

Managing and Employing the Handicapped

The Untapped Potential

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DEDICATION

To my late mother, Tusar Pati,
who instilled in me the basis
for whatever human values I now have.

Gopal C. Pati

To my late grandmother, Mattie Carney,
who despite being a double amputee
and suffering from a heart condition,
never gave up the struggle.

John I. Adkins, Jr.

To Chance.

Glenn Morrison

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FOREWORD

As Consulting Editor for Brace-Park's Human Resource Application Series, I'm pleased to have been associated with this writing project. Dr. Gopal C. Pati has taken the lead in developing resource material derived from over 80 organizations and hundreds of information sources with wide appeal to many readers. With the able assistance of John I. Adkins and with the contributions of Glenn Morrison, a realistic action agenda has been developed. Business officials and managers, public officials, members of the rehabilitation community, union officials, and many others are sure to benefit greatly from this thoughtful, sensitive treatment.

Perhaps, one of our reviewers, a business official, says it best:

I believe this book will serve as a landmark in the current state of the art on the handicapped within the Industrial Relations/ Human Resource area. This book covers all facets and concerns on handicapped employment: not only the historical but, more importantly, the practical and relevant legal problems that exist. This book can (also) be invaluable to all segments of handicapped advocates....

I am quite sure that it will prove to be an invaluable tool for managers and students of managing and employing the handicapped.

Elmer Burack
Chicago, August 1981

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Gopal C. Pati
John I. Adkins, Jr.
Glenn Morrison

Introduction

THE PURPOSE

Much of the publicity concerning handicapped people usually plays on your emotions: the handicapped are portrayed as either pathetic or heroic; the world that confronts them is heartless and combative. We hope here to deviate from those extremes. We hope to appeal to your reason and arouse your self-interest.

This book is *not* about charity cases; it is *not* a book about injustices. It is *not* even a book of heroic stories, although we think there are some good stories in it. In short, you will *not* be cajoled to weep in pity, *nor* made to tremble in fear (or celebration) at the prospect of omnipotent and omniscient government risen in anger. You will *not* even be inspired to awe of the exploits of courageous disabled men and women.

We intend to talk only good business sense. We will attempt to persuade you that employing qualified handicapped workers will solve personnel and production problems. We will explain how that can be done without much difficulty or significant expense to the employer.

THE READERSHIP

Who is this "you" to which we speak so confidently?

We have addressed this book to three sets of readers:

- **Employers (private and public):** top-level executives, personnel specialists, affirmative action officers, managers, supervisors.
- **Rehabilitation professionals:** agency directors, counselors, job developers, trainers, placement specialists.
- **Other interested parties:** business and rehabilitation associations, academics, unions, public interest groups, and so on.

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We expect employers to be interested because we offer solutions to personnel and production concerns (and, alas, to legal obligations). We expect the rehabilitation community to be interested because we will demonstrate ways to help the people they are dedicated to help—handicapped individuals. We expect the associations, the academicians, the unions, and other groups to be interested because we have new and current information.

At times we will seem to be addressing the first group directly. We hope the others will listen in as well.

THE SITUATION

It is common enough to proclaim that we live in uncertain economic times—probably we always have. Recently it has become conventional wisdom to believe it. Surely the world has gotten more crowded (and more dangerous), and technology, mass communications, and all sorts of new "consciousnesses" (discrimination, environment, quality of life) seem to make it more volatile and hence unpredictable. Nonetheless, we must try to manage—and if in private business, make a profit.

To that end we will isolate a few human and business factors that merit consideration:

1. We have reached a juncture in our economic history when employers continually complain about a lack of people who are willing and able to perform in accordance with corporate expectations, i.e., people who can produce quality work. These employers are looking for persons with at least a modified "work ethic" who will do a good day's work for a good day's pay. At the same time, ironically, many employers either overlook qualified handicapped workers or believe (usually incorrectly) that they are unable to do the job.

2. The labor market is replete with disadvantaged human resources. Moreover, increasing numbers of individuals join the ranks through disabling accidents each year. Most employers do not even take advantage of the tax incentives provided by the federal government to those who hire handicapped and culturally-disadvantaged persons.

3. Many human resource planning principles are already available that can be applied with modifications to more fully integrate and utilize handicapped employees.

Indeed, many leading companies already do a good job finding, training, and managing productive handicapped people.

4. Employers who work under government contract (at one time or another, almost everyone) will be mandated by law to design affirmative action programs that include the hiring and full utilization of the handicapped.

Compliance agencies are becoming more sophisticated; so are employers. It is, therefore, crucial that affirmative action programs be developed that are innovative in meeting not only government objectives, but the objectives of business and industry.

5. Huge sums of tax dollars (which represent an investment in human assets) are spent on rehabilitation of handicapped people. For every dollar spent in this manner, employed handicapped people return between eight and ten dollars in the form of taxes to the U.S. Treasury. Additionally, they become an integral part of a productive labor force, which means a savings on welfare and Social Security payments.

Socially, we have been committed to spending money to rehabilitate the handicapped, but commercially we have not been fully committed to hiring them. On the one hand, government at all levels has been willing to invest in rehabilitation; on the other hand, industry and business (and government, strangely enough) have not been ready to take advantage of that investment.

One of the major reasons for this contradiction is that historically there has been little interaction between rehabilitation practitioners and the business community. Today, however, both communities are beginning to recognize that they can assist one another and realize a profit thereby. By cooperating they can serve their own interests and those of society as well.

THE THESIS

We have been building our thesis by degrees for the last few pages. Here it is again in its most simple form: **Handicapped people constitute an underutilized human resource of great potential value to employers.**

That statement can be broken down into three components:

1. The handicapped are often reliable, competent people who are highly motivated to succeed at regular jobs, to be personally independent, and to contribute to society.

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2. Handicapped workers are screened twice: once by the rehabilitation service, once by the employer. A properly trained and selectively placed handicapped worker will increase the employer's productivity.

3. Successful corporations and organizations of all sizes are making the hiring of disabled workers a routine part of their personnel practices, with no significant costs or inconveniences (and often with savings).

SOME QUESTIONS

To reach this desirable solution, we will have to provide answers to some honest and practical questions. Like the following:

What are the barriers to training and selectively placing qualified handicapped people?

What should employers know about this widely divergent population?

What is the legal definition of "handicapped"?

What is the legal framework of equal opportunity for the handicapped?

What are the ingredients of a successful affirmative action plan and of favorable compliance?

What kinds of organizations can provide assistance to employers?

What are some of the model programs that link the rehabilitation and the business communities?

How do the principles of management, in general, and human resource planning, in particular, apply to employing handicapped people?

What are the components of a solid organizational support system? What services are necessary?

Why do employers hire the handicapped and how are they benefiting?

What are some successful corporate and organizational employment programs?

What are the emerging technologies and innovations that can assist both employers and disabled employees?

What accommodations are necessary to make facilities accessible to handicapped individuals?

Are drug abuse and alcoholism considered handicaps? How should employers respond?

What kinds of training and education programs are available?

What are the unresolved issues? What will government, business, the rehabilitation community, unions, and the handicapped population have to do in the future to make the system work for everyone?

THE STRUCTURE

To answer those questions and others and to put the whole process of handicapped employment into some meaningful structure, we have organized the book into nine chapters:

- Chapter One describes the handicapped population in real, every-day terms. The population is larger and more diverse than you might suppose. (And it is growing.)
- Chapter Two defines the legal framework in which employers and rehabilitation personnel have to work. It will provide what you need to know about the regulations and legislation and will tell you how best to comply.
- Chapter Three explains how rehabilitation agencies can work with employers to solve personnel problems. Several model agencies are investigated.
- Chapter Four details how to design and implement an effective recruitment and placement system using proven and workable management ideas.
- Chapter Five illustrates the techniques expounded in the two previous chapters with models from corporations, small businesses, unions, and public organizations.
- Chapter Six offers a review of the technological aids that are available to help disabled workers perform a great number of jobs.
- Chapter Seven delineates the accessibility standards and provides some help with logistics of getting people in, out, and about the worksite.
- Chapter Eight discusses the training and consciousness raising—for both managers/supervisors and employees—that is necessary for a successful employment program.

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- Chapter Nine sums up the lessons of the preceding chapters and makes recommendations for all groups concerned with the process of handicapped employment.

THE BEGINNING

The best way to begin the process of tapping the potential of handicapped workers (besides reading our book) is to make a commitment and be flexible. Gerald Ford, in a 1975 proclamation, suggests a point of view to keep in mind:

Those of us who are not handicapped think of what we could *not* do if we lost an arm, or a leg, lost our sight or our voice, or were disabled in some way. We often forget that the handicapped are thinking of what they *can* do.

Please Note:

Throughout the book we have not tried to balance our pronouns: "he" and "his" appear more than "she" and "her." This imbalance reflects a lack of dexterity on our part and not an attempt to exclude women from the professional ranks and the handicapped population.

Rehabilitated alcoholics and drug abusers are handicapped people protected by the law. Since there are abundant substance abuse programs and considerable information on the subject is available from professional and health organizations, we have not treated the topic here in a separate section. We have, however, considered the problems of those individuals within the context of the handicapped population. Supervisory ramifications are discussed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 5

Programs that Work

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"The handicapped worker does a good job. Any operator or manager who doesn't want to put time and effort into working with the handicapped isn't really interested in success."

—Bill Taylor, owner/operator
of a McDonald's restaurant
in Elizabeth, North Carolina

Programs to employ disabled people did not begin with the government regulations of the 1970s. In fact, large-scale work with the handicapped (in terms of employment) really got started in the 1940s when thousands of disabled veterans began returning home. Yet, as we have insisted throughout this book, organizations are involved—and have been involved for many years—because it is in their best interests to do so.

In this chapter we will investigate in some detail programs for employing the handicapped in corporations, private agencies, public agencies, and unions. We present them as models for your organization; they are programs that work. (For an overview of the elements highlighted, see Table 5.1)

TABLE 5.1

Overview of Programs Highlighted

Organization	Aspects Highlighted
Pennsylvania Power & Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects With Industry • Outreach innovations
National Restaurant Association and Food Service Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects With Industry • Recruitment, training, placement • Answers to turnover problems
Continental Bank of Chicago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Training • Career planning • Counseling
3M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house rehabilitation and selective placement • Rehabilitation committee • Innovative transportation • Recreation programs
Control Data Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLATO educational system • Homebound employees ("Homework")
Human Resources Development Institute (AFL-CIO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects With Industry • Job placement model • Job development
Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkage model • Supportive services • Social services

*This is far from an inclusive survey. We have not attempted here to describe all aspects of every organization's program.

TABLE 5.1 (continued)**Overview of Programs Highlighted**

Organization	Aspects Highlighted
Alta Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment for small business needs
McDonnell Douglas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employing the deaf • Programs since the 1940s
Sears, Roebuck and Co.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective placement • Innovative AAP • Accommodations
Tennessee Valley Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Management training • Job search for the blind • Interpreter services
Edison Electric Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAP programs • Task force • Awareness seminars
Public Programs -Pennsylvania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job readiness program • Job-seeking skills • Follow-up
-Indiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer training program • Cooperation with industry • Internships
Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of CETA • Client assessment and placement

PENNSYLVANIA POWER & LIGHT COMPANY (PP&L)

PP&L has been involved since 1974 in seeking disabled people to fill positions in the company. According to Charles Sauder, supervisor of personnel placement, the company has employed (or is employing) people who are blind, deaf and speechless, orthopedically handicapped, rehabilitated alcoholics, diabetic, or epileptic. These employees have worked as clerical staff, construction laborers, keypunch operators, typists, engineers, and so on. In addition, PP&L has had a leadership position in the Edison Electric Institute and, thus, a national influence. (We'll look at the Institute in more detail later.)

1. Internal rehabilitation programs represent an idea whose time has come.
2. Internal programs are probably only efficient for companies that employ over 1,000 people.
3. Private rehabilitation services are a valuable supplementary resource for internal programs.
4. A team approach coordinating internal and external sources is essential.
5. Smaller firms can profitably use private agencies to supply rehabilitation services.
6. An internal program can be cost effective in terms of both expenditures and productivity.²⁵

CONTROL DATA CORPORATION

"HOMEWORK"

Another Midwestern giant corporation (3M is headquartered in St. Paul; Control Data's home is in Minneapolis) has put its own technology to good use for itself and its disabled employees. Control Data has developed a program called "Homework" for severely disabled homebound employees.

Homework is designed to provide, first, training and, then, employment through the technology at the PLATO system. PLATO is a computer-based educational system that utilizes a computer screen and keyboard. A PLATO terminal can be installed in anyone's home and linked to terminals at the office, or nearly any other location.²⁷

The project began in 1978 with 12 trainees who were disabled employees of the corporation. Each had a terminal installed in his or her home. For a year they were trained to become PLATO courseware writers. The trainees proved the success of the venture by writing a course that teaches programmers how to write in Pascal, a computer language.

Control Data was sufficiently pleased with the initial project to begin two more: one will train 14 disabled employees to be business application programmers; the second will teach other disabled workers to become tutors in the rather extensive Control Data Institute (CDI) educational program, which also uses the PLATO system. Thus, CDI tutors (like Carol Anderson, an original course-

writer trainee) can still remain at home and provide instant feedback to students via their terminals in an instruction center.²⁸

William Norris, chairman and chief executive officer of Control Data, believes the Homework concept has a significant future. He points out that "there are more than two million Americans classified as being homebound because of a severe mental and/or physical disability." Further, Norris envisions that the Homework and programs like it "will become an employment alternative, not only for the disabled population, but also the able-bodied."²⁹

Control Data's involvement in social issues—including seeking employment outlets for the disabled—stems from a point of view that might also be of general interest. Again, we quote William Norris:

The time is long overdue when business should take the initiative, in conjunction with government and other sectors of society, in addressing these problems as profitable business opportunities, with an appropriate sharing of costs between the private sector and government.³⁰

SELECTIVE PLACEMENT

Since 1975 Control Data has employed a rehabilitation counselor, much in the mold of Paul Ashton of 3M. Again, the purpose is to rehabilitate and selectively place disabled employees in suitable jobs. The objectives are to not waste human resources, to maintain productivity, and to save on disability payments. (To that last objective, Control Data estimates that its rehabilitation program has saved several hundred thousand dollars.)³¹

Stephen Wastvedt, of the personnel office of Control Data, has provided us with two examples of their selective placement program. The first is an epileptic applicant, whose medication slowed his mental faculties somewhat. Recognizing that his slowness did not negate his basic reliability and competence, the corporation found him a job he could handle—cleaning computer tapes. Since then he has been promoted to process control aid and is doing well.

The second case involves an applicant who was close to a degree in computer science and who had cerebral palsy. Mr. Wastvedt was able to find the applicant an internship, so that he could finish his degree. He became a permanent employee (computer programmer) when Wastvedt was able to locate a position that did not put excessive demands upon the employee's limited communication abilities. The placement is considered a success by both employee and corporation.³²