

## **New Program Helps Ontario Business Connect with the Right Talent**

*The Discover Ability Network will showcase the business advantages of employing persons with disabilities*

**TORONTO: September 14, 2017** - Today, the Honourable David Onley, Special Advisor to the Government of Ontario's Minister Responsible for Accessibility, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (The OCC) and the *Discover Ability Network* partners launched a new program and online portal that will connect persons with disabilities seeking employment directly with Ontario businesses looking to meet their talent requirements.

The portal is a key feature of *Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities*, a comprehensive plan focused on connecting more people with disabilities to rewarding jobs and more employers to new talent to help grow their businesses.

Funded by the Government of Ontario and powered by Magnet, a data-rich, job-matching technology platform, the *Discover Ability Network* showcases the business advantages of employing persons with disabilities and provides a roadmap for businesses to hire persons with disabilities. Companies can also sign up, register and begin connecting to and recruiting talent.

"Employers are finding it more and more difficult to fill positions with the right talent, yet people with disabilities are an untapped resource with skill sets many businesses need," said Richard Koroscil, Interim President and CEO of the OCC. "Business will see improvements in productivity, increased engagement with employees, less turnover and reduced costs to training when hiring employees with disabilities."

The Honourable David Onley, Special Advisor to the Minister Responsible for Accessibility, joined *Discover Ability Network* Partners, including the OCC, at the DMZ, Canada's top university business incubator at Ryerson University, to officially launch the new web portal and to discuss the benefits for businesses when hiring persons with disabilities.

"Today's successful companies build diversity into all aspects of their workplace. This innovative online platform will help increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities," said the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Accessibility. "One of the pillars of *Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities* is focused on supporting and encouraging employers as accessibility champions and partners. As a key element of the strategy, I'm thrilled this platform is launching to engage and educate employers on a valuable talent pool."

The web portal, found at [www.discoverability.network](http://www.discoverability.network), includes the following six-step guide on how businesses can hire persons with disabilities:

1. Learn about accommodation needs: When in doubt, businesses should ask what people need to be successful. It can be simpler than you think. People with disabilities know what tools and accommodations they need to benefit your company.
2. Find talent: There are a lot of people with disabilities ready and willing to work. Businesses can let people with disabilities know they are hiring through inclusive jobs postings and using platforms like Magnet's for free and convenient online matching tool.
3. Interview and hire: Businesses should select the candidate with the ability to do the job by holding inclusive interviews and job carving.
4. Onboarding: Businesses should confirm with a new hire any accommodations needed, have each new employee complete an individual accommodation plan (IAP) and pair the new hire with a current employee to make the transition easier.

5. Accommodations: Businesses must be willing to modify the work environment and job for a new hire with a disability.
6. Promote your success: Share your story when you get it right. Your customers will show their appreciation.

There are real, proven advantages to employing people with disabilities. Businesses can benefit from:

- Increasing the size of its skilled labour pool;
- Reducing costs associated with turnover, training and safety;
- Improving the engagement of all your employees;
- Harnessing the value of innovative processes and new perspectives; and
- Attracting an underserved consumer market worth \$55 billion per year in Canada.

In a recent survey conducted by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 30 per cent of employers indicated that they could not find the talent they needed. Filling a job position with the appropriate talent is essential for employers. Bridging this divide is essential to help businesses meet the talent requirements.

The *Discover Ability Network* will be hosting webinars and educational events around the province in the coming months to help businesses better understand the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

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For more information about the *Discover Ability Network*, please visit [www.discoverability.network](http://www.discoverability.network)

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