



Chicagoland Business Leadership Network Newsletter

March, 2009

“Hiring people with disabilities is not an act of charity, it’s good for business.”
Kevin Bradley, Director of Inclusion and Diversity, McDonald’s USA

disabilityworks ▶



The Latest at CBLN



Congratulations for surviving the coldest Chicago winter in decades! I think that it’s safe to speak on behalf of all members and say that we **all** are about ready for that spring thaw. Despite the cold, the CBLN is heating up with a plethora of trainings and planning for the future direction of CBLN.

Following the February Quarterly meeting, the newly created volunteer **Leadership Group** conducted its first meeting and discussed numerous ideas for 2009. Chief among the topics discussed was permitting more time for a **member open forum** during the meetings,

and prioritizing CBLN’s **educational offerings**. We reviewed the suggested topics gathered at the most recent meeting and refined them so that I have a starting point to make them happen. Among the presentation options that piqued the most interest:

1. **“Everything You Wanted to Know About Disabilities But Were Afraid to Ask”** We’ve presented it in the past, but we’ve had many new members join our ranks (including myself) and even some old faces who could probably benefit from pulling it out from the moth balls. This is an interactive workshop with facilitators.
2. **“Marketing to People with Disabilities”**: Assemble a panel of business leaders who have realized a boost to their bottom line via tailoring products and services to customers with disabilities and successfully marketing their offerings. Selling to people with disabilities is a viable revenue stream!
3. **“Recruiting Veterans with Disabilities”**: There is a growing interest in the corporate world to actively recruit our recently wounded service men and women. However, for a variety of reasons, it has proven difficult to find qualified candidates. Assembling a panel of “experts” (employer successfully implementing recruiting program, specialty recruiter, VA or other government official) to illuminate on the topic is being explored

If you have a suggestion of someone who is knowledgeable about the topics listed above and might be interested in participating, please let me know. The Leadership Group is continually seeking any suggestions for topics or speakers to better meet the needs of our membership.

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Special points of interest:

- CBLN Online Forum Change of Address
- Complimentary Benchmark Report
- CBLN Training dates—Mark your calendars!

Trainings: Quarterly Meetings & Web-Based

Quarterly Meeting

Thank you to Christine Youngberg and The Northern Trust Company for hosting our first quarterly meeting of 2009 on February 4th. **Deloitte** will host this year's second Quarterly Meeting on May 20th, 2009.

Alan Goldstein, Senior Attorney for Equip for Equality will present on the topic: **Reasonable Accommodations Under the ADA**: With the ADA Amendments Act becoming law, representatives for both management and employees agree that an employer's duty to provide reasonable accommodations will now become more important than ever. This workshop will provide legal and practical information for human resource personnel to help them understand the obligations and limits of the reasonable accommodation process. Issues covered will include:

- What constitutes a request for a reasonable accommodation?
- How should an employer respond to a reasonable accommodation request?
- What are some best practices in the area of reasonable accommodation?

- Samples of reasonable accommodations.
- What are the limits for providing reasonable accommodations?
- Resources for investigating potential reasonable accommodations.

The training is generously hosted by Carrie Grady, Kristine Klemm and the team at 111 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606 15th floor from 11 a.m.—1 p.m. Lunch will be provided, and photo i.d.s are required for building security. Please register with me at by Monday May 18th.

Web-Based Trainings (CEUs available)

Just a reminder to continue to check the **Events Calendar** on the CBLN website for our upcoming DBTAC Webinars and Audio Conferences **hosted at the Chamber**. The remaining dates are as follows: **3/17, 4/24, 4/28, 5/19, 6/16, 6/30, 7/21, 8/18, 9/15, 9/22**. Please check the website for descriptions and details: <http://www.disabilityworks.org/default.asp?contentID=86>

By the Numbers:

*Percentage of People
in the Workforce with
Disabilities (PWWD):*
23.1%

*Unemployment Rate
of PWWD: 13.2% vs.*
8.3% *workers without
a disability*



CBLN Members participate in a DBTAC webinar: FMLA and the ADA, at the Chicagoland Chamber on January 13th, 2009

ODEP: Business Case for Hiring People with Disabilities, rev.

New for 2009, the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy has released its revised Business Case for Hiring People with Disabilities, including returning **disabled veterans**: a powerful tool in the campaign to persuade upper management to actively recruit and accommodate employees with disabilities, the fastest growing segment in the labor force. ODEP's website (www.earnworks.com/BusinessCase/index.asp) includes video clips, research and anecdotal information *from businesses and industry leaders* on how hiring people with disabilities improves an organization's bottom line across six themes:

- **Return on Investment:** Improve the business bottom line by turning social issues into business opportunities: increase revenues, reduce costs, and enhance shareholder value.
- **Human Capital :** Mine the wealth of diverse talent critical to maintaining a competitive advantage: expanded candidate pool, high retention rates, and increased productivity
- **Innovation:** Innovative solutions to diverse issues by employees with disabilities whose unique experiences contribute to workplace, product and service innovation.
- **Marketing:** Increase opportunities to gain and grow a loyal customer base of a trillion dollar market segment of persons with disabilities, their families and associates.
- **Diversity:** Expand your diversity dividend by creating a more diverse workplace and meeting the needs of a diverse marketplace.
- **Social Responsibility:** Increase value in the marketplace and workplace by employing persons with disabilities and thereby improving the quality of life for workers, their families, community and society and in return.

CBLN

Volunteer

Corner:

Requests, Reminders, & Solicitations

CBLN Online—Update!

I have recently changed the CBLN Online Forum hosting to Google Groups. If you would like to join the others who have already signed up for the CBLN discussion online, please email me a request to join at: chicagolandbln@gmail.com.

CBLN Toolkit Overhaul

I have begun the process of overhauling the CBLN Toolkit for employers (the basics of hiring, accommodating, retaining employees with disabilities and marketing to them).

- I am seeking employers that are willing to share their **employment or marketing success stories**. Confidentiality will be observed, so identifying details should be omitted when submitting your story.
- What would you like to see in the toolkit for when you are seeking a quick reference?

CBLN Volunteer Leadership Committee

Weigh in on CBLN goals and educational priorities! Join Deb Russell (Walgreens), Kevin Bradley (McDonalds), Stuart Early (Banana Republic), Sheryl von Westernhagen (Office Max), Christine Youngberg (Northern Trust), Robye Smith (Harris Bank), Millie Yvonne Brown (Boeing), and Melissa Reishus (IBM) on the Leadership Committee— meetings from the comfort of your office via conference call. Contact Selima to get involved.

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Disabilities at Work

I welcome contributions to the newsletter— success stories, innovative solutions, editorials, you name it! The newsletter is published on the 15th of every other month. I look forward to hearing from each of you and seeing you at an upcoming training!

Selima Ani
M.D.C.B.L.N.

Mission

The CBLN mission is to allow employers to understand and benefit from people with disabilities in both the labor and consumer markets.

We are a business-to-business consortium dedicated to helping businesses learn from each other how disability can enhance diversity initiatives.

Vision

Our vision is to become Chicagoland's number one resource for businesses that want to benefit from hiring people with disabilities.

Values

In pursuit of our mission and vision, we have identified four core organizational values. As such, all of our activities will be: ethical, business-oriented, educational and place an importance on open, honest communication.

Provide a forum, model and structure for employers to share experience regarding employing people with disabilities.

Keeping Up with the CBLN Joneses Workplace Flexibility: A Low Cost Employee Accommodation Assess Your Business Today

We want to make you aware that the Employer Questionnaire from the *Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility* will be online until April 6 at www.whenworkworks.org. CBLN is proud that four of its members have been Sloan Award winners in past years. Ernst & Young and KPMG hold records for being winners for three consecutive years. Others winners have been Association Forum of Chicagoland and Deloitte. In 2008, Chicagoland had 18 Sloan winners and five honorable mentions. We hope to see more CBLN members as 2009 Sloan Award winners and more Sloan winners as CBLN members.

Flexible practices are important for all employees and especially in accommodating people with disabilities. Even if you are not aiming to be a flexibility award winner, the on-line questionnaire is a tool to help companies assess their use of flexible work and career

practices. There are about 65 questions on flex topics related to work arrangements, degree of employee control, enabling life transitions, supervisory training and supportive culture.

Please contact Peggy Luce, at 312-494-6745 or pluce@chicagolandchamber.org for samples of the Employer Questionnaire and Benchmark report.

TECHWORKS Initiative

Employers interested in sponsoring technologically savvy summer interns with disabilities (high school—masters level students), The **Tech-Works Initiative** is for you! Visit <http://www.chicagotechworks.org/> for details. For those of you not yet hiring person with disabilities, this a great way to get your feet wet!