a minimum of accommodations that had to be made**

Mainstream, Inc.'s, "Cost of Accessibility" Study (1976)

Coverage: The survey studied the costs of making 34 facilities accessible to employees with disabilities.

Findings: The average cost of making all 34 facilities accessible was less than 1 cent per square foot. The average cost of making the 29 smaller facilities accessible (less than one million square feet) was less than 5 cents per square foot. A comparative figure would be that it costs an average of 13 cents per square foot per year to clean and polish the vinyl asbestos floors found in most offices.

Personnel Journal Study (1980)

Coverage: Sixteen major corporations employing approximately 8,000 persons with disabilities.

Findings:

- * **Lower absentee rate than average (one company reported 3.4% as compared to 13.9% for its employees without disabilities)**
- * **No impact on insurance rates**
- * **Job performance was the same or better than the average**
- * **Only minor accommodations had to be made**
- * **Lower turnover than the average**

"Equal to the Task," Second Du Pont Survey (1981)

Coverage: 2,745 employees with such disabilities as allergies, amputations, epilepsy, hearing disorders, heart disease, mental impairments, nonparalytic orthopedic problems, paralysis, respiratory ailments, vision impairments, and others.

Findings: (for workers with disabilities)

- * **In safety, 96% rated average or above average**
- * **In performance of duties, 92% were average or above**
- * **In attendance, 85% were average or above**

Berkeley Planning Associates' Study of Accommodations Provided to Handicapped Employees by Federal Contractors (1982)

Coverage: A written survey of 2,000 Federal contractors, with 367 firms responding, was representing 512,000 workers/419,200 of who were known to have a disability.

Findings:

- * **Almost half (45%) of the employees with disabilities received some sort of accommodation**

- * **No cost was involved for about half (51%) of the accommodations reported**
- * **Many accommodated workers (30%) received packages of accommodations for which the total cost was between \$1 and \$500**
- * **Only a few (8%) of the accommodated workers received accommodations with a total cost exceeding \$2,000**
- * **Most firms (79%) did not perceive accommodations as prohibitively costly**

Louis Harris's Survey, "Employing Disabled Americans" (1986)

Coverage: Telephone interviews with top managers, EEO managers, department heads, and line managers, and managers in small companies representing a total of 921 employers.

Findings:

- * **Of those surveyed, 66% rated employees with disabilities as "good" to "excellent"**
- * **Nearly all workers with disabilities do their jobs as well as or better than other employees in similar jobs**
- * **The average costs of employing persons with disabilities and their colleagues are about the same, according to 75% of the managers**
- * **Over 75% of the managers felt that people with disabilities often encounter job discrimination**
- * **Only 43% of the EEO managers said their firm had hired someone with a disabling condition within the last year**
- * **Only one in ten top managers indicated a strongly optimistic attitude toward people with disabilities as a potential source of employees**
- * **Lack of qualifications is the single most important barrier to employment, according to 60% of the managers**

"Equal to the Task II," Third Du Pont Survey (1990)

Coverage: 811 employees, with disabilities in the areas of motor skills, general bodily systems, substance addiction, neurological, hearing, vision, and others.

Findings: (for workers with disabilities)

- * **In safety, 97% were rated average or above average**
- * **In attendance, 86% were rated average or above**
- * **In performance of job duties, 90% were rated average or above**

[When the editor of this compilation contacted Du Pont in 2001 to ask why the company was not conducting another survey of its workers with disabilities, a Du Pont spokesman replied, "Well, there's just no reason for it. We found out what we wanted to know, and that is: Do people with disabilities make productive workers? The answer is 'Yes.'"]

N.O.D./Harris Survey on Employment of People with Disabilities (1995)

Coverage: Telephone interviews with 404 senior executives from a national cross-section of 404 corporations with 50 or more employees selected systematically from a list provided by Dun & Bradstreet.

Findings:

- * **Seventy-six percent of corporate managers describe the job performance of their employees with disabilities as "pretty good" (59%) or "excellent" (17%).**
- * **Only 27% of companies said that the average cost of employing a person with a disability is greater than employing a person without a disability. Among those executives who could provide figures, the median cost per employee for accommodation was \$223.**
- * **Three quarters (75%) of the managers said they are likely to make greater efforts to hire people with disabilities in the next three years. Almost all corporate managers (98%) said that there will be at least the same, or more, opportunity for people with disabilities; no one said that these opportunities would lessen.**
- * **A large majority (70%) said that the Americans with Disabilities Act should not be changed. Eight percent said that the law should be strengthened. Almost all (90%) thought that it should be weakened in some way and only a few (3%) thought it should be repealed. By an 82% to 5% margin, companies reported that the opportunities that the ADA will provide are worth the costs of its implementation.**

Society for Human Resource Management's Implementation of the Employment Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act Study (1999)

Coverage: Telephone interviews with 813 human resource professionals.

Findings:

- * Many organizations make accommodations for their employees with disabilities, including: making existing facilities accessible to employees with disabilities (82%), being flexible in the application of HR policies (79%), and restructuring jobs or modifying work hours (67%). Respondents from larger and medium-sized organizations were more likely to report providing the accommodations than were respondents from smaller organizations. Organizations that did not make accommodations did not do so because such accommodations were not needed.**
- * When asked who holds responsibility for making the final decision regarding the provision of an accommodation, 28% of respondents indicated that the role is assumed solely by their HR staff, and 10% said such decisions are made jointly by the HR staff along with another individual. Seventeen percent of respondents said no single party makes such decisions at their organizations. Some organizations leave such decisions to non-HR managers or directors (18%), the president or CEO (7%), or the immediate supervisor of the employee requesting the accommodations (5%).**
- * According to survey results, the majority of employers have made changes to their existing recruitment, pre-employment screening, testing, and orientation procedures to comply with the ADA. Of those respondents whose organizations have modified these processes, most indicated that making the changes was easy. For example, 85% of respondents found making new employee orientation accessible to people with disabilities either easy or very easy, and 80% found making interview locations accessible either easy or very easy. The areas that employers found most difficult include making information accessible for people with visual or learning impairments and making information for people with hearing impairments.**
- * While the majority of respondents indicated that their interviewing staff is either familiar or very familiar with many ADA compliance considerations in the applicant interview process, some respondents reported that staff members are least familiar with interview considerations pertaining to people with visual or auditory impairments. More than four out of ten respondents reported unfamiliarity with accessing sign language interpreters (43%), using a reader to assist a person with a learning disability or vision impairment (43%), and adapting print materials used in interviews to large print, diskette, or Braille (43%).**

* **Eighty-one percent of respondents reported that their organizations have not had an insurer decline, limit or exclude health, life, and/or long-term disability coverage to employees or dependents with disabilities. In addition, 73% of respondents reported that their organizations have not experienced cost increases attributable to extending health, life, and/or disability coverage to employees or dependents with disabilities.**

* **Fifty-one percent of respondents see lack of related experience as a barrier to employment and advancement for people with disabilities, and 40% felt similarly about the lack of requisite skills and training. Respondents also reported that supervisors' lack of knowledge of which accommodation to make (31%) can impede the progress of people with disabilities, as can attitudes and stereotypes of supervisors and co-workers (22%) about people with disabilities. Interestingly, increased costs of training, additional supervision, and accommodations were seen as barriers to less than one in six respondents (10%, 12%, and 15%, respectively).**

* **Visible top management commitment (82%), staff training (63%), mentoring (60%), and on-site consultation or technical assistance (59%) were identified by respondents as the most effective approaches to reducing barriers to employment or advancement for people with disabilities.**

[Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\) Study of the Accommodations It Recommends to Employers \(Ongoing\)](#)

Coverage: Between July 1984 and June 2000, JAN has provided assistance in making accommodations to 250,988 callers.

Findings: Eighty percent of job accommodations suggested by JAN cost less than \$500.

Source: [Social Security Administration's Office of Employment Support Programs](#), with additional support provided by the Department of Labor's [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#).

[For more information on how employers can find qualified disabled employees contact Dave Davies at 920-232-6250](#)

