Why Hire a Person with Epilepsy?

From Rethinking Disability in the private sector from the Conference Board of Canada - 2013

795,000 Canadians are working aged but are not working and their disability does not prevent them from working. Almost half, 340,000 have post secondary education.

Hiring people with disabilities is good for business

Others noted that while genuine job requirements exist, assumptions about disabilities can create unnecessary barriers: We don't know what we don't know.

And from a case study....

The hotel's management believes that high staff engagement is a result of the diverse workforce – people genuinely care about each other. The response from guests to the hotel's diverse workforce has been consistently positive, as evidenced by its leadership market share.

To quote Rich, "We have found that companies that perform well in disability are highly responsive to their customers, and thus outperform peers in revenue growth."

Companies told us they had an improved ability to attract talented, innovative people, and that there was greater employee loyalty and commitment

JAN study on employer accommodations (cited by Conference Board of Canada)

Top six direct benefits reported after making accommodation (percent mentioned)

Retained a valued employee 90

Increased the employee's productivity 71

Eliminated costs associated with training a new employee 60

Increased the employee's attendance 53

Increased diversity of the company 42

Saved workers' compensation or other insurance costs 39

Epilepsy is a complex condition that can vary widely between individuals. The information contained provides a general overview of the condition and its impact in the workplace, but is in no way intended to address all possible situations.
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Top six indirect benefits reported after making accommodation (percent mentioned)

Improved interactions with co-workers 66

Increased overall company morale 61

Increased overall company productivity 57

Improved interactions with customers 45

Increased workplace safety 45

Increased overall company attendance 38

Customers

Businesses cannot market effectively to customers with disabilities if they don't recognize and truly understand their needs. When companies create an inclusive workplace – which includes a strategy for hiring people with disabilities – they build understanding and acquire knowledge.

In so doing, they create an identity that employees and customers want to share. They can tap into this market as both an employer and a marketer, and gain a competitive advantage.

People with epilepsy represent 40,000 customers in the GTA and their families and friends, many many more.

From the Epilepsy Canada website

Epilepsy & the Employer

* How would you respond to an employment application from someone with epilepsy?

If you are truly open-minded, you won't reject anyone for that reason. Rather, if the person is qualified and suitable for the job, you will make enquiries about the degree of their health condition.

* Is it of the mild variety with no major seizures? If it is more severe, is it under control with anticonvulsant drugs?

If the answer to either of these questions is "yes," there's no reason not to hire that person.

In fact, there are some very good reasons to make a positive hiring decision. Studies show that, on average,

- people with epilepsy tend to work somewhat more conscientiously than others, to prove themselves;
- they tend to work more carefully and have fewer accidents;
- and they tend to have more loyalty to their employers, missing fewer days of work.

The next time someone with epilepsy applies for a job with your company, remember these facts. **If the person is qualified, the person should be hired.** Give them the opportunity they deserve to be constructive, useful, self- supporting members of society.

Chances are, you'll gain an industrious employee who will make a real contribution to your company's success.

The more you know about epilepsy, the less frightening it is.

From the Epilepsy Therapy Project (Tony Coelho)

Epilepsy and Your Employment

Most people with epilepsy can work productively at fulltime jobs, yet people with epilepsy have about twice the unemployment rate of the general population. Why is that?

Often, people with epilepsy want to work but may encounter employers afraid of the potential effects of a seizure on the job. These employers may worry about liability, missed work or customers seeing someone having a seizure. While these things can happen, they are not valid reasons to avoid hiring people with epilepsy. The only time when a potential employee's epilepsy is relevant to the hiring decision is in a case where seizures on the job would endanger the person's or the public's well-being. Such exceptions might apply, for example, to pilots, bus drivers, firemen, roofers and tree cutters. In addition, people with seizures should avoid work that involves driving, working underwater or in other dangerous locations, or spending prolonged periods around fire, dangerous machinery or chemicals. Despite these limitations, over 90% of jobs can be done and done well by people with epilepsy.

In the United States, the median income for persons with epilepsy is 93% that of all persons. The unemployment rate for persons with epilepsy has been reported to be between 25% and 69%. The high school graduation rate has been reported at 64%, compared with an overall national average of 82%. [2] The treatment of epilepsy: principles & practice By Elaine Wyllie, Ajay Gupta, Deepak K. Lachhwani: page 1203