

Costs and Benefits of Workplace Accommodations: Findings from Company Case Studies

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Company-Based Disability Case Studies

- Department of Labor's Office of Disability and Employment Policy project:
 - Create a standard methodology for conducting & benchmarking case studies of inclusive employment
 - Establish benchmarks by which inclusive employment may be evaluated, focusing on corporate culture
 - Also asked about workplace accommodations (what, process, cost / benefits)

Research Consortium

- Burton Blatt Institute, Syracuse Univ. (lead)
- Program for Disability Research, Rutgers Univ.
- Employment & Disability Institute, Cornell Univ.
- Work RERC, Georgia Tech.
- International Center for Disability Info. (JAN), West Virginia Univ.
- Humans Future Inc.



Case Study Methodology

- Online survey (n=6053)
- Focus groups (n=79)
- Interviews (n=49)
- Review of company policies / procedures
- Tested method (& collected benchmark data) from 8 companies (2 – interviews/focus groups only), with 38 to 38,000 employees



What Accommodations Were Requested?



Accommodation Requests?

Employees with Requests for Accommodations (%)

	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3	Company 4	Company 5	Company 6
w/ disability	40	71	46	63	43	41

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w/o disability	42	25	44	26	30	24

Types of Accommodation Requests (overall median % requests)

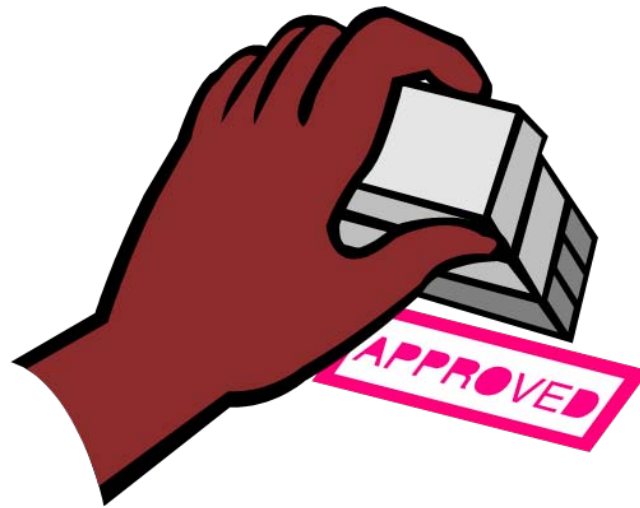
Most Common

- Change in work schedule (42%)
- Mod. indiv. work environ. (38%)
- New computer or IT (26%)
- Work from home (35%)
- Mod. to computer or IT (16%)
- New or different type of other equipment (10%)
- Move to another location (9%)
- Physical change to site (9%)
- Position reassignment (8%)
- Job restructuring (10%)

Least Common

- Education of coworkers (7%)
- Mod. of other equip. (5%)
- Changes in supervision (7%)
- Transportation accomm. (7%)
- Changes in work policy (5%)
- Written job instructions (4%)
- Alt. formats or more time (3%)
- Mod. in exam or training approaches or materials (3%)
- Interpreter, reader, job coach, service animal, or personal assistance (1%)

And Then What Happened?



Most Common Denial Reasons for Types of Accommodation Requests

Request	Denial Reason	% Denied
Schedule changes	Not necessary	3
Mod. indiv. workstation	Not necessary / Employee burden	4 / 4
New computer / IT	Too expensive	1
Work from home	Not necessary	4
Modify computer / IT	Too expensive	4
New / different equipment	Not necessary / Organiz. burden	5 / 5
Move location	Not necessary / Employee burden	6 / 5
Physical changes to site	Too expensive / Not necessary	10 / 7
Position reassignment	Not necessary / Organiz. burden	3 / 3
Job restructuring	Not necessary / Organiz. burden	7 / 7

What Do Accommodations Cost?
How Does This Compare to the Benefits?



Costs of Accommodations as Reported by Employee

Comp.	Initial one-time costs (% of accommodations)						
	\$0	\$1-100	\$101-500	\$501-1000	\$1001-5000	Over \$5000	Not sure
1	39.1	8.7	21.7	8.7	4.3	4.3	13.0
2	33.3	20.8	20.8	4.2	8.3	0	12.5
3	47.8	21.7	4.3	8.7	8.7	0	8.7
4	41	9	18	10	6	2	16
5	10.0	50.0	30.0	10.0	0	0	0
6	61.5	23.1	0	0	0	0	15.4
Median across companies	40.1	21.3	19.4	8.7	5.2	0	

Costs of Accommodations as Reported by Employee

Comp.	Annual on-going costs (% of accommodations)						
	\$0	\$1-100	\$101-500	\$501-1000	\$1001-5000	Over \$5000	Not sure
1	68.2	0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	13.6
2	83.3	0	8.3	0	0	0	8.3
3	80.0	5	0	0	0	5	10
4	65	2	3	3	3	5	19
5	88.9	11.1	0	0	0	0	0
6	75.0	12.5	0	0	0	0	12.5
Median across companies	77.5	3.5	1.5	0	0	2.3	

Perceptions of Accommodation Benefits

- Employees rated a list of 10 potential benefits on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely)
- Top benefits (averaging 4 = Very much):
 - Improved employee's morale / job satisfaction
 - Made it possible for the employee to work here
 - Decreased employee's stress at work
 - Made it more likely employee will stay here
 - Improved productivity (rating 3.54)

Perceptions of Accommodation Benefits

- Medium benefit (averaging 3 = Somewhat)
 - Improved workplace safety
 - Improved ability to acquire training & new skills
 - Improved attendance or hours of work
- Lowest benefit (averaging 2 = A little bit):
 - Improved employee's interactions with coworkers
 - Enabled promotion of a qualified employee

Estimated Cost vs. Benefits of Accommodations (Medians within each cost range)

\$ Value of Benefits	Initial Cost of Accommodations					
	\$0	\$1-100	\$101-500	\$501-1000	\$1001-5000	Over \$5000
\$0	XXXXXX			X	Cost is More than Benefit	
\$1-100		XXXX				
\$101-500	Cost is Less than Benefit		XX	X	X	
\$501-1000			XX	XX		
\$1001-5000				X	X	XX
Over \$5000		X	X		X	XXXX

Summary

- ANY employee (with or without a disability) may have an accommodation need
- Only about half of the employees with disabilities survey had made an accommodation request
- The most frequently used accommodations are a mix of technology-based (e.g., workstation) and non-technology (e.g., schedule) solutions
- Cost is often cited as a reason for denying accommodations, but more are denied because they are “not necessary”

Summary

- Accommodation costs range from \$0 to over \$5000, but the majority are under \$500
- Highest rated benefits were related to improved job satisfaction, decreased stress, and making it more likely that the employee will stay at the company
- In general, employees report accommodation benefits outweigh or equal costs
- BBI is conducting a project as part of the Work RERC to characterize costs/benefits and measure them over time

Corporate Culture....

- Full study contains much more information about how company policies and managerial behaviors can help create a climate of support for disability accommodations (but not released quite yet....)

Thank you

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