

Innovation

*Diverse Issues,
Innovative
Solutions*



Innovation is key to your business' success. Employees with disabilities bring unique experiences and understanding that transform a workplace and enhance products and services. As part of your team, employees with disabilities help build your business and can lead your company into the future. [Hear](#) or [read](#) more about what businesses have to say.

Workplace Innovation

- Create more efficient and effective business processes.
- Develop and implement management strategies to attract and retain qualified talent.
- Use technology in new ways to increase productivity.

Product and Service Innovation

- Stimulate new product and service development through disability-inclusive diverse teams.
- Customize products and services to increase profitability.

Defining the Future

- Foster the development of next-generation products and services.

Spotlights

- [Watch video about Innovation](#)
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Diverse Issues, Innovative Solutions

Innovation does not just happen. Innovation requires new ideas and unique talent, which come from people, including those with disabilities.

Workplace Innovation

Employees with disabilities contribute to your organization's success by bringing unique perspectives, problem-solving skills, and experiences to the workplace. According to "[Leveraging Diversity to Improve Business Performance](#)", *Human Resource Management, Winter 2004*, diverse teams that include employees with disabilities are creative, with increased synergies that contribute to the development of more efficient and effective business processes.

Innovation leads to ways to work more efficiently, cooperatively, and collaboratively. For example, when A&F Wood, a small manufacturing company in Howell, Michigan, reorganized a work station to accommodate an employee with a visual impairment, they discovered a more efficient layout for all employees to use. Similarly, Walgreens modified their distribution center's supporting technology, making it easier for their employees with disabilities to use. What they soon discovered was that the changes simplified tasks for all employees, increasing productivity.

Product and Service Innovation

Employees with disabilities contribute to the creativity of an organization in developing products and services with a broad customer appeal. They bring a perspective about how customers with disabilities perceive and interact with your products and services, which can be valuable in improving or identifying new features. Employees with disabilities are good for business. They add diversity to a workforce, something that former Cisco CEO John Chambers has long trumpeted as a factor in improved productivity and creativity. When Cisco Systems began hiring employees with disabilities, they recognized an additional benefit: improved interaction with the company's clients, many of whom also had employees with disabilities.

Tools designed to make life easier for people with disabilities are now incorporated in a wide range of products. Examples include:

- Technology used to improve wheelchairs for people with mobility impairments is now being used to help all people move in cities and large facilities through the use of Segways.
- Captioning developed to help people who are hard of hearing or deaf enjoy television and videos is now helping all people obtain information in crowded or noisy environments.
- Text messaging, which has long been used by the deaf community, has now become commonplace in businesses (through the use of Blackberries) and in personal lives (through the use of cell phones).
- Large screens used to help individuals with low vision are now highly sought after items both at work and at home.

Defining the Future

People with disabilities have contributed to our society in many areas, including the political leadership of Franklin Roosevelt, the scientific innovation of Stephen Hawking, and the music composition of Beethoven. People with disabilities will continue to define the future whether they be the next world leader, the returning veteran, your next-door neighbor or you.

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