

Disability Inclusion Myth-Busters

By Tarra Nystrom, MBA

It is no myth that the ROI of disability inclusion is no different than ROI in business applications. It is a performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an *investment*, albeit human capital instead of monetary capital. There are many myths to dispel regarding the ROI disability inclusion about how the human capital does not impact the monetary capital.

MYTH 1: People with disabilities do not have the knowledge, skills, or abilities for the positions in our company.

FACT 1: There are 2.3 million working age adults with disabilities who have a Bachelor's Degree, 2.2 million more are enrolled in college, and many others have vocational training and relevant prior work experience. People with disabilities rate an average of 90% or better for job performance.

MYTH 2: People with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.

FACT 2: People with disabilities have lower rates of absenteeism and less turnover. Better attendance records and longer tenures directly correlate to increased productivity and revenue.

MYTH 3: Hiring People with disabilities will increase my business's health care costs.

FACT 3: Businesses report no increase in costs with the addition of PWD to their workforce.

MYTH 4: Hiring People with disabilities will increase workers' compensation rates.

FACT 4: Workers' compensation rates are based solely on the type of business operations and loss history, and NOT on the demographics of employees.

MYTH 5: Accommodations are expensive.

FACT 5: Employers accommodate workers—with and without disabilities—every day. Approximately 46% of accommodations for people with disabilities cost nothing, and 45% have a one-time cost, typically around \$500 and most times are paid for by outside resources.

MYTH 6: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the American with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) are complicated and overwhelming, and makes companies more vulnerable to lawsuits.

FACT 6: The ADA and ADAAA do not interfere with your right to hire the best qualified applicant. The ADA and ADAAA do not impose any affirmative action obligations; the ADA simply prohibits employment discrimination. Most ADA employment disputes are resolved through informal negotiation or mediation.

MYTH 7: Disability diversity does not affect my business.

FACT 7: Increasingly, Environmental, Social and (corporate) Governance (ESG) policies and procedures of a business are scrutinized by investors as well as consumers. Disability diversity increases equity and ROI through good ESG.

MYTH 8: Employing people with disabilities is simply sympathetic and has no economic impact.

FACT 8: People with disabilities represent \$544 billion in discretionary income in the US, and \$1 trillion in aggregate income globally. One in three households has a member with a disability. As a business owner, one in nine people in any business market has some form of disability.