

Employment of persons with disabilities as an element of diversity management

Justyna KOŁODZIEJCZYK
University of Lodz. Poland

Abstract:

Aim: In making the decision to employ disabled persons, at first one should understand the essential characteristics of disability, identify employment barriers and gain insight into the rights and obligations of both parties to the legal relationship. One of the paper's aims is therefore to describe the disability issues. On the other hand, solutions applied by some organizations are demonstrated with a view to show good practices in employing and including disabled people in diversity management programs and to highlight benefits arising there from.

Research method: The paper is the outcome of the analysis encompassing the academic literature concerned with people with disabilities and the data published by the Central Statistical Office.

Findings: The analysis of the literature content shows that disabled people are just as valuable as their non-disabled colleagues. Organizations which gained insight into the disability issue and thus decided to employ disabled workers, taking them into account in diversity programs, gain a variety of benefits. Moreover, enterprises which neglect this group of employees do so to their disadvantage. The examples illustrated in the paper of measures taken for the disabled could provide some guidelines for other enterprises in terms of constructing diversity management programs.

Keywords: disability, a person with a disability, diversity, diversity management
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Introduction

Nowadays, the structure of the external labor market tends to be increasingly diversified. Organizations operating on this market are therefore choosing, somewhat addressing in this way the expectations coming from the surrounding environment, to employ diverse employees. For managers, employing diverse workforce is, on the one hand, a huge challenge, yet on the other – an opportunity for success (Griffin 2009: 190).

Numerous conflicts arise as a result of stereotypical thinking about some social groups, as well as strong prejudices or distrust which employees exhibit towards some communities. However, deploying diversity policy with the aim to promote both companies and products they offer and to establish new business contacts could initiate social changes and contribute to competitive advantages (Giermanowska 2014: 21).

A large body of papers define diversity through three dimensions. The first one, which is referred to as primary or primary identity, point out to the most visible differences such as age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or disability. The second dimension is comprised of such elements as: nationality, language, life style, family and economic status, religion, the way of thinking or the level of education. The third dimension is made up of convictions, attitudes, beliefs, group norms or values espoused (Gajek 2014: 128).

This paper is devoted to disability which employers should take into account while building diversity management programs in their organizations so as to make them complete. Providing insight into the disability issue is a cognitive aim of this paper. Thus, the first part focuses on the attempt to define the following terms: disability and a disabled person, while presenting the types and levels of disability, barriers to employment of the disabled, as well as rights and obligations arising from their employment. Further on, the paper concentrates on economic activity of persons with disabilities. Moreover, support measures for the disabled implemented by companies promoting diversity in the workplace are illustrated with a view to show good practices in this area. The paper concludes in summing up the discussions conducted, showing the advantages arising from the employment of people with disabilities while stressing the necessity to carry out empirical studies on this subject.

„Disability” and „ a disabled person”

In the contemporary world, disability represents one of the more serious social problems. Considering the fact that the average life expectancy continues to increase, which could eventually lead to deterioration of the human mental and physical condition, the concern showed for disability issues seems entirely justified. One should, however, bear in mind that this problem can also refer to other groups: children, youth and persons of working age.

Defining the terms “disability” and a “disabled person” in the way that is clear and comprehensible to all recipients presents a very difficult task, and as such it is of interest to many

scholars. In academic literature there is a variety of definitions of disability. One of the most frequently cited is the division into social definitions (social model) and medical definitions (individual model).

Within the social model, disability is considered through the prism of numerous restrictions and limitations a disabled person has to encounter. They are largely due to the prevalent stereotypes or biases, social policy incorrectly pursued, discrimination, imperfections of the education system or solutions which exclude the disabled from the labor market. According to this model, the cause of disability lies not in an individual but in the barriers he or she comes across during their lifetime (Sznajder 2014: 128).

According to the individual model, the cause of disability is embedded in a person who considers his or her state as a personal tragedy. Given this situation, such people are unable to adapt to this new condition, refuse help offered by family, society and doctors, and, while being unwilling to cooperate, they stop believing in themselves and their abilities. Any attempt of support is perceived as stigmatization, while being omitted with no reaction whatsoever is viewed as being excluded. In this case, it is paramount for people staying in contact with a disabled person to make him or her participate in the process of rehabilitation and adjustment to the new situation. The actions which a disabled person undertakes should eventually ensure his or her self-acceptance (Poliwczak 2007: 25).

According to the International Labor Organization, a person with disabilities is a person whose capabilities in terms of gaining and maintaining employment or promotion in the workplace are considerably limited by a physical or mental impairment (Garbat 2013:18).

Moreover, pursuant to the Act on Occupational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons – psychical, mental or physical state effecting a temporary or permanent limitation, hindrance or a complete lack of capacities to fulfill the roles of the human being in society, especially those linked to paid employment, is called disability (Act of 27 August 1997:Article 2, point 10)

The definition formulated by the World Health Organization (WHO) considers a person to be disabled whose limited physical capabilities make his or her ability to fulfill social roles or perform life tasks impossible, difficult or reduced, while taking into account cultural, environmental and social factors, as well as gender or age. The approach to the issue of disability exhibited by the WHO experts had to change amid the wave of criticism. The opponents protested

against associating disability solely with restriction, loss or impairment. The modified version from 2007 defines disability as a multidimensional phenomenon emerging as a result of interactions between the human being and his or her social and physical environment, as well as the effect of having to face barriers in his or her surrounding environment (Sznajder 2014: 129).

Under the regulation Americans with Disabilities, a very precise approach to disabilities is present in the American concept, which holds that for a person to be considered disabled he or she has to meet at least one of the following conditions:

- they should be characterized by mental or physical illness, impairments or disorders which substantially limit their daily living activities,
- their limitations with respect to daily living activities should be certified at the present moment or in the past,
- they should be viewed by their surrounding environment as persons with impairments (Garbat 2013: 19).

In view of the above definition, a person with disabilities is such who experiences limitations in performing daily living activities or did so in the past. People who go or used to go psychiatrists, underwent detoxification, suffered from cancer or are HIV positive are increasingly more frequently considered to be disabled.

In Poland, from the legal point of view, limitations of daily living activities or no possibility of paid employment must be confirmed by the relevant adjudication concerning:

- partial or total incapacity to work issued by ZUS [Social Insurance Institution] and KRUS [Agricultural Social Insurance Fund] for pension purposes,
- low, moderate and severe level of disability with an adjudication being issued by poviast disability assessment teams for pension purposes,
- disability before attaining the age of 16 years (Batóg 2003:17).

A low level of disability refers to people with physical impairment resulting in a significant decrease in capacity to perform work compared to a person with similar occupational qualifications or restriction to fulfill social roles. This disability can be alleviated by technological, assistive aids and appliances or orthopaedic equipment (Act of 27 August 1997: Article 4, paragraph 3).

A **moderate level of disability** refers to people with physical impairment who can perform occupational responsibilities only under the conditions of sheltered work and who require partial or temporary care and assistance from others in order to fulfill their social roles (Rutkowska 2007: 19).

A person with physical impairment who is incapable of work or capable of work under the conditions of sheltered work, requiring permanent, long-term assistance and care from others in order to fulfill his or her social roles, being unable to live an independent existence has a **severe level of disability** (Bieńkowska 2012: 15).

Labor Force Survey Data in 2015 shows that the largest portion of the disabled is made up of people with a moderate disability. People with a severe level of disability account for the smallest proportion (see Table 1).

Table 1. Polish people with adjudicated disability in 2015

| | Low level of disability | Moderate level of disability | Severe level of disability |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 15 and over 15 years of age | 28.4% | 43.8% | 27.8% |
| working-age people | 30.7% | 46.4% | 22.9% |

Source: self-reported data based on Biuro Pełnomocnika Rządu ds. Osób Niepełnosprawnych (2014)[30.10.2016].

The disability adjudication is conducted by a medical examiner of the Social Insurance Institution. According to law, incapacity to work is adjudicated for the period of no more than 5 years. Permanent incapacity to perform occupational duties is granted only to those people for whom there is no chance of recovery from a medical point of view (Work incapacity assessment: SPES, nd.).

Which type of work a disabled person can be engaged in and what types of work he or she should not be appointed to because of his or her health condition, risk to life or effectiveness of tasks to be performed is determined by the disability codes (see Table 2).

Table 1. Disability codes

| Code | Code name | Allowable workplace |
|------|-------------------|--|
| 01U | Mental disability | The ability to perform tasks depends primarily on the level of mental handicap. People mentally handicapped can work anywhere, provided their duties are not too complicated. |
| 02P | Mental illnesses | While choosing a job, one should pay attention to the type and level of disorders. As a rule, permission is not granted to work involving operation of risky machinery, driving vehicles or protection of persons or property. |

| | | |
|------------|--|---|
| 03L | Voice, speech and hearing disorders | Depending on the type of disorders, permission is not granted to work at heights, in rooms with high noise level, work which requires excessive use of vocal cords, or professional driving of vehicles |
| 04O | Ophthalmologic illnesses | Depending on the impairment, one should avoid working at heights, driving vehicles, operating machines and working with weapons. |
| 05R | Motor organs impairments | Persons can perform almost all kinds of office work and some physical jobs which are non-life threatening and not hazardous to health. |
| 06E | Epilepsy | Persons can perform uncomplicated tasks, provided they avoid working with rotating and flashing elements. |
| 07S | Respiratory and cardiovascular system illnesses | Work should not be demanding in terms of physical effort, work rooms should be free of excessive dust, and the person should be able to determine the time and form of the work break |
| 08T | Digestive system illnesses | There are no contraindications to perform any kind of work. Toxic elements should be avoided. |
| 09M | Genitourinary disorders | There are no contraindications as to the workplace. It might be necessary to change workplace ergonomics or to make breaks more flexible. |
| 10N | Neurological disorders | Work permission is issued based on individual conditions. |
| 11I | Other, including the following disorders: endocrine, metabolic, enzymatic disorders, contagious and zoonoses diseases, disfigurement, haematopoietic system diseases | The possibility of performing a job depends on the person's disorder, e.g. people suffering from psoriasis may work everywhere, while people with hematological illnesses should not perform work which involves contact with other people's blood. |
| 12C | Pervasive developmental disorders | Depending on the developmental disorders, people can perform various duties. |

Source: self-reported data based on: Kody niepełnosprawności i ich znaczenie (Disability codes and their meaning) [http://partnerfirm.pl/kody-niepelnosprawnosci-i-ich-znaczenie/?print=pdf\[22.10.2016\]](http://partnerfirm.pl/kody-niepelnosprawnosci-i-ich-znaczenie/?print=pdf[22.10.2016]).

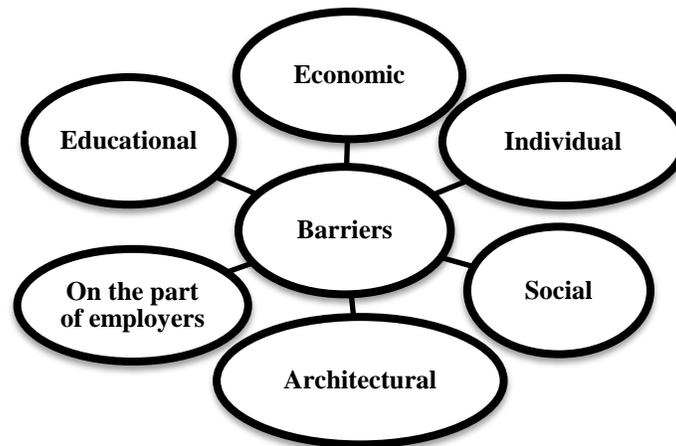
The symbol indicating the cause of disability which is contained in a particular person's disability certificate, as well as the disability level, the benefits and reliefs the person is entitled to all reflect the recognition of the illness as leading to a physical impairment which makes the existence, social functioning or paid work difficult (Garbat 2013: 24).

Barriers to employment of disabled people

Barriers are all those hindrances people with disabilities encounter which limit or make it completely impossible for them to fulfill their career ambitions according to the qualifications and plans they have. The disabled are a specific group of job candidates, for in going through the same recruitment process in the company of their own choice they must overcome a number of inconveniences to which healthy people pay no attention, from going out from home, obtaining

relevant qualifications to facing architectural obstacles. The difficulties the disabled are most likely to encounter are classified within the six basic groups (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Basic barrier groups



Source: self-reported data based on Granosik, Nadolna (2009:228-229).

The individual barriers the disabled face result, as the very name suggests, from the personality of the person having a disability. The degree of impediments depends on the level of self-acceptance and acceptance of one's own situation, belief in one's abilities or the willingness to face challenges. The **social barriers** include, among others: prejudices, stereotypes, no assistance from the surrounding environment, keeping distance, isolation of disabled people or excessive care on the part of the closest people. The **architectural barriers** arise because buildings, pavements, cars, city transport and other facilities are not adjusted to the needs of disabled persons. The **economic barriers**, also known as financial barriers, result from having to pay for medications, rehabilitation equipment or appliances making daily living activities easier. The **educational barriers** emerge when a person has the ability to take up studies in school but for reasons that are beyond his or her control has no such possibility or when such a person is placed in a facility that cannot ensure appropriate education conditions (Granosik, Nadolna 2009: 228-229).

One should bear in mind that people with disabilities have limited employment opportunities, for the choice of work or occupation depends on the adjudicated level of disability. On the other hand, the disabled are thus entitled to other sources of income such as pension and rehabilitation benefits (Poliwczak 2007: 56).

The **barriers on the side of employers** are essentially associated with their unwillingness to employ people with disabilities, lack of knowledge, anxiety and unsuitable back office infrastructures. The impediments on the part of people providing jobs can be divided into eight groups:

- administrative, resulting from having no skill to service co-funding from PFRON [State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled], unclear, ambiguous and unstable law and fear of additional formalities and obligations resulting from the employment of people with disabilities.
- social, which, like general barriers, arise from the employers' stereotypical thinking and fear of having to confront the disabled with the non-disabled employees.
- financial relating to the costs of adapting the work station, labor costs arising from the disabled people entitlements,
- organizational relating to the employer's obligation to make the workplace, organization and type of work suitable for a person with a disability,
- qualification barriers, arising from low or inadequate qualifications of potential disabled employees, as well as the employer's anxiety of their aversion to occupational development,
- information barriers caused by having no knowledge on the subject of stimulation to activity, using their potential, managing their problems and the possibility of external support,
- infrastructural, arise as a result of inadequate medical, transport and rehabilitation infrastructure.
- other, arising from insufficient support of local governments, employment agency or job centers.

There are numerous barriers on the part of the disabled as well as employers which both sides should be aware of and should make all the necessary efforts to eliminate those difficulties. It should be stressed that economic support alone will not alleviate all the problems. What is crucial is to ensure training, continuous cooperation with the disabled, as well as generating impact on the public awareness, implementing diversity management programs which take into account people with disabilities and sharing those programs with the community.

Rights and obligations of employers and the disabled

The entitlements of employers employing persons with disabilities and of the disabled themselves in the workplace are governed by the Act on Occupational Rehabilitation already cited here.

Every employer who employs at least 25 people, counted as full time equivalent, should have the minimum of 6% of disabled people employed. An employer who decides not to hire disabled persons at all, or employers with whom the disabled account for less than 6% of the entire workforce are required to make monthly contributions to the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PFRON), with the contribution amount being the product of 40,65% of the average wage and the number of employees corresponding to the difference between the employment, which would ensure the 6% -disabled people employment rate, and their actual employment. Employers who employ persons with disabilities at the level of at least 6% are exempted from the contributions, pursuant to the provisions of Article 21 paragraphs 2a and 2b (Act of 27 August 1997: Article 21, paragraphs 1, 2).

The privileges granted to employers are to compensate, on the one hand, the higher labor costs linked to the employment of the disabled, while on the other – to encourage including persons with disabilities in the employment process. On account of employing disabled people, an employer has the right to:

- reimbursement of the costs incurred in connection with the adaptation of the facility and workplace, acquisition and authorization of equipment, software for disabled persons, provided that it does not exceed the twenty-time-average salary per work station (Article 21, paragraphs 1, 2),
- have the disabled person's salary co-financed in the amount conditional on the level of disability:
 - PLN 1800 for people with a severe level of disability,
 - PLN 1125– a moderate level of disability,
 - PLN 450– a low level of disability (Article 26a, paragraph 1),

The above amounts increase by PLN 600 for people with adjudicated mental illness, pervasive developmental disorders, epilepsy, mental handicap and for blind people (Article 26a, paragraph 1b),

- reimbursement of costs incurred in connection with employment and training of persons assisting the disabled in their occupational duties (Article 26d),
- reimbursement of costs incurred in connection with making the workstation suitable for the disabled; however, the amount may not exceed the fifteen-time-average salary (Article 26e),
- reimbursement of costs incurred in connection with training persons with disabilities up to 70% , provided the costs do not exceed twice the average salary (Article 41).

Employers running sheltered workshops may seek to obtain additional benefits for having employed disabled persons which encompass, for example, funds, even up to 50% of the interest rate of a loan taken for social and occupational rehabilitation of the disabled. Moreover, those employers whose employment rate is at least 50% may be reimbursed for transport and administrative costs, as well as the costs incurred in connection with building or expanding rooms and workshop facilities, provided that these expenditures were made with the intention to employ people with disabilities (Article 32).

Pursuant to the act, a disabled person should not spend more than eight hours a day at work, maximum 40 hours per week. If the doctor in whose care the disabled person is or the doctor conducting periodic check-ups at the employer's issues the relevant certificate for the disabled person with adjudicated severe or moderate level of disability, work hours should be reduced to seven hours a day and 35 hours a week. In principle, people with disabilities are not supposed to work either overtime or at night unless they are employed as security or the responsible doctor or the one who conducts preventive examination gives such permission (Articles 15, 16). In addition, persons with disabilities are entitled to:

- additional 15 minute-break, which counts as working time and can be used for rest or physical exercise (Article 17),
- leaving work for rehabilitation camp up to 21 working days (this refers to severe and moderate disability) in order to undergo treatment, specialist and physical fitness check-up, as well as to obtain or repair orthopaedic appliances (Article 20),
- additional leave, up to 10 working days per calendar year (this applies to severe and moderate disability) (Article 19).

The above entitlements are to adjust the disabled person's working conditions to the limitations arising from his or her disability. People with disabilities should notify their future

employers about their needs as that will help improve their work. Employers, on the other hand, should implement necessary changes, including adapting the workstation to the needs of a disabled person, provided that these changes do not place an excessive burden on the employer's budget (Struck-Peregończyk 2015:116).

Employment of persons with disabilities vs. diversity

The current attitude towards diversity is no longer confined exclusively to the employment of people of different nationalities, race or gender. It is primarily considered as embracing and including all differences which foster the development of an organization while providing the opportunity to compete on a demanding market (Hasse 2012: 19).

Increasingly more enterprises are deciding to create and implement programs prohibiting discrimination, mobbing in the workplace. The aim of this initiative, apart from the actual change within the organization, is building a positive external image of the enterprise for all its stakeholders. Creating a place where all employees, whatever their differences, understand and accept one another striving for a common goal can provide tangible benefits.

One of the initiatives promoting diversity is The Diversity Charter. This international project signed by over 5000 entities has been functioning since 2004. In Poland, this idea was adopted in 2012, and so far 149 signatories have joined in. This is the number of organizations which officially declare that they are undertaking specific anti-discrimination measures, promoting the diversity idea, which also includes the employment of people with disabilities (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu 2012)).

The Polish population belongs to aging populations. The forecasts of the Central Statistical Office show that this situation will be deteriorating until 2050, since the number of births will decline with the proportion of people at the age of 60 and above growing from 22.9% (2015) to 40.4% (2050). Moreover, the forecasts suggest that life expectancy will progressively increase. Considering, for example, the current pace of life, diet styles or working conditions, we can predict that not only for the vast majority of this group, but also for younger population this will not be a life lived in full health. Therefore, one should make appropriate preparations for the growing problem in that assistance to people, mainly in terms of ensuring care, medical treatment, rehabilitation and workplace adaptation, is provided, as well as offering help for those seeking employment (GUS 2016).

Drawing on the two currently colliding trends: on the one hand – the aging population, which will work longer than previously owing to economic reasons, willingness to further development or changes to the pension regulations, and on the other hand – changes with respect to the attitude towards disability in that other groups are being incorporated in the category of persons with disabilities (blind people, people suffering from cancer, HIV or AIDS), it should be stressed yet once again that the implementation of diversity management programs is a paramount endeavor.

Additionally, given the fact that since 2011 the average time of recruitment expressed in days has increased by 43%, on the average spanning 33 days, while the cost of employment per new employee grew by 42% and stood at PLN 2640 in 2014 (PWC 2015), consideration should be given to how to boost employment amongst those persons with disabilities who want to work, are allowed and capable to do so.

The CSO LFS data show that over the last decade the unemployment rate among the disabled declined from 21,9% to 13%, while the employment rate recorded for this group continues to grow and in 2015 stood at 22,5% (see Table 3).

Table 3. Economic activity of disabled people in working age

| Year | Total (in thous.) | Economically active (in thous.) | | | Economica lly inactive (in thous.) | Economi c activity rate | Employment rate | Unemployment rate |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|----------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | | Total | working | unempl oyed | | | | |
| 2005 | 2386 | 570 | 444 | 125 | 1816 | 23.9 | 18.6 | 21.9 |
| 2010 | 2023 | 521 | 441 | 80 | 1503 | 25.7 | 21.8 | 15.3 |
| 2015 | 1864 | 483 | 419 | 63 | 1381 | 25.9 | 22.5 | 13 |

Source: self-reported data based on: Biuro Pełnomocnika Rządu ds. Osób Niepełnosprawnych (2014)[30.10.2016].

Although the overall number of working disabled people who are in the working age (18-59/64 years of age) is constantly declining, the number of employed persons is growing and in 2015 stood at around 346 thousand (see Table 4). These data show how much is still to be done in terms of employment of people with disabilities, considering the number of persons without a job, despite the fact that employers are more willing to employ the disabled.

Table 4 Working disabled persons in the working age (in thous).

| Year | Total | Employed persons | Self-employed and employers | | Family members providing assistance |
|------|-------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | Total | Employers | |
| 2010 | 441 | 319 | 94 | 11 | 29 |
| 2015 | 419 | 346 | 59 | 10 | 16 |

Source: self-reported data based on: Biuro Pełnomocnika Rządu ds. Osób Niepełnosprawnych(nd.)[30.10.2016].

The increased interest in people with disabilities in reference to the diversity management policy in an organization has been noticed among the signatories of the Charter of Diversity. The employers' awareness of the measures supporting the disabled grew by 36 percentage points compared to 2014. In the year 2016, 80% of the signatories and 44% of other engaged entities declared their interest in persons with disabilities and in taking steps to their benefit. To give an example, the company CEMEX Poland informs its stakeholders that it understands and accepts every employee's diversity, which is the reason why it is promoting an equal-opportunity environment within the field of growth and employment, adjusting the workplace to the disabled employees' needs. The company KPMG, on the other hand, ensures equal treatment in terms of employment and declares that employees can report behaviors which are at variance with the code of ethics adopted by the company (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu 2016).

Within the framework of diversity management programs, organizations take a variety of actions ensuring that the disabled are treated as well as possible (see Table 5). In the first place, they seek to provide the best possible working conditions and equal treatment in terms of access to training, courses, promotion and employee evaluation. Some entities hire training staff capable of using sign language and prepare materials written in Braille. In addition, employers, depending on the level of disability of the person employed, eliminate doorsills which are an obstacle to moving freely, construct lifts inside the building, adapt entrances and toilets, buy programs allowing their tasks to be performed, create internal support programs, each time inform workers about employing a person with disabilities while asking for their support, provide a parking space as near as possible to the entrance to the company and co-finance the purchase of equipment improving the functioning of a particular employee (Giermanowska 2014: 118-215).

Table 5. Examples of actions taken in terms of the employment of people with disabilities

| Company's name | Actions taken |
|---|---|
| Altix | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging workforce in campaigns for the disabled • Participation in the development of a portal for blind people "Tyflosfera", • Employee volunteering program "It's worth knowing", • Equality in terms of employment and access to training, • Suitable materials for every employee, • Flexible work, • Necessary work-aids and accessories |
| Carrefour Polska | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of professional ethics • Co-financing measures aimed at stimulating disabled persons to activity, • A course on disability for managers, • Equality in terms of employment and access to training, • Setting equal goals, • Preparing the staff for the reception of disabled employees, • Training for the disabled. |
| STU Ergo Hestia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Integralia" foundation for occupational integration of the disabled, • Volunteer Club running workshops for the disabled, • Special parking spaces located near to the entrance, • Toilets for disabled persons, • Desks adjusted to the person's height, • Co-funding hearing aids, • Equality in terms of employment and access to training. |
| Hutchinson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical behavior rules, • Diversity information days, • A team appointed to represent persons with disabilities, • Reorganization of production lines, adapting the workplace to people with disabilities, • Training for managers who are to work with the disabled, • Equality in terms of employment, access to training, evaluation (different only for the interpretation of the mobility rate) and goals that are being set. |
| Laboratorium Kosmetyczne Dr Irena Eris | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special handrails, ergonomic swivel chairs, lifting equipment used for packing cardboard boxes, ramps and lifts, • Special communication areas for people using sign language, • All machines used in the company have light signaling devices, • Sign language interpreter employed in the company, • There is a doctor's office and a nurse on the company's premises, • Equal access to training, employment. |
| Sodexo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with foundations, associations working for the benefit of the disabled, • Internal measures preparing for the employment and work with persons with disabilities, • Job coach for persons with intellectual disabilities for the first six months of work, • Equality in terms of access to training, promotion, • Team building outings |

Source: self-reported data based on Giermanowska (2014: 118-188).

The measures above are only some of those taken by the organizations to benefit persons with disabilities. One should bear in mind that the choice of forms of support and steps taken within

the framework of diversity management programs depends on the specificity of the company's operations, its financial possibilities, and first of all, on the type of disability of the employed workers. Nevertheless, employers must formulate the same goals, prepare the same system of motivation, awards and evaluation for all subordinates. Actions taken to the benefit of one group should not lead to the discrimination of the other group.

Conclusion

The programs formulated in an organization which take into account all employees, regardless of the more or less visible differences between them, go beyond the obvious improvement of cooperation skills, whatever their style of work, ways of communication or different experience. The programs allow leaders and managers to build a team which drives itself to action. Diverse employees are capable of devising creative solutions because of their such diverse perceptions of tasks they are faced with, which a uniform team might overlook (Hasse 2012: 28-29).

Allowing persons with disabilities to join the workforce of a particular company and including them in diversity management programs yield numerous benefits. Besides acquiring the financial assistance mentioned earlier, employers win employees who equal their non-disabled colleagues in terms of work safety, attendance and task performance. Thanks to advanced technology, a disabled person is capable of solving every problem. Further to that, in overcoming the difficulties of everyday living, the disabled are more enduring, resilient to failure or stressful situations. Moreover, they are characterized by loyalty, commitment and enthusiasm for their job. Naturally, employers must be aware that people with disabilities are not capable of doing all tasks, they need to rest more frequently and may be absent for health reasons (Giermanowska 2014: 118-215). Choosing to employ a disabled person, to create suitable working conditions and including his or her in diversity management program, on the one hand, enhances the company's image, and on the other – may contribute to winning a competitive advantage, and certainly allowing a better insight into the potential of disabled persons, while enabling them to grow and strive for success. As seen above, the benefits arising from including the disabled in the employment process and diversity management programs are immense and therefore the author of the paper hopes to conduct empirical studies in the future which would focus on persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Literature on the subject, articles, good practices and case studies devoted to persons with disabilities illustrate how to face up to the challenges, helping employers to resolve doubts while identify ingready-made solutions. It is worth taking advantage of the good practices so as to enjoy the positive effects coming from taking appropriate actions.

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