

8 ways to make the process of hiring inclusive for disabled people

In traditional hiring processes, the ways that businesses conduct interview can often be very exclusive and act as a barrier of the disabled or even for those that are just a little bit different to the typical candidate for interview. There is a massive pool of disabled Americans who are looking for work and just cannot seem to get past this first interview stage for this very reason.

If you are in control of or have input into your business' hiring processes, there is actually a lot you can do to open up the pool of opportunity to those less abled. If you are trying to conduct inclusive interviewing; it is much less about trying to tailor your interview to the specific disability of the person you are interviewing, and more about how you can open up the processes as a whole to level the playing field.

Understand your own bias

Unfortunately, there has always been an air of ablism and discrimination in our society against disabled people, and even people with the best of intentions

sometimes harbour fear or apprehension when interviewing someone with a disability. As Holly Dinkus, a business writer at [1day2write](#) and [Britstudent](#), commented, “It is important to not only understand your own bias before going into an interview with a disabled candidate, but also to understand the bias of your company as a whole and of the other people who work in it.” A lot of the times, you may find that yourself or other people in your business harbour unconscious bias. It is human nature if you have had limited interactions with disabled people, and it is not your fault; but it is up to you how you handle it.

Understand things may be different

As Jessica Ridley, a recruitment blogger at [Originwritings](#) and [Write My X](#), noted, “Through training and experience, we have learned what to expect from a stereotypically ‘good’ candidate, and what we consider ‘red flags’ in an interview. We often look for consistent eye contact, well flowing conversation, and a solid handshake upon meeting.” However, people with disabilities, especially those with learning difficulties, struggle with this normal ‘people skills’. Without understanding this, it may immediately make them a ‘no’ in your books, which is one reason why people with disabilities struggle to even get in the door. Try your best to gauge the suitability of the candidate for the specific role they are interviewing for, rather than these stereotypical ‘good interviewing skills’.

Set your candidate up for success

The first thing you need to do is ensure the environment in which you are interviewing your candidate is suitable for the interview. The last thing you want is to put your candidate in an environment or situation where they are going to struggle. If you know the disability of the person you will be interviewing, make sure the environment you are in does not trigger them or make them uncomfortable.

Adjust interview questions

It is important to understand who you are interviewing, and which questions will help you understand them the best. Disabled people can often be thrown off and put at a disadvantage by abstract questions, so it might be a better idea to ask more literal questions. Try not to ask them about their disability but ask them how they would work through problems instead.

Follow their lead (when it comes to referencing)

Some people do not like to be referred to as their disability, and some people do not mind. Follow their lead! Often, they will refer to themselves as the way they want you to refer to them. Do not assume correctness, find out from the way they speak.

Think about alternative interview types

Sometimes, sit down interviews do not work for everyone; and as aforementioned, they can be very excluding for disabled people. There are some other interview types. You can try a tour of the 'office', a 'working interview', project completion, or even an assessment centre.

Understand silence

Often, people with ASD and ADHD are visual learners. Visual learners and people with learning disabilities usually take longer to respond to questions and this can lead to silence. Silence is something that is steered away from in most interviews. When interviewing someone with a disability, resist the urge to try and fill the silence.

Just be you

Although it is important to tailor parts of your interviewing style to the person you are interviewing if they have a disability, it is crucial to keep the content of the process relatively the same. Although making the process inclusive is important, the easiest way to make someone comfortable is to simply be comfortable yourself.

Using inclusive interviewing processes will not only make your company more accessible to people with disabilities, but it will also actually open your business up to a wider pool of talent when it comes to employing. Hopefully, this article will allow you to open up your business by making your hiring processes more inclusive.

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