

# The *Positive* Interviewing Strategy:

*Increase Success in Identifying High Potential Jobseekers with Disabilities*



# INTRODUCTION

**The process** of interviewing jobseekers has a simple goal: Identify the jobseeker with the highest potential for success. The interviewer's objective is to engage each candidate in such a way that he or she can accurately judge the jobseeker's likelihood of success in both the job and within organization. The cost of not getting this right? Substantial. Poor hiring decisions lead to poor performance, lower productivity, higher risk and ultimately, higher turnover. Employee turnover costs on average 21% of the separated employees' annual wage. So, for decision makers, at all levels of an organization, positive interviewing skills should be a priority.

Interviewing jobseekers with disabilities can present some unique challenges to interviewers in determining a candidate's potential for success since certain disabilities can affect a jobseeker's communication style and communication ability.

## **Business Critical Skill**

On March 24, 2014, the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contractor Compliance (OFCCP) implemented updated regulations that will require all federal contractors and their subcontractors to achieve a hiring goal of 7% of the company's workforce to be employees with disabilities. OFCCP furthers this goal by indicating that each job group, in each location should reflect 7% of total employees with disabilities. There are approximately 50,000 prime federal contractors with between 200,000-250,000 covered establishments (locations) that are subject to the Section 503 affirmative action regulations.

# POSITIVE INTERVIEWING STRATEGY

The Positive Interviewing Strategy can help interviewers to identify and reduce communication barriers and increase the chance of successfully engaging jobseekers with disabilities in the interview process. There are three key components to successfully engaging with and interviewing jobseekers with a disability.



## 3 Components for Conducting a Positive Interview in the Workplace:

1	<b>S</b> TRUCTURE the Interview
2	<b>U</b> SE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION
3	<b>M</b> INIMIZE Sensory Stimulation

*Maximize Interview Success*

## 1

# S

## STRUCTURE

### THE INTERVIEW

**Structure** the interview and communicate this structure up front to the jobseeker.

The following is a list of structural needs:

- ❑ Let the candidate know how many people will be participating in the interview (one on one, multiple interviewers, interview panel)
- ❑ Provide interview questions beforehand if needed and be flexible
- ❑ Understand the length of the interview and communicate this to the candidate. Timing is everything.
- ❑ Ask the jobseeker if any supports, adaptations or accommodations are needed
- ❑ Use a “hands-on” approach, in the actual environment (walking interviews)
- ❑ If the time is extensive, break the interview down into smaller intervals (work, break routine)
- ❑ Use visual aids

## 2

# UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS

**Communication** in an interview is inherently “social.” It requires sending — and receiving — information. And that information must be translated and interpreted on both ends by the interviewer and the jobseeker.

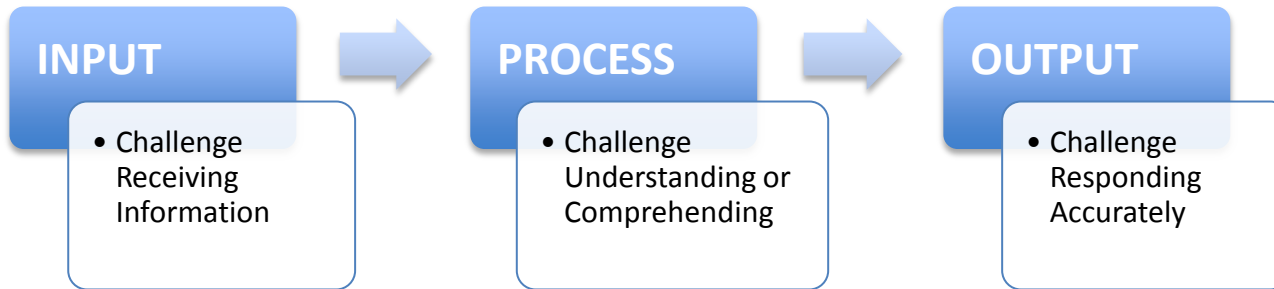


The social communication process of each interview is unique based on the chemistry between each party. Disability Solutions utilizes a unique methodology that simplifies and helps business best understand the different needs of candidates with varying disabilities during the interview stage.

# 2

# UNDERSTAND

# THE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS



INPUT CHALLENGE DISABILITIES	PROCESS CHALLENGE DISABILITIES	OUTPUT CHALLENGE DISABILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Disability</li> <li>• Deaf/Hard of Hearing</li> <li>• Tactile Sensory Impairment</li> <li>• Blind/Visual Impairment</li> <li>• Seizure Disorder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Disability</li> <li>• Cerebral Palsy</li> <li>• Autism</li> <li>• Traumatic Brain Injury</li> <li>• Intellectual Disability</li> <li>• Emotional Disturbance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Disability</li> <li>• Deaf/Hard of Hearing</li> <li>• Cerebral Palsy</li> <li>• Autism</li> <li>• Traumatic Brain Injury</li> <li>• Speech and Language</li> </ul>

### Social Communication Tips and Supports

- ❑ Use normal tone of voice
- ❑ Speak clearly and keep questions and directions brief
- ❑ Keep questions concrete and straightforward
- ❑ Speak directly to the candidate
- ❑ Use interpreters when needed
- ❑ Use as many visual aids when possible to assist the process

## 3

**The sensory** component is particularly important when interviewing people with autism. Research has proven that environmental factors have a direct correlation on sensory processing. This affects how the candidate perceives the interview format and how they process information. People are over and/or under stimulated differently due to certain environmental factors.

# MINIMIZE SENSORY STIMULATION

## Supports that can be best utilized to assist in sensory stimulation:

- Minimize distractions and/or interruptions
- Lessen the use of body language
- Pay attention to the setup of the interview environment.
  - Does it meet the needs of the person? (limit clutter, clear path for people with physical disabilities)
  - Is lighting adequate or too intense (florescent lights can cause sensory overload)
- Number of people present
- Use an appropriate tone of voice
  - Don't raise your volume
  - Speak clearly to be understood
- Use visuals to support and lessen the over use of verbal demand Use visuals to heighten greater understanding (actual product, the work environment, sample work tasks, etc.)

# A WORD on Physical Disabilities

**It** is very common for people without a disability to assume a person with a physical disability also has a cognitive disability. This is sometimes true, but not in most cases. *You should speak to a person with a physical disability without raising your voice, invading their personal space, not using empathetic touching, extensive hand movements, or talking to them as though they have a cognitive impairment.* If a person with a physical disability does have a cognitive impairment you can then apply the appropriate adaptations as needed.



# The Disability Solutions Training Advantage

**Disability Solutions** is the consulting service of Ability Beyond focused on helping corporations tap new channels for qualified talent, manage culture change, leverage federal and state hiring incentives, respond to a changing regulatory environment, and strengthen their workforce through diversity. We deliver custom solutions in recruiting, talent management, compliance and training



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Julie's experience in public and private organizations, and her work in compliance vendor environments gives her a unique perspective on the jobseeker to employee lifecycle. She uses this experience to focus on mapping and identifying touch points, barriers, and gaps in the talent engagement process, including within Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and RPO vendor infrastructure.



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Chris is a disability outreach and inclusion consultant who has consulted on both local and national disability and diversity initiatives. His clients have included OfficeMax, Walgreens, Electronic Arts, TJ Maxx and Rising Tide. Christopher has designed national training programs to enhance the talent life cycle and create depth within hiring initiatives.

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