

SUCCESS STORY

DISABILITY SERVICES GROUP Staffing Need Solved Using EARN

You look for ability versus disability. As long as a person can do the job, why not hire them?

– Allan Checkoway, Principal, Disability Services Group

Key Lessons Learned



If your customers may include people with disabilities, hiring people with disabilities gives your company valuable insight to better serve and keep this customer base.

Consider telework among your alternatives in accommodating workers with disabilities.

Company Background

With nearly 30 years of disability services expertise, Allan Checkoway understands the employment challenges facing people with disabilities. In his everyday work, Checkoway deals with issues of disability related to employee benefits and long-term care.

Checkoway's firm, Disability Services Group (DSG), helps businesses establish employee benefits programs. His focus is on establishing disability insurance coverage for employees who may one day need it. In doing so, he guides both the company and its employees through the insurance process, which often requires

a measure of education and understanding for both sides.

Somebody that becomes disabled literally hits a psychological wall,

Explains Checkoway, adding that a person has to deal with the emotional challenge of feeling less than they did before. For DSG, it means handling the process right the first time so both the employer and employee can feel at ease.

Flexibility in Job Design Widens Potential Labor Pool

Checkoway could foresee that almost overnight he might go from the "publishing business" into the "fulfillment business" and would need to fill orders for his book. He began to ask himself,

What would I do when orders came in? How would I ship the books, and what would be the impact on my Employee Benefit business? How would I begin to fill the orders in a timely manner?

Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network

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At that time Checkoway had only three employees working for his Employee Benefit business, other than himself.

This led me to think...the work could be done at home and, that's what started the whole process,

Checkoway says. He began to consider ways he might use additional help to expand his business into new markets. His most important realization was that his work could also be done by an individual from their home office.

Management Challenges

Much like his own customers, Checkoway found himself considering many of the common concerns about employing a person with a disability:

How do I go about hiring an individual with a disability?

What kind of difficulties will I have with a disabled person?

Can I maintain a high level of customer service?

What about issues involving The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Health Insurance & Portability Act (HIPPA)?

What about medical insurance and employee benefits?

He also knew that he would have to invest his time in training this employee and didn't want to put a lot of time into someone that would quit or would be unable to do the job because of unforeseen conflicts with a disability. Relying on his business experience to answer some of these concerns, Checkoway outlined the requirements of his new position and decided to research the possibilities of opening his newly-created position to a person with a disability.

Finding the Right Candidate

Checkoway decided that, instead of reporting to the company's office each day, the new employee would telecommute. Having an employee work from home was a benefit to DSG's small business needs and mission. He said as the position was being created, he knew it was a job that could be performed wherever a functioning telephone existed and put serious consideration into hiring a person with a disability because that is the nature of his work and the customer base he serves.

Checkoway did not already have ties to any local disability organizations, so he asked his assistant to look into available employment resources. The Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network (EARN) was easy to find through an internet search, and responded so efficiently that

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Checkoway didn't bother to search further.

EARN located a local employment provider, Enable, Inc. Concerned about whether the provider's job candidates would be able to meet his needs, Checkoway was assured by an EARN specialist that referrals are only made if the provider has candidates who can meet the job requirements. He was confident that he could trust their evaluation and judgment.

Five candidates were referred to Checkoway, but it took only one callback to select Judith Flewelling. He said it was all in her voice.

There was no reason to go any further,

He recalled, who was so impressed with Judith's pleasant and professional phone manner that his decision to hire her was quickly confirmed. Checkoway is still unaware of her disability, and initially he tried to imagine what it might be. But after he spoke with her a few times, he knew intuitively that she was the one by how she handled his call and would be representing him and his business.

Simple Accommodations

In her new job, Flewelling is responsible for generating new business leads and

maintaining a database of employee benefits points of contact for those companies. Enable, Inc. assisted with onsite training, changes to the phone service, and other accommodations to help her set up to work from home. Together with Checkoway, they established a work schedule and general business practices. Checkoway shared with her how he works with his clients and arranged a bonus system for new clients she brings to DSG.

Plans for the Future

This single hiring experience was a significant step for DSG. Though not contemplating additional hiring at this time, Checkoway says:

I would not hesitate to use the same process and the EARN service if the need ever arises again for recruiting. When we hire more people, we will begin with EARN. The woman from EARN did some coaching and I couldn't imagine any other employment firm taking responsibility for the individual and having such a sincere interest in her success. It was a big plus!

Share Your Story

If you have a success story you would like to share, please email us at: earn@earnworks.com.

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