

Recruiters report companies still 'fearful' of hiring disabled people

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95% of recruiters say that companies are 'fearful' or 'unsure' about hiring disabled candidates according to a new industry survey. The findings underline the need to continue raising awareness and add further impetus to the ongoing campaigning work of the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI) (<http://www.ridiawards.com>).

The survey of over 100 members of recruitment industry trade body, the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) (<http://www.rec.uk.com>), took stock of client companies' attitudes to hiring disabled candidates. While 28% reported that there had been some progress with clients more open to hiring to people with disabilities, employers remain unsure about how to do this, and the majority of recruiters (67%) said that companies remain 'fearful' of hiring disabled people. 2% reported that they believe job opportunities have actually worsened for disabled people.

Just 3% of respondents said that companies are actively asking for more diverse candidates.

Commenting on the findings, Kate Headley, Chair of the Judging Panel at the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative Awards (RIDI) (<http://www.ridiawards.com>) & Development Director at the Clear Company (<http://www.theclearcompany.co.uk>) said:

"While it's encouraging that there has been a marginal increase in companies requesting more diverse candidate shortlists, it is clear that there remains a lack of awareness and understanding around disability throughout the business community."

"The fact is that despite their best intentions, many employers, recruiters and HR professionals simply don't know where to begin when it comes to becoming more inclusive to disabled talent – or are just afraid of getting it 'wrong'."

"One thing that these statistics acutely demonstrate is that if employers are considering actively tapping into more diverse talent pools, they are not sharing their aspirations with their recruitment suppliers. However, in order to help close the disability employment gap, employers must collaborate with their HR departments, their recruitment supply chain and third party organisations to determine how to best source, engage with and retain disabled talent."

"By sharing best practice case studies the business community can gain the collective confidence to increase inclusion exponentially. Stories of previous RIDI Award winners show that you don't necessarily have to make monumental changes to have a huge impact on the prospects of disabled jobseekers."

Tom Hadley, RIDI Executive Board Member and Director of Policy & Professional Services at the REC, commented;

"Although some progress has been made in regards to placing people with disabilities, it is clear that

there is a huge amount left to do. It is also clear that recruiters can play a major role by working with their clients to make change happen.”

“The feedback from REC members is that more needs to be done to raise awareness amongst businesses - including SMEs with no HR department - of how to get additional support and the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. As attitudes continue to evolve, recruiters with a genuine commitment to driving inclusive recruitment can gain a competitive advantage. As a result, opportunities to showcase good practice will become increasingly important.”

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Carly Smith

BlueSky PR

T: +44 (0)1582 790 708

M: +44 (0)7951 634 792

E: carly@bluesky-pr.com

W: www.bluesky-pr.com (<http://www.bluesky-pr.com>)