

the wave

A NEWSLETTER OF SPRINGBOARD CONSULTING

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www.consultspringboard.com

A Holiday Wish...

Christmas, Kwanza, Chanukah and New Years....just some of the many spiritual and/or religious opportunities people take to celebrate during the month of December.

From everyone at Springboard and The Wave, I want to take this time to wish all of our subscribers a month filled with family, friends and good cheer followed by a year of health, wealth and happiness.

All of our contributors look forward to continuing to serve you in 2012.



Nadine



2012 Disability Matters

United States:
April 18-19, 2012,
Newark, NJ

International:
March 27, 2012,
Paris, France

Stay Tuned for more!

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The ADA Inquirer:

by Shelley A. Kaplan, Manager ADA Services, Springboard Consulting, LLC

RETURN ON INVESTMENT MEANS HIRING THE RIGHT TALENT

Every October many employers nationwide, turn their attention and resources towards activities that recognize the skills that people with disabilities bring to our workforce. Employers rededicate themselves to improving employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors for workers with disabilities. If you missed out, December marks another opportunity to disability awareness.

This effort to educate the American workforce about issues related to disability and employment actually began in 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year as “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1962, the word “physically” was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).” Upon the agency’s establishment in 2001, the US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) assumed responsibility for NDEAM and has worked to expand its reach and scope ever since.

This year’s NDEAM theme--**Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities**--focused on improving employment opportunities that lead to good jobs and a secure economic future for people with disabilities and the nation as a whole. Workers with disabilities represent a highly skilled talent pool that can help employers compete in today’s global economy.

In his proclamation recognizing October 2011 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, President Obama wrote “to win the future, we must harness the power of our Nation’s richest resource – our people. Americans with disabilities, like all Americans, are entitled to not only full participation in our society, but also full opportunity in our society. Their talents and contributions are vital to the strength of our Nation’s workforce and our future prosperity.”

Since March 2011, when bipartisan regulations implementing the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) became effective, the EEOC has filed nearly 60 lawsuits under the ADA Amendments Act, underscoring its commitment to vigorous enforcement of the law and to ensuring that all workers receive fair and equal treatment in the workplace. In November, the EEOC will examine barriers to employment for veterans with disabilities and hopefully provide insight into effective employment practices for this growing population of workers who also remain unemployed or underemployed.

More than 20 years after the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals with disabilities, including injured veterans, are making immeasurable contributions to workplaces across our country. Unfortunately, however, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities

The ADA Inquirer - Continued

remains too high (16.1%) -- nearly double the rate of people without disabilities (8.5%). In September, the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce was 21.1% while those without disabilities was 69.7%. Reversing this trend is crucial to our nation's economy.

Industry reports consistently rate employees with disabilities as on track or above average in performance, safety, and attendance. And, when it comes to retaining employees and reducing turn-over costs, research has found that employees with disabilities tend to have higher retention rates when compared to employees without disabilities. This in itself is definitely a major plus in a market where employers continue to struggle to find qualified candidates.

Joy, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, doesn't require any accommodations to perform her job as a trial attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Kenny, who has osteogenesis imperfecta and uses crutches to walk, is a graphic designer with a Federal contractor to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and is part of a prolific team that produces publications, websites and other materials to promote road safety.

Rob, who experienced a brain hemorrhage that resulted in severe physical and cognitive impairments, is a Family Counselor and Parent Educator, uses a digital voice recorder to take notes, and voice-recognition software to document them. An employer-provided smart phone assists with scheduling. Because he has difficulty synthesizing written information, he also has staff assist with monthly and quarterly reporting requirements. In addition, his job itself has a lot of flexibility, allowing him to manage not only his disabilities, but also life as a parent himself.

Munir, who is deaf, is a team leader for merchandising and special promotions at a large electronics retailer's store. He uses a lot of non-verbal communication tools, such as print outs and display schematics. He also reads lips. His knowledge of sign language also allows him to assist store customers who may be deaf; however, he doesn't use an interpreter to carry out his daily job responsibilities. His employer's emphasis on respect and communication is the key to his success.

Francine, who contracted polio when she was two years old and wears braces, developed tendonitis from so many years using crutches and now uses a wheelchair, has worked at IBM for over 30 years and provides support to a Senior Project Executive for a large health care account. In a workplace culture that encourages communication about workplace supports, a push button device to operate the pedal for a dictation system was provided without question. In addition, when moved to a new building with less space, she was given a cubicle at the end of the row near a window in order to have more room for her wheelchair.

The ADA Inquirer - Continued

These are only a few examples from employees who are valued by their employers for the skills and talents regardless of disability. But, there is much left to achieve to ensure that people with disabilities are able to fully participate in the workforce and everyone has a role to play in reversing this inequity. Employer awareness about disability doesn't need to be limited to October. In fact, **International Day of Persons with Disabilities is around the corner...** an international observance on **December 3rd** promoted by the United Nations since 1992. It's never too late to reinvigorate employer efforts to celebrate and acknowledge the experience and capabilities of people with disabilities. Below are some ideas employers should consider.

- Employers must foster workplaces welcoming to all qualified employees and potential employees. It's a tough economy, but people with disabilities must not be overlooked as a source of top talent. Employers who value people with disabilities are working harder than ever to promote inclusive and supportive workplaces, equal hiring practices and increased retention, while also expanding internships, fellowships, and training opportunities.
- Hire on a basis of talent, not disability. Not only is it unfair to conduct an interview with questions surrounding a person's disability, but it is illegal. Questions about an applicant's physical or mental impairment or how he or she became disabled - for example asking why the applicant uses a wheelchair, questions about an applicant's use of medication, or questions about an applicant's prior workers' compensation history are strictly forbidden.
- Attitudes are important influencers affecting the employment and retention rate of people with disabilities. Know your own stereotypes and prejudices. Be aware of your own values, beliefs and any prejudices that may shape the way you act and react to new situations and experiences with employees with disabilities. Let your employees, your colleagues, suppliers and your customers know that you fully support a diverse workforce. It is time to let go of the stereotypical and inaccurate views that are held by so many, preventing the true success of your organization. Open communication, employee involvement and awareness will only have the most positive return.
- Conduct disability awareness programs. Specialized training on how to effectively interact with people with disabilities include tips on communication, respecting space, wheelchairs, service animals and other unique issues. People with disabilities represent an increasing market segment and successful interactions have proven to benefit employers message in the marketplace.
- Work with your IT Department to ensure that your E-recruitment practices are accessible by using the accessibility guidelines stated in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. This will ensure all applicants have equal opportunity to apply for jobs, and it will allow Federal employees to better use technology at work. At the same time, review your intranet communications for accessibility. Access to a company's information is an essential function of the job and existing employees with disabilities must have equal access to that information as well.
- Workplace flexibility for all employees, including individuals with disabilities, is key to reducing the pervasive and unacceptable employment discrimination faced by top talent with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation by employers is required under the ADA for qualified workers with disabilities so they can perform the essential functions of their jobs. Reasonable ac-

The ADA Inquirer - Continued

commodation ranges from making adjustments or modifications to the physical work environment, to restructuring the job, to providing certain assistive equipment to an employee, as well as simply offering flexible scheduling. Workplace flexibility can be a reasonable accommodation, while a reasonable accommodation may not always be a workplace flexibility offer to an employee. Workplace flexibility, however, can often reduce the need to provide reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities.

- Employers that encourage employee input on the use of universally accessible flexible work options and flexible strategies, rather than available to only certain target groups, without penalty or retaliation creates a culture of workplace flexibility workplace integration.
- Plan a Disability Mentoring Day (DMD). This large-scale national effort to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities through hands-on career exploration, on-site job shadowing, and ongoing mentoring leading to internship and employment opportunities is an effective way to increase workforce comfort in breaking down barriers and misconceptions about the many talents people with disabilities bring to the workplace.
- Plan activities that can range from simple, such as putting up the annual NDEAM poster, to comprehensive, such as implementing a disability education program by training your workforce on the ADA and participating in job fairs that showcase the assets of workers with disabilities.
- Early announcement of the theme helps employers nationwide plan a series of announcements, events and meetings to begin in October, some of which can continue throughout the year.

Regardless, of when and how you jump in, everyone plays an important part in fostering a more inclusive workforce, one where every person is rightly recognized for his or her abilities — every day of every month. If not now, when?

The Travel Spot:

by Scott Rains, *The Rolling Rains Report*

DEFINING THE MARKET OF TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

The market is out there. They are traveling. They are spending. And they have much, much more disposable income as they wait for the right products.

There are four fundamental points to consider when developing travel products for maximum appeal. This article examines the first.

- Visualize your market using the United Nations' definition of disability.
- Evaluate your product against the Seven Principles of Universal Design.
- Perfect your product locally.
- Vary your product with modularity.

Start with in-depth knowledge of your market. Much of your homework on this market niche has been done for you.

Simon Darcy, Bruce Cameron, Eric Lipp, Canada's Keroul organization and the UN have produced some fundamental research that all travel writers, travel professionals, and hospitality managers ought to be familiar with. (See below.)

But you can misread the data if you start out with an anemic definition of the breadth of the market of travelers-with-disabilities.

Misunderstanding who you are serving, **you can make unnecessary investments, overlook opportunities for low or no-cost solutions, fail to create collaborations, or not capitalize on what is called the "Curb-Cut Effect"** - the unintended positive consequences of good design for **temporarily** able-bodied persons (all non-disabled persons are only temporarily able bodied.)

The United Nations Definition of Disability

The United Nations definition of disability looks at both physical capacity and social participation. It asks, **"How does a certain lack of physical ability affect a person's options for social participation?"**

It recognizes that society builds environments, products, and practices. They are under human control unlike the natural environment. These created entities may be designed in ways that

The Travel Spot - Continued:

either do or do not require an individual to have certain capacities. They can be designed to include or exclude. **The presumption of good design is toward inclusion.**

The UN's argument here is not for some special services unique to persons with disabilities but for the **unfettered access to those generally available goods and services by persons experiencing a lack of physical capacity.**

The definition assumes that both citizenship and the dignity that comes of being a human person places a responsibility for others on each of us - as individuals, or associations such as governments, non-governmental agencies, and businesses.

This responsibility has some proportionality to the relative privilege - that is the wealth, power, or social access - of that individual or association.

When an imbalance in opportunities for access occurs it is the responsibility of the one with the privilege of access to rectify it. Obviously, **it is more cost-effective, not to mention more just, to create with everyone in mind.**

And that is the purpose of Universal Design.

But before exploring the Seven Principles of Universal Design in the next article let's sum up about the UN definition of disability. You can find it spelled out in mind-numbing detail as **"The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health," known to mere mortals as the ICF.**

When I wear my travel agent's hat and think in terms of markets and profitability, what fascinates me about this document and this definition, is the insights it offers into seemingly unrelated demographic groups.

I claimed that "all non-disabled persons are only temporarily able-bodied." A lack of capacity can be temporary - most often it is. (That, by the way, is one explanation for the difference in self-understanding and attitude between those who were disabled in their youth and seniors who are disabled slowly through aging. It takes a while to figure out what's permanent loss and what isn't.)

Enlarge your mental image of who "the disabled" are and suddenly you include:

The Travel Spot - Continued:

- the teen on crutches (from a skateboard accident?)
- the pregnant woman
- the intoxicated party-goer
- the exhausted business guest

And once you begin to think about who travels and how they might be inconvenienced by the design of things are they are there is also:

- the senior traveler
- families traveling together (increasingly grandparent and child)
- the huge cohort of aging Baby Boomers from every nation

Wars continue but they will not do so forever. When peace breaks out whose hotel will the disabled veterans and civilians choose? As any under represented group is likely to say, "Just because you don't see us now doesn't mean we're not here."

But the perspective can be shifted yet again and ICF even recommends it. What exactly is this "normal capacity" that we unconsciously design for?

Broadly speaking, it traditionally boiled down to males between 20 and 40 years old. That meant, that all children, (everyone to the age of 20), all mid-career adults, and everyone else in the remaining 50 years of their lifespan have "abnormal capacity" - they have more in common with "the disabled" than the norm.

Designing exclusively for such an abnormally restricted definition of "normal" starts to seem pretty ridiculous from a marketing perspective, doesn't it?

Not to mention that it is a losing business proposition.

2012 - The Inaugural Disability Matters EUROPE Awards & Conference:



THE INAUGURAL DISABILITY MATTERS EUROPE 2012

*Paris, France
March 26-27, 2012*

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Sponsorship Opportunities Are Still Available

The Inaugural Disability Matters EU is is sure to become the most important Corporate Awards Conference in the Europe. Come join us in the European celebration!

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2012 - Disability Matters Awards Banquet & Conference:



DISABILITY MATTERS 2012

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Word Search Puzzle:

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

H D K T V D Z O E H D G U M L Y Z I B D W R J D Y
 G K Z W M X G H T W N D O Q T Z M T E V U H E B T
 Q P P Z B K H Z Z E U F D I L B J J J K G H B B H
 M B F V D P U O J Y Y P B Z W H B Z D B G D R L C
 V Z A M N E J J Y R V K R H A B J S J H A Y O K W
 Y F I U W R X B E M I N C M S R X H P H N F S L V
 K K R O W G W O H H R N P M G Q A A H U V V I O E
 B G S H W T H J M T B W N A C K C Z J E L J F E E
 Y K S B K X S R I I J G X P R D V J B A E R R A U
 E I E J N T Z B F K F F O P U E O T Z K A Y J I Z
 Z V N P P Z L C J I S S N D V B D D Z M Q K C U G
 G J E V K F H C D K Y P P O O I L I T Y B D B M P
 C K R U E T T S O R I T W N P N V I Q X C U N X G
 I I A E R S Q C K J D J I T H P F G C I X A T W J
 S Q W R B Y T A P A H E B S L O B D Q M V F I H M
 U X A O Q O S M J W B S U K R E I E O A H A C C Y
 U E K C M T T N E M Y O L P M E T B W D K V J E X
 T T Y B B S Q C K N B X R Q K B V E O L L N E F S
 F V H R D Z C N O X T A M L K D I I C U A V U R Z
 L M H G P J K Q N P A D B B Q L B U D O Q W H N N
 C H S R Q R T H Y S E T M L B Y P N Y J L Z W W H
 P W L Z H P H W T C C O O F R M E Q U C O V F Y W
 U C L H D L G I R C W H W Q D W V W Q H J H O G M
 Z M Q Z R B C H B B X S J O J T G M E R S N B P R
 V U L H R J L Z Q P T K N O H W J T X T R E V N Y

To download an accessible version of this crossword, [click here >>](#)

Word Search Puzzle:

HINTS:

Month designated every year as National Disability Employment Month (**October**)

2011 theme for National Disability Employment Month 2011 is (**profit**) by Investing in workers with disabilities.

Profits are achieved through (**investment**) in all aspects of a person's development.

Employers celebrate National Disability Employment Month with various activities including (**public awareness**) programs and (**job fairs**) that showcase the assets of workers with disabilities.

The primary outcome of dedicating a month to disability awareness is to increase and enhance the (**employment**) of people with disabilities.

(**Work**) is central to every person's financial independence, sense of self and integrity.

Disability is a natural part of (**diversity**).

Businesses can benefit by taking steps to ensure people with disabilities are (**included**) in their workforce.

SEARCH WORDS:

- AWARENESS
- DIVERSITY
- EMPLOYMENT
- FAIRS
- INVESTMENT
- JOB
- OCTOBER
- PROFIT
- PUBLIC
- WORK

Come See Nadine!



CALIFORNIA *diversity* **COUNCIL**

Member of the National Diversity Council

Nadine will be presenting at the California Leadership & Diversity Conference being held in Berkeley, CA on February 2 & 3, 2012.



World Diversity Leadership Summit - Europe

Nadine will be presenting at WDL S, EU in Vienna on March 1 & 2, 2012.

2012 - The Inaugural Disability ERG Professional Development Leadership Summit



SPONSORED BY:  **PSEG**

DATE & LOCATION:

Tuesday, April 17th, 2012
8:30 AM-4:30 PM EST

PSEG Headquarters
80 Park Plaza
Room 101 – Lower Level
Newark, NJ 07102

PRICING*:

\$299 per person: General Admission
\$229 per person: Disability ERG Leadership Networking Forum Subscribers
*Includes light breakfast and lunch

RSVP:

Purchase a ticket and register no later than Friday, March 9, 2012 – [CLICK HERE >>](#)
Should you have any questions, please contact Jill Frankel at jill@consultspringboard.com or via telephone: 1-973-813-7260 x. 106.

REMINDER:

The 2012 U.S. Disability Matters Awards Banquet & Conference will be taking place the following two days, Wednesday and Thursday, April, 18 & 19. If you are interested in attending please visit - <http://www.consultspringboard.com/2011/about-disability-matters-united-states/> or contact Jill Frankel at jill@consultspringboard.com or via telephone: 1-973-813-7260 x. 106 for more information.

2012 - The Inaugural Disability ERG Professional Development Leadership Summit, Continued:

HOTELS:

The Newark Liberty Airport Marriott – this is the host hotel for the Disability Matters event and is located approx 4 miles from PSEG. To view hotel's website, visit – <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/ewrap-newark-liberty-international-airport-marriott/>

The Robert Treat a Best Western Hotel – this hotel is located one block from PSEG. To view hotel's website, visit – <http://www.rthotel.com/>

MESSAGE:

The difference between success and greatness lies in our ability to lead others, and ourselves. Although many look to innovations, especially in technology, to generate value, it's effective leadership that turns those innovations into corporate and societal game-changers. This is especially true when it comes to leading a Disability Employee Resource Group. Springboard's Disability ERG Professional Development Leadership Summit is designed to expand the capability and capacity of Disability ERG Leaders and their groups, providing the participants with a way to tap into potential and more of what is possible. The Summit will also provide a forum for cross-company/industry learning, experience sharing and of course, networking.

Whether you already lead a successful Disability ERG or you're just introducing it to your organization, this inaugural ERG Summit will be invaluable in helping you take your group to the next level, whatever that level may be.

We look forward to seeing you in April.



Nadine

To Download Agenda, [Click here >>](#)

A Note from the Springboard Team:

As always, we hope everyone has enjoyed this edition of “[The WAVE](#)”.

Winter is here... we've had our first snowfalls (storms) in many places, we are looking forward to the upcoming holidays, families gatherings... sharing love and cheer. Yet, when everyone has left for the evening or you arrive home and you're looking for something to read as you wind-down, grab your copy of “[The WAVE](#)”!

As always, please help us spread the word... tell everyone you know to visit our website and sign-up for the newsletter - <http://www.consultspringboard.com/newsletter/> .

Again, we thank you for your support and for subscribing to ...

“The WAVE”

Until Next Time...



14 Glenbrook Drive, Mendham, NJ 07945, United States
T: 973-813-7260; F: 973-813-7261; E: info@consultspringboard.com
<http://consultspringboard.com>