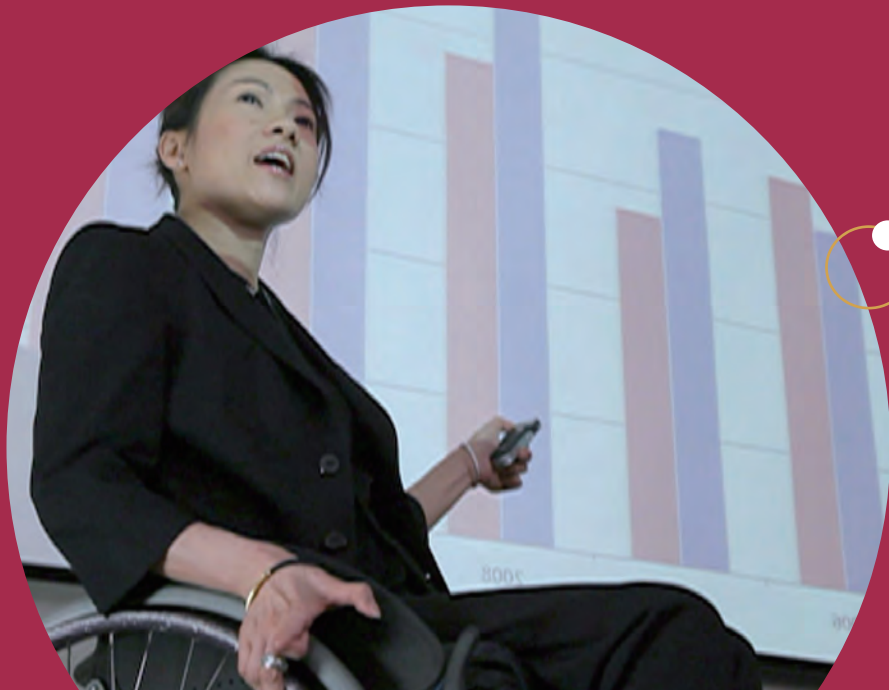


Towards Disability Confidence

A Resource Guide for Employers
in Hong Kong and Singapore



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About Community Business

Community Business is a unique membership based non profit organisation whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to improve their positive impact on people and communities. Community Business provides training, facilitation and advice to some of the world's leading companies in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its major areas of focus include corporate community investment, diversity and inclusion and work-life balance. Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong, Community Business currently works with a number of organisations, small, medium and large, committed to CSR. For more information, visit www.communitybusiness.org

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Community Business also thanks all the companies who agreed to be featured in this publication for sharing their best practice in terms of policies and programmes for people with disabilities. These include both member and non-member companies of Community Business.

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY COMMUNITY BUSINESS	2
FOREWORD BY LEAD SPONSOR, AMERICAN EXPRESS	3
AUTHORS' NOTE	4
Terminology	4
Online Toolkit	4
SECTION 1: ADDRESSING DISABILITY - A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE	5
A Broader Perspective of Disability	6
Beyond Legal Compliance	7
'Disability Confidence'	7
SECTION 2: THE LOCAL CONTEXT IN HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE	9
Defining Disability	10
The Cultural Context	11
The Legal Context	13
Government Measures	14
Key Challenges for People with Disabilities	17
SECTION 3: TOWARDS DISABILITY CONFIDENCE - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS	21
1. Take a Strategic Approach	22
2. Change Organisational Culture and Behaviour	27
3. Realise the Potential of Disabled Employees	30
4. Value Disabled Customers	35
Assessing Disability Confidence: A Senior Leader's Strategic Checklist	37
CONCLUDING REMARKS	38
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: Disability Advisory Group	39
Appendix 2: Disability Resources	42
REFERENCES	46

FOREWORD BY COMMUNITY BUSINESS

As an organisation focused on corporate social responsibility, Community Business believes that much needs to be done to overcome the social exclusion of the most disadvantaged in our society and that companies have a key role to play. People with disabilities are a key target group in this respect - often disabled not so much by the impairments themselves but by society's reaction and treatment of them. We are delighted, that with lead sponsorship from American Express, we have had the opportunity to explore the subject of disability and examine its relevance to the corporate sector in Hong Kong and Singapore.

There is an ethical case for companies to play a part in ensuring that those with disabilities are not excluded from participating in our society. However there is a growing business case too that needs to be more widely understood and articulated. Fuelled by factors such as the ageing population and growing awareness of different types of learning difficulties and special needs, disability affects significant numbers of the general population in Hong Kong and Singapore as elsewhere in the world. For the corporate sector in this region, 'this fastest growing minority' crucially represents increasing numbers of customers and employees - and as such cannot be ignored.

We know from our diversity work with companies in Asia that disability is a subject that companies are beginning to address. Some companies are focusing their disability initiatives on community and outreach programmes. Others, particularly in countries such as Japan and China where governments have set quotas for the recruitment of people with disabilities, are looking to see how they can bring people with disabilities into their organisation as employees. We commend those companies for the work they are doing. However we urge companies to look beyond philanthropic gestures or the fulfillment of quotas and to take a more strategic and holistic approach. We encourage companies to consider the impact of disability on all areas of their business - from both an internal and external perspective. In considering how barriers can be removed, they will unleash the potential for reaching new employees and serving new customers.

This Resource Guide is designed firstly to help companies in Asia put disability on the business agenda by looking at the business imperative; secondly to understand the context of disability in Hong Kong and Singapore; and thirdly to advise companies on how to build their capability to employ and do business with disabled people.

In putting this publication together, Community Business has relied on the expertise and insight of many key stakeholders, including disability organisations, disability experts and disabled individuals, both locally and internationally. These people formed Community Business' Disability Advisory Group and are featured in Appendix 1. Worthy of particular mention is The Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD) in the UK, an organisation committed to building 'Disability Confidence'. We are pleased to support this endeavour and encourage companies in the Asia region to become disability confident.

Kate Vernon
Managing Director and Head of Diversity & Inclusion

FOREWORD BY LEAD SPONSOR, AMERICAN EXPRESS



It is a great pleasure to be writing this Foreword.

At American Express, we are already experiencing the impact of changing demographics on the organisation:

- The effects of an ageing population, which will naturally bring an increased prevalence of disabilities, will affect our workforces in many ways.
- There will be fewer people entering the workforce and finding ways to recruit and retain all people with the relevant skills and capabilities is critical.
- To fully service and satisfy our customers with disabilities, we must develop relevant and accessible products and services, driving loyalty and therefore, business results. In order to achieve this aim, we need an enlightened and diverse organisational culture, e.g. engaging and including employees with disabilities, to contribute to the design and development of these products and services.

The bigger and wider social issue, particularly considering younger people, is that the societies in which we work and live need to provide access to good education and work opportunities for people with disabilities. In common with many of the organisations in the region who are interested in addressing disability in the workplace, we at American Express find it difficult to know where to look to source people with disabilities. We all need to ask ourselves 'What role can our organisations play in facilitating improvements in our education systems?'; 'What practical activities can we undertake, now, so that we will see the benefits in the longer term?' and 'What support can we give to organisations, like Community Business, who have a voice in the arena?'. Building a reputation for ourselves as disability confident organisations that seek out and hire skilled professionals with disabilities is a first step in helping to change the attitudes and cultures, not just in our organisations but in the communities in which we work.

My personal passion in addressing disability in the workplace is just that: personal. As a result of chemotherapy treatment 3 years ago, I have experienced considerable hearing loss. This has highlighted to me some of the issues that people who are hard of hearing encounter in their daily lives in the workplace. This insight has been the culmination of a growing awareness that our region has some catching up to do. When I moved to Asia some six years ago, I quickly saw that there is far less focus on issues surrounding disability compared to my experiences in Europe and North America, where legislation has been a strong leading factor. This context has been a strong catalyst for my drive to encourage American Express to take a lead in addressing issues surrounding disability in the workplace in Asia.

Whilst the focus of this Resource Guide is Hong Kong and Singapore, I hope that we can encourage you, and your organisations, to consider collaborations and funding for research and activities in other countries around the region. I would like to call upon you, if you share my passion in this area, to contact Community Business or the organisations that have sponsored this publication, which can help put you in touch with relevant contacts through our networks. Also if you would like to contact me directly - I would be happy to share my insights with you.

In the words of our CEO, Ken Chenault, "Diversity is a business imperative. It is central to the success of the company!"

Julia Wolage
VP HR Transformation



AUTHOR'S NOTE

Terminology

A note about terminology, borrowed from the British Council's 'Promoting Disability Equality' guide.¹ There is ongoing discussion about the appropriate terminology in the context of disability. 'Disabled people' is the most common term used and is adopted by many international disabled people's organisations and groups. This term is preferred because it suggests that people with a range of different impairments are 'dis-abled' by the structures of society, and so inclusion will only be possible when those barriers are removed. The term 'people with disabilities' is preferred by others, however, because it suggests that individuals should be recognised as people, before their disability or condition is mentioned. This Resource Guide uses both terms interchangeably and intends that both are viewed as positive terms.

Online Toolkit

This Resource Guide has been developed in conjunction with an Online Disability Toolkit sponsored by American Express. This is available at www.communitybusiness.org/disabilitytoolkit and is designed to equip managers with the tools and templates they need to put many of the recommendations outlined in Section 3 of this Resource Guide into action.

The toolkit contains simple check lists, tips and tools that companies can use to help start or continue their journey to disability confidence. Examples of what the toolkit contains, include:

- Tools to create your organisation's business case, including customisable powerpoint presentations and speaker notes.
- Sample disability goals and measures.
- Guidelines for auditing accessibility in your organisation and examples of reasonable adjustments.



Section 1: Addressing Disability - A Business Imperative

Key Disability Facts:

- There are at least 650 million disabled people worldwide.
- 400 million people with disabilities live in and around the Asia Pacific region.
- 25% of the entire global population is either directly or indirectly affected by disability and impairment.
- International studies suggest 1 in 3 people are disabled or close to someone who is.
- The majority of disabled people are not born with a disability - 78% of people acquire their impairment aged 16 or over.

Towards Disability Confidence



A Broader Perspective of Disability

Sourcing accurate statistics on the prevalence of disability in any given country can be notoriously difficult. Lack of clarity of definitions and inconsistencies with data collection mean that numbers tend to be incomplete and misleading and individual country reports are typically conservative in this regard. However, according to the World Health Organisation, disabled people make up 10% of the global population - around 650 million people and 25% of the entire global population is either directly or indirectly affected by disability and impairment.² Independent Health and Disability news source, Disabled World states that the Asia Pacific region has by far the largest number of people with disabilities in the world.

“Some 400 million people with disabilities live in and around the Asia and Pacific region of the world. When taking into consideration the impact on Asian families, the lives and livelihood of over 800 million people are impacted, about 25% of the population.”³

According to the Employers’ Forum on Disability (EFD), 1 in 3 people are disabled or close to someone who is and 1 in 3 of those aged 50-64 may be described as disabled - even though they may not see themselves that way.⁴ These may be surprising, not to mention, sobering figures. They highlight two key things: first that we need a broader perspective of how we view disability and secondly that disability affects us - and our organisations, more widely than we might first have thought.

Non-visible disabilities

When we think about disability, we tend to think about a wheelchair user or perhaps someone who is blind or deaf. These are very visible types of disability. However, the disabilities that the majority of people experience are hidden. Impairments such as epilepsy, dyslexia and diabetes, not to mention mental health conditions including depression or anorexia, affect huge numbers of people, but are rarely visible unless openly disclosed by the individual. In light of this it is fair to assume that the majority of organisations are already employing significant numbers of people with disabilities - whether they are aware of it or not. This raises some interesting questions. Do companies know who among their employees are affected by disability? Are they currently taking steps to support these people? And what can be done to enable these people to be as effective and productive as possible in their jobs?

Impact of the ageing population

The majority of disabled people are not born with a disability, but they acquire their impairment during the course of their lives. According to the EFD, 78% of disabilities are acquired at the age of sixteen or over.⁵ As Disability Expert, Nadine Vogel, so aptly puts it, given the frailty of the human condition we are all ‘temporarily-abled-bodies’. Consider for example, the individual whose sight or hearing deteriorates, or the person who develops back problems at work. The chances of developing a disability increase as we grow older, a fact supported by the statistic that 1 in 3 of those aged 50-64 have a disability.⁶ This is a significant issue, particularly for Hong Kong and Singapore who have the most dramatic ageing populations in Asia. According to Community Business’ own research, 33.6% of the population in Hong Kong and 36% of the population in Singapore will be over the age of 60 by 2030.⁷ As people stay in the workplace longer, thinking about the needs of older employees through a disability lens is going to become increasingly important.

People who care for dependents who have a disability

“Disability affects not only the individuals concerned. It also affects their family members and others who care for them.”⁸



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

The segment of the population affected by disability increases when you take into account the number of people with care-giving responsibilities. This comprises not just parents of children with special needs but those caring for a sibling or spouse with disabilities as well as those responsible for ageing relatives. Hong Kong and Singapore are both societies where Confucian ethics remain strong and children are expected to take on responsibility for parents in old age. It is likely that a very large proportion of the working population in both these geographies is indirectly affected by disability in this way. Acknowledging the needs of employees in their role as carers of people with special needs is important if companies are to ensure such employees are to be productive and engaged in their work.

In summary, the incidence of disability in Asia and the rest of the world is both widespread and growing. This is significant for the corporate sector, because these growing numbers of people affected by disability represent a company's customers, employees, shareholders, stakeholders, partners and competitors. As such, it can be said that disability impacts every aspect of business. Addressing the needs of people affected by disability, is therefore not merely a philanthropic or socially responsible gesture - rather it is a business imperative that requires corporate commitment at the highest levels.

Beyond Legal Compliance

The impetus for many companies around the world to address disability is to ensure compliance with the law. In many countries there are growing legal obligations for companies to protect their disabled employees from discrimination, to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees and to consider the rights of disabled customers with regard to access to products and services. Whilst disability-related legislation differs across Asia (Hong Kong, for example has its Disability Discrimination Ordinance, whilst Singapore has no such provision), the focus on fulfilling legal obligations misses the value that can be gained from taking a more holistic and strategic approach to disability. It is only when an organisation takes a strategic approach and is seen to be committed to best practice, rather than mere compliance, that it can gain true business advantage.

'Disability Confidence'

For some years, leading governments and organisations around the world have talked about 'mainstreaming disability' - that is considering disability and its implications in all areas of work. Mainstreaming is about ensuring that disabled people are able to fully contribute alongside non-disabled people and that their experiences are taken into account in all programmes, services and ways of working.

The EFD, which has been working with organisations to make it easier to employ and do business with disabled people for over 20 years, talks about the need to build 'disability confidence' within organisations. It describes a 'disability confident organisation' as one that:

- Understands and adapts for how disability affects every aspect of the business - people, markets, communities, suppliers and key stakeholders.
- Creates a culture of inclusion and removes barriers for groups of disabled people.
- Makes adjustments which enable specific individuals to contribute - as employees, customers, partners and valued stakeholders.

Section 3 of this Resource Guide outlines how companies can take steps towards building such disability confidence. Fundamental to this approach is understanding and articulating the business case for doing so. Whilst every business has different priorities and a different rationale for becoming disability confident, some of the key business drivers are outlined in Figure 1. These are adapted from the EFD's 'Realising Potential' website which contains a range of information, facts and case studies on the business case for disability confidence.⁹



Figure 1: Business Drivers for Disability Confidence

A company which REALISES THE POTENTIAL OF DISABLED EMPLOYEES will:

- Tap into a wider talent pool.
- Improve recruitment practice by focusing on ability and potential.
- Enable all to contribute by creating barrier-free working environments.
- Enhance productivity by providing the right tools and training.
- Harness diversity of thought and innovation as disabled employees bring different perspectives and problem solving techniques to the table.
- Improve employee morale and engagement as people realise they themselves would be treated fairly should they become disabled.
- Improve employee retention.
- Reduce costs of sickness absence.

A company which VALUES DISABLED EMPLOYEES will:

- Reach a wider market.
- Develop better designed, user-centred products and services.
- Create innovative new products to meet their needs.
- Provide clear and accessible communications which are easier for everyone to read and understand.
- Deliver tailored services - and ultimately better services for everyone.
- Stimulate demand from underserved customers.
- Reduce loss of business from disabled customers who cannot access a company's products and services.
- Improve customer retention.
- Enhance reputation with every customer.



Section 2: The Local Context in Hong Kong and Singapore

"...it makes business sense to employ people with disabilities. People with disabilities tend to be more loyal, are absent less, they are more dedicated. This is backed up by international studies."

Professor T H Tse

Professor, Department of Computer Science, The University of Hong Kong

"By providing an opportunity for disabled people, you are showing others that you are hiring for the value and talent that one can offer, not the disability that one has - by doing this, you also get an opportunity to work with good talent."

Regana Mydin

Manager, Disabled People's Association, Singapore

"It's positive for business, in terms of generating more business, more market share, and you will be seen as a business that cares."

Joseph Kwok

Chairman, Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, Hong Kong

Towards Disability Confidence



Defining Disability

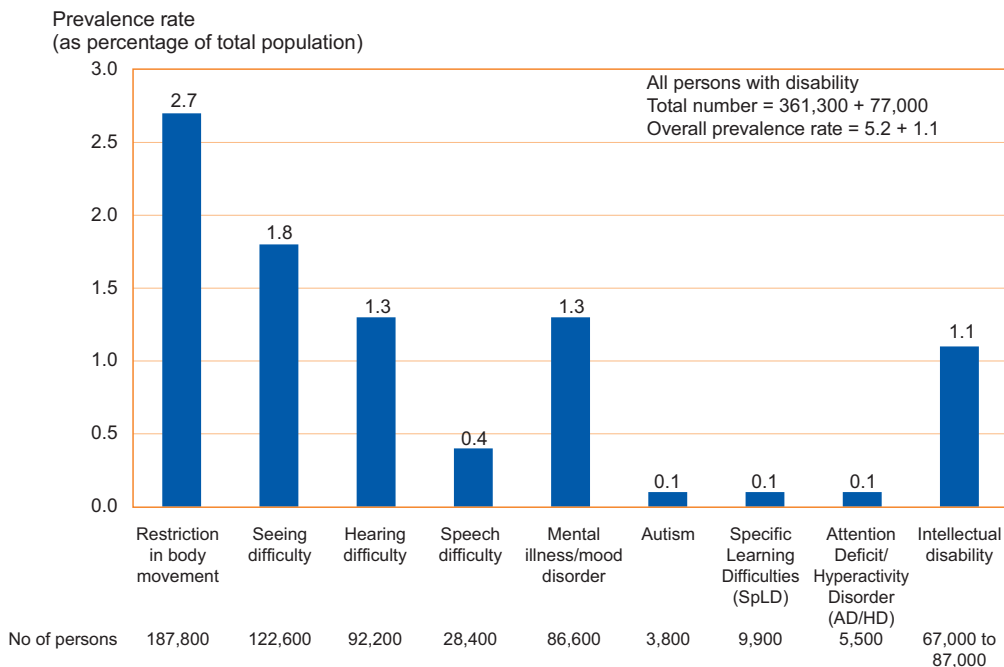
One of the biggest challenges for governments around the world looking to address the subject of disability is getting an accurate picture of the number of people affected by disability. This is complicated to a large extent by how disability is defined and the type of classifications that are used.

In Hong Kong, disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO), a law to protect people with a disability against discrimination, harassment and vilification on the grounds of their disability. The DDO defines disability as:

“...total or partial loss of a person’s bodily or mental functions, total or partial loss of a part of the body, the presence of organisms causing disease or illness (such as HIV), the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body, or a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour, and learning difficulties. A disability includes not only a disability which presently exists, but also a disability which previously existed but no longer exists, which may exist in the future or which is imputed to a person.”

Despite this broad definition, a study by The Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department conducted from November 2006 to December 2007 identified only 438,300 or 6.3% of the Hong Kong population as being affected by disability in one or more of nine categories:¹⁰

Chart 1. Prevalence Rate of Persons with Selected Types of Disability



The above graph has been extracted from The Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department February 2009 Monthly Digest of Statistics.¹¹



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

In Singapore where no such law exists, disability is defined as:

“those whose prospects of securing, retaining places and advancing in education and training institutions, employment and recreation as equal members of the community are substantially reduced as a result of physical, sensory, intellectual and developmental impairments.”¹²

This definition has been developed in line with international approaches and is favoured because it encompasses both the medical criteria¹³ and the ‘physical, institutional and attitudinal barriers present within society’.¹⁴

The authors of Singapore’s Enabling Masterplan acknowledge that collecting statistics regarding the prevalence of disability is a challenge and that no reliable sources of data currently exist. It has recommended that the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) conducts a study to determine the prevalence rate, including possibly conducting a national census or survey.

The Cultural Context

It is interesting to understand the cultural context in Hong Kong and Singapore and the extent to which this affects people’s attitudes towards disability. Both geographies are made up of majority Chinese populations - 95% in Hong Kong and 77% in Singapore¹⁵ and a mixture of religious beliefs and cultural values, including Buddhism and Confucianism, as well as folk religion, have played a part in shaping traditional attitudes towards disability. General awareness and education is gradually improving, but traditional attitudes and beliefs towards disability still exist.

Retribution of sins

With the Confucian focus on social order and harmony and Buddhist focus on karma, and the belief that individuals who perform wrong actions will earn demerits or unfavourable rebirth,¹⁶ disability has traditionally been viewed in much of Asia ‘as a punishment for the disabled person’s parental or past-life sins’.¹⁷ One commentator describes it as follows:

“The oriental metaphysical concept considers each individual’s life span as a link on a chain, where each individual is seen as the ‘product of all the generations of his or her family from the beginning of time’. Due to this link with ancestors, the existence of disability is sometimes explained as coming from ancestral spirits, trying to rectify some wrong that was done.”¹⁸

Another commentator highlights how there has been a tendency in Asian traditions, to identify the cause of a disability - often in very unscientific terms:

“In some cases, mental illness is blamed on evil spirits or punishment from god(s). Another belief is that unbalanced diet, eating food that should be avoided, or emotional disturbance during pregnancy will cause illness or disability of the newborn. For instance, grief or having temper tantrums during pregnancy is perceived to possibly cause the mother to lose her baby or to produce a baby with disabilities.”¹⁹

Towards Disability Confidence



Family shame and rejection

Asian cultures emphasise the importance of the family and reciprocal obligations and everyone in the family has a responsibility to make the family proud. Failures in many aspects of life are considered an embarrassment, shame, and loss of face to the entire family.²⁰ Given this context, many disabled people and their families face stigmatisation, family shame and rejection.

“The stigma attached to disability may generate the family’s fear of exposure to criticism and disgrace. Guilt might be felt by the individual with a disability towards his or her family or by the family towards the individual with disability, as well as towards ancestors.”²¹

Chinese terminology

To a certain extent, traditional attitudes towards disability in Hong Kong and Singapore are reflected in the terminology that was developed and still remains in use today. Indeed, neither the original Chinese terms, nor their English translations have been subject to the same rigorous examination of political correctness experienced in the West, and terms that would be viewed as derogatory and disrespectful are still in popular usage.

“The traditional Chinese terms for disability are ‘canfei (殘廢), meaning ‘handicap’ and ‘useless’, or ‘canji’, meaning ‘handicap’ and ‘illness’. The term ‘gong neng zhang ai zhe (功能障礙者)’, meaning ‘individuals with disabilities’ is rarely used.”²²

Likewise and for example:

“The term for epilepsy, ‘dian gan (癲癇) / yang dian feng (羊癲瘋)’, translates as “shaking of the lamb” in Chinese. The mother believed that the lamb she ate passed the “shaking of the lamb” to her child.”²³

Changing attitudes

Greater government focus, awareness and education mean that gradually attitudes are changing. Today, various NGOs serving different disabled groups are running awareness campaigns and projects with the aim of minimising stigma in the community. In Singapore for example, the Centre for Enabled Living (CEL) launched a LivEnabled campaign in September 2010 designed to lay the foundations for effecting a mindset change - from that of passive care to active enabling - among Singaporeans in the long term.²⁴ Both Hong Kong and Singapore Governments promote 3 December as International Day of Disabled Persons each year and hold events on this day.

Members of Community Business’ Disability Advisory Group²⁵ expressed mixed views about current social attitudes towards people with disabilities. Some mentioned some specific challenges:

“Generally, the Hong Kong work ethic is maximum efficiency and productivity. There’s a strong belief in individual success. Less tolerance of diversity. Generally individual differences are not tolerated as a good thing in itself. Traditions are less now, but they are still in the background.”



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

“Hong Kong is crowded, communities don’t want anything to be put in their neighbourhood. People want more open space, not taken up by facilities for disabled people. This is a dilemma in Hong Kong.”

It was also highlighted that attitudes vary according to the category of disability, with those with mental health issues facing the biggest challenge - perhaps fuelled by sensational media coverage of acts of violence by people with psychiatric illnesses.

“The most stigmatised are people with psychiatric illnesses in Hong Kong. No one dares to say ‘I have a relative with a history of mental illness.’”

However, most members of the Disability Advisory Group agreed that whilst much more work needs to be done, social attitudes towards people with disabilities in Hong Kong and Singapore are generally improving.

“Earlier, when you saw people with disabilities, there would be an unusual sight, so people would look at you more. But now because of the accessibility of the environment and the transport system there are more people with disabilities going around and leading regular lives.”

“Majority of people have gone from direct discrimination to a more positive approach. But they are not yet treating people with disabilities equally as if they are able bodied. Some people are overprotecting - helping too much. Some others treat us equally.”

The Legal Context

In Hong Kong, people with disabilities are protected by law under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO). Introduced in 1995 this law protects a disabled person against discrimination, harassment or vilification in the areas of employment, accommodation, education, access to partnerships, membership of trade unions and clubs, access to premises, educational establishments, sporting activities and the provision of goods, services and facilities. This protection is also extended to ‘associates of persons with disabilities’ who may include a relative or carer. The law also covers victimisation. To support this law, the Equal Opportunities Commission in Hong Kong has also published a voluntary Code of Practice which provides advice on good management practice with regard to the employment of people with disabilities.²⁶

Singapore has chosen not to go down the legislative route, instead setting up the Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices (TAFEP) - an alliance between employers, unions and the government - to promote fair employment practices that should be adopted by employers to help prevent discrimination in the workplace. This extends to the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities and the first principle of the Employer’s Pledge of Fair Employment states:

Towards Disability Confidence



“Recruit and select employees on the basis of merit (such as skills, experience or ability to perform the job), and regardless of age, race, gender, religion, family status or disability.”²⁷

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international human rights instrument of the United Nations drafted on 13 December 2006. It is intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Parties to the Convention are required to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.²⁸ This Convention also raises awareness for the first time of the need to counter discrimination caused by inaccessible technology, for example through inaccessible online recruitment. The Convention is described as ‘marking a “paradigm shift” in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities’.

“It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.”²⁹

There were 82 original signatories to the Convention including China and on 1 August 2008 the Chinese Government declared that the Convention shall also apply to Hong Kong and Macau. Some disability experts praise Hong Kong’s support of the UN Convention, seeing it as a positive sign of encouragement for people with disabilities and as a step in the right direction. However, others are more skeptical and question what impact it has had on changing traditional attitudes towards disability and promoting disability equality.

Government Measures

2003-2012 was declared as the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). With its regional policy guideline, the ‘Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (BMF)’, called for a shift from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach towards disability. This together with the subsequent UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has provided an impetus for governments in the region to examine their approach to disability and adopt proactive measures.

Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Government’s preferred approach towards those of all ages with mild and severe disabilities is to encourage as much integration as possible and it has taken a number of positive measures in this regard. A Rehabilitation Advisory Group is responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP). The stated objectives of this initiative are to:

“promote and provide such comprehensive and effective measures as are necessary for the prevention of disability, the development of the physical, mental and social capabilities of people with a disability, and the realisation of a physical and social environment conducive to meeting the goals of their full participation in social life and development, and of equalisation of opportunities.”³⁰



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

The scope of this plan is far-reaching and includes commitments to: prevention and identification, medical rehabilitation, pre-school training, education, employment and vocational rehabilitation, residential care, day care and community support, development of self-help organisations, access and transport, application of information and communications technologies, recreational, sports, cultural and arts activities and public education.³¹

Singapore

In Singapore, families are seen as the first line of support for people with disabilities and the approach towards their integration into society is seen as relying on 'many helping hands'³² from the community, private and public sectors. Whilst the Government provides means-tested subsidies for disability services, it views institutionalised care as the last resort.³³ The Singapore Government works closely with the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and Centre for Enabled Living (CEL) and other relevant bodies in the delivery of services and programmes for people with disabilities.

An Enabling Masterplan Steering Committee, comprising representatives from the public and private sector was formed in September 2006. It released its report, the Enabling Masterplan 2007-11 in February 2007, articulating its vision:

"Our vision is for Singapore to be an inclusive society where people with disabilities (PWDs) are given the opportunity to become equal, integral and contributing members of society. Children with special needs will receive effective intervention and education services to maximise their potential and opportunity to eventually work and contribute to society. There will be equal opportunities for PWDs in employment. More PWDs will achieve self-reliance through work."³⁴

The plan outlines a number of recommendations and focuses on 'mainstreaming' disability, where creating a barrier-free environment and disabled-friendly approach becomes integral to the agenda and involves close co-operation between agencies such as the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, National Council of Social Service, Voluntary Welfare Organisations and the private sector.³⁵

Promoting employment

Hong Kong

To assist with the employment of people with disabilities the Government has set up the Selective Placement Division under the Labour Department. The Selective Placement Division provides a free recruitment service to employers and a free employment service to job seekers with disabilities. It also runs a 'Work Orientation and Placement Scheme' designed to enhance the employability and competitiveness of people with disabilities through pre-employment training and work trial placement. Under this scheme participating employers offer a three-month work trial to the job seeker with disabilities and are free to decide whether to continue the employment upon completion of the employment period. The participating employer receives a financial incentive equal to two-thirds of the actual wages paid to the employee during the employment period, with a ceiling of HK\$4,000 per month. After assessing the merits of individual cases, the payment period may be extended from three months to a maximum of six months.³⁶

Towards Disability Confidence



Hong Kong's Social Welfare Department also runs and oversees a number of programmes to help the disabled into work. Included in these initiatives are special educational programmes run by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) for those with disabilities. The VTC operates three skills centres and monitors two further centres run by non-governmental organisations. Between them, these centres provide more than 600 full-time training positions (including some with residential facilities).³⁷ The Government also seeks to help those who become disabled by providing re-training programmes through its Employee Retraining Council.

Singapore

Singapore has a number of initiatives designed to facilitate and encourage the employment of people with disabilities. The Bizlink Centre Singapore Limited receives support from the Government and the National Council of Social Service and runs a centralised vocational assessment and job placement service. This assesses a candidate's suitability for employment and helps with job placement. Follow-up services and job support are also given to help people with disabilities remain employed. The Infocomm Accessibility Centre (IA Centre) provides information technology training and is specially equipped with assistive technology devices. It works with the IT Apprenticeship Programme (ITAP), a Government funded initiative run by the Society for the Physically Disabled (SPD) to train people with disability and prepare them for employment. On the employer side, the OPEN DOOR Fund provides employers financial support and encourages employers to look beyond the disability and recruit based on merit. To make it easier for companies to employ people with disabilities, the Government provides funding of up to S\$100,000 to employers to co-fund their expenses in job redesign, workplace modification and job support programmes.³⁸ In addition, the Enabling Employers Network (EEN), which describes itself as an 'alliance of like minded employers', was set up in 2007 as an initiative of the Enabling Master Plan to champion the employment of people with disabilities.

Employment quotas for people with disabilities

However, despite these government measures, the employment rate of people with disabilities remains low. Interestingly, both the Hong Kong and Singapore Governments have consciously chosen not to opt for an employment quota system³⁹ adopted by other countries in the Asia region including China⁴⁰ and Japan.⁴¹ According to Hong Kong's initial report submitted to the UN on the 'Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities':

"under a mandatory employment quota system, persons with disabilities would be perceived as a liability, making them difficult to be accepted by their peers at work which is not conducive to their integration into the community. We consider that persons with disabilities should be assisted to find appropriate jobs on the basis of their abilities rather than disabilities."⁴²

There is a mixed response to this decision by members of Community Business' Disability Advisory Group. Some believe that a more aggressive approach would be more effective in driving a change in behaviour:

"[Quotas] create a number of vacancies and therefore a reason for employers to actively look for people with a disability. [Quotas] create a level playing field so that people with a disability know they can prove themselves and look for a job because there are vacancies."



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

However, others are more skeptical:

“In Japan, the quota system comes with a levy system. If a company doesn’t meet the quota, they have to pay a fine - the money is put into a fund to support vocational training for persons with disabilities. But over the years they collected such a huge sum of money that they could not use it, so they extended to help old people find jobs. That explains a quota system may not necessarily create employment opportunity - it becomes another measure of collecting tax.”

Key Challenges for People with Disabilities

Through conversations with various stakeholders, including a facilitated dialogue in Hong Kong between people with disabilities and the corporate sector, Community Business identified a number of key challenges faced by people with disabilities in Hong Kong and Singapore - both generally and specifically in the workplace. Some of these are summarised below.

General Challenges

Social attitudes and ‘disability labels’

Many people talked about the lack of understanding and ignorance of people as being the biggest challenge for people with disabilities. As highlighted in the previous section, traditional attitudes based on fear and superstition are still evident and can cause significant challenges for people with disabilities in both Hong Kong and Singapore. Others talked about the discrimination and stigma people with disabilities face - particularly those with mental illness. This prevents such individuals from being able to actively participate in the community and sometimes from gaining access to the services they need. Such rejection of people with disabilities inevitably spills over to the caregivers and family members. Others talked about how many do not see disabled people as individuals - rather they focus only on someone’s impairment or medical label. It was highlighted that society often makes assumptions about individuals based on their medical condition or disability and this limits their opportunities both educationally and in terms of their wider integration into society. As already mentioned, the very terms used to describe disabled people can have a detrimental effect. As one person put it:

“People with a disability are just ordinary people and how they view themselves is affected by how other people view them and that can be a very negative circle there.”

Barriers in education

Several of the disability experts that Community Business spoke to talked about the lack of integrated education for people with disabilities. Although mainstream school opportunities are available, under the existing education policy in both Hong Kong and Singapore, students with severe special educational needs or multiple disabilities are generally referred to special education schools. Whilst these special schools offer the advantage in that they provide a curriculum tailored for different types of disabilities, they can deny students the opportunity to integrate into mainstream society.

Towards Disability Confidence



“So even before we talk about employment, we need to talk about mainstreaming education, making sure that as many people as possible get vocational skills earlier in life. Make schools, universities, kindergartens all accessible so that they have an equal footing in academics and integrating with the community... It must be part of the education system to make sure that everybody is suitably skilled. For me education is the most important thing, because by the time of employment, it's too late.”

Others talked about barriers to higher education for people with disabilities:

“Everyone has the same education rights as other children in primary and secondary education. However, it's difficult for them to go to higher education. There's a bottleneck because of public examinations. For example, people with hearing impairments. They have difficulty with their language development and can't get through the public examinations. The public exams are a barrier for them.”

Low employment rate of people with disabilities

Although statistics are not readily available about the employment rate of people with disabilities in Hong Kong and Singapore, they are generally agreed to be low and certainly far lower than the employment rate of the population at large. Less than half of the people with disabilities in Singapore are employed and according to a Top News Asia report in June 2010 only 79 companies have tapped into the OPEN DOOR Fund over the last four years since it started in July 2006.⁴³ However, according to the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) this number has increased to 124.

Physical barriers

Aside from social challenges, people with disabilities often face physical barriers in terms of accessibility. Both Hong Kong and Singapore are making great strides in terms of improving the accessibility of their infrastructure and accessibility is increasingly being built into the design of new buildings, roads, pathways, parks and recreation facilities. However, physical barriers do exist. Many older buildings for example, do not have ramps or elevators for people who use wheelchairs; buildings often have washrooms for men and women on different floors which can make it difficult for the person with disabilities to access; and in the limited space of Hong Kong, access is often not wide enough for a wheelchair user to pass through.

Workplace Challenges

Attitude of employers

One of the biggest challenges cited by individuals with disabilities with regard to employment opportunities in Hong Kong was the attitude of employers. This was seen to be a far bigger obstacle than physical barriers and more difficult to fix.

“The question is whether employers are willing to change their attitude. Even with the Disability Discrimination Ordinance [in Hong Kong] which prevents employers from discriminating against people with disabilities, in reality people don't care.”



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Limited experience or contact with disabled people

It was highlighted that one of the key reasons employers may be reluctant to employ people with disabilities, is that people in the corporate sector have limited experience of working with or interacting with people with disabilities. As one disability expert put it:

“My experience is that most employers hesitate to employ blind people because they haven’t had the chance to meet them. When open-minded employers meet blind people who can present their skills, usually the result is positive.”

There is also a lack of in-house expertise on how to adapt the built environment and how things are done, so that people with different impairments can contribute to business success.

Negative perceptions and false assumptions

With limited personal experience of people with disabilities, it was highlighted that employers often have negative perceptions and false assumptions about disabled individuals and their ability to perform in the workplace. Examples mentioned included assuming that a disabled individual cannot fulfill a certain role, lacks intellectual capacity or might take twice as long to perform a task. In addition few employers understand the extent to which technology can now empower disabled people at work. Many managers for example, do not realise that blind people can and do access the internet or use email.

Uncertainty and fear

Many shared the view that uncertainty and fear play a key role in preventing companies from employing people with disabilities. With a lack of education and training, many managers do not know how to appropriately recruit and manage people with disabilities and so rely on a ‘play safe’ mentality, employing people with whom they feel more comfortable and familiar.

Access to information

A key challenge to the employment of people with disabilities, cited by both employers and disabled individuals themselves, was a lack of access to information. The employers talked about the difficulty in identifying disabled talent and the lack of information available on this. The disabled individuals talked about the lack of access to corporate information and being unable to find out about opportunities available. Accessibility of information on corporate websites was cited as an example here.

Pressure to excel

A challenge highlighted by a number of disabled individuals, was the constant pressure to excel and do better than non-disabled peers - almost in order to justify their existence and to prove that they are not a burden. As one person put it:

“A person with a disability has a tougher challenge in proving themselves [to be] capable to carry out a job. That you are an asset, not a liability to an office. That people want you, not that they feel sorry for you.”

Towards Disability Confidence



It is clear that many people with disabilities in Hong Kong and Singapore face similar challenges to those in other parts of the world and that they are limited not so much by their medical condition or impairment but by barriers that arise from the social environment in which they operate. Much can be done by the corporate sector to overcome some of these barriers and enable individuals with disabilities to participate more fully in society and to contribute to the regional and global economy.





Section 3: Towards Disability Confidence - Recommendations for Employers

Section 1 of this Resource Guide highlights the business case for companies to promote disability equality and build disability confident organisations.

This section provides companies with advice on how to take steps towards becoming disability confident.

These recommendations are drawn from a number of sources including: international best practice - most notably the EFD's Disability Standard,⁴⁴ interviews with members of Community Business' Disability Advisory Group in both Hong Kong and Singapore and from the Hong Kong Government's comprehensive Code of Practice on Employment under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance.

Illustrated with case studies from Hong Kong and Singapore, these recommendations focus on the following 4 key areas:



Towards Disability Confidence

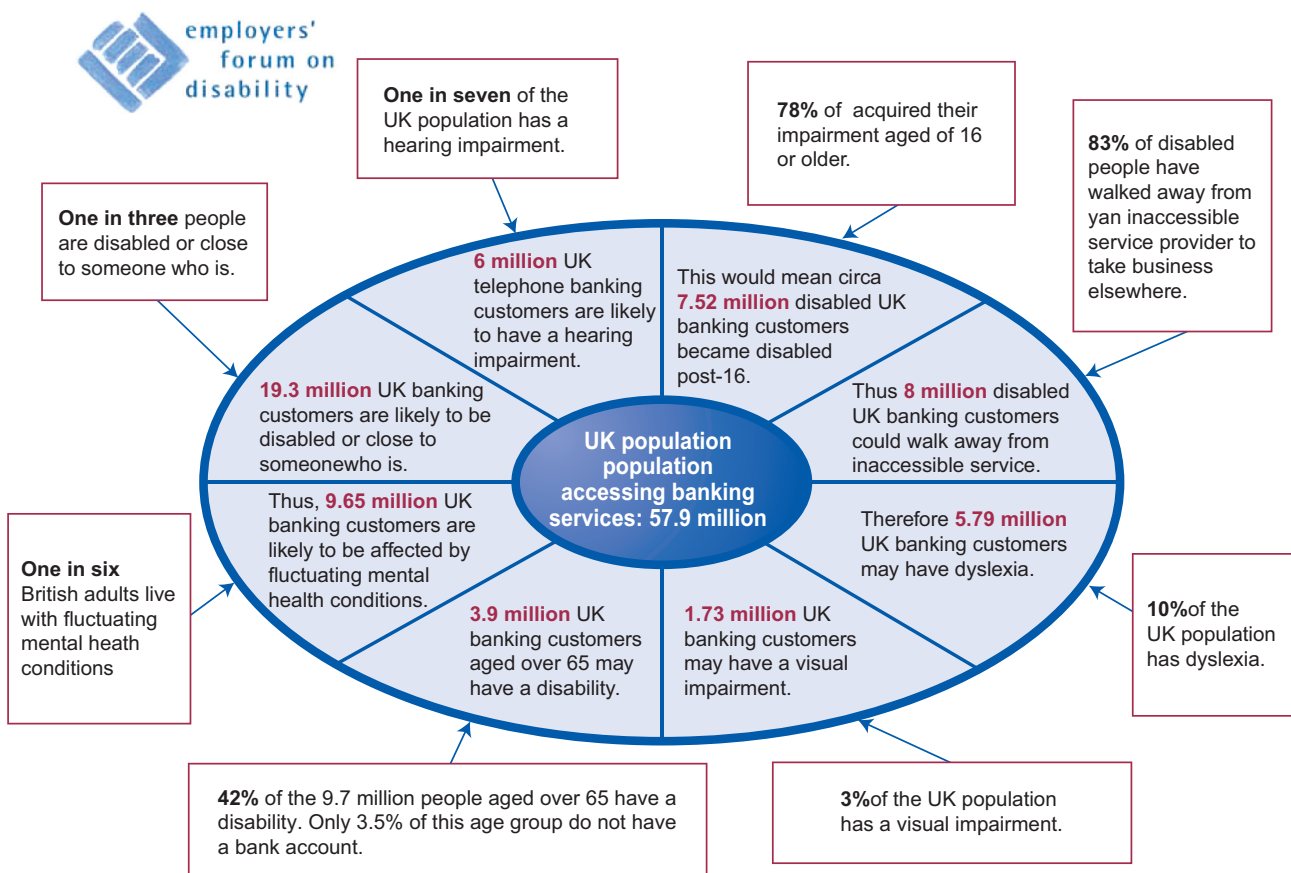
1. Take a Strategic Approach

To impact real and lasting change with regard to addressing disability, it is important for companies to take a strategic approach. This includes: establishing the business case, identifying a vision and goals, developing action plans and building management commitment and leadership.

Establish the business case

Any company looking to invest time and energy into creating a disability confident organisation needs to clearly understand and be able to articulate the economic and ethical case for doing so. This will be different from company to company and will require some level of research into the characteristics of the local market and industry. As far as possible the business case should be rooted in facts and figures and demonstrate the impact of disability on the business both internally and externally. The EFD has found that focusing on how disability affects a company's customer base can be particularly powerful in capturing the hearts and minds of senior executives and spurring them to action. The data is not currently available for Hong Kong and Singapore but adopting the approach developed by the EFD and illustrated in Figure 2, can be useful in presenting the business case:

Figure 2: Banking Sector Customer Profile





A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Identify a vision and goals

In order for disability equality to become a business priority, the senior management team needs to take the time to identify and communicate a vision for the organisation and define specific disability goals against which progress can be monitored. Some examples of disability goals are listed below:⁴⁵

- We are committed to becoming disability confident across the business - not only to employing more disabled people.
- We no longer make assumptions about what people can do on the strength of a label.
- We aim to be barrier-free for groups and skilled at making adjustments for individuals.
- We have high expectations of disabled people and of the business.

Develop actions plans - across all departments

Once goals have been defined, the challenge is to translate these into action plans - and critically these should be developed across all departments, not just the human resources function. Whilst human resources professionals might be responsible for the initial recruitment or training of an individual with disabilities, they are not responsible for the day-to-day management. Companies therefore need to think through the workplace experience from the perspective of the disabled employee and identify how that individual might need to be supported and managed. This could require, for example, engaging the IT department to think about the individual's specific IT needs, or the Building Management department to think about how the employee might get about the office. This process should be extended to external and customer facing functions. Marketing departments for example, should be encouraged to think through the experience of a disabled client or customer wanting to do business or interact with the organisation and identify what adjustments to product or service delivery might be necessary. Whilst procurement functions should be encouraged to explore whether they can source products and services from organisations that employ people with disabilities. What is required is for all departments to audit their functions and processes and seek to remove any barriers to employing or serving people with disabilities.

Build management commitment and leadership

To ensure that the disability agenda is taken seriously and that vision and goals are followed through, it is important to build management commitment and leadership. Only if the most senior levels of the organisation are able to articulate and demonstrate their commitment will other parts of the organisation follow through. Developing a written commitment, publically supported by senior executives can be useful in this regard. Some organisations have found it useful to identify a senior executive to act as a disability champion. Ideally this person should have a place on the most senior local management team and have the ability to influence policy and review progress towards disability confidence.



Case Study 1: Taking a Strategic Approach

Organisation: British Council

As a large international cultural relations organisation, the British Council recognises the importance of adopting a strategic approach to diversity - including disability. In its 'Promoting Disability Equality' guide compiled in September 2009 it sets out what the organisation and its employees can do to promote disability equality and how doing so supports the organisation's vision, purpose and values. The guide articulates the organisation's moral/ethical, legal and business reasons for promoting disability equality which are summarised below:

• Moral/ethical reasons

As an organisation that values people, we believe it is right to strive to include people with disabilities in all we do, facilitating participation in our activities and services. By correlation, it is unethical and immoral to fail to effectively respond to disabled people's exclusion.

• Legal reasons

Promoting disability equality also helps us to meet our legal obligations and supports us to minimise risk to the organisation.

• Business reasons

Promoting disability equality makes perfect business sense. Thinking about disability at work helps us to:

- Be relevant to a larger pool of customers and clients.
- Learn from the experience and expertise of others.
- Ensure that individuals have a positive experience of our services.
- Enhance our reputation as a good partner.
- Enhance our reputation as a good employer.

The guide identifies seven objectives for mainstreaming disability within the organisation and in addressing each objective outlines what staff can do, points to examples of best practice by referencing what British Council offices around the world have done and defines what making progress towards disability equality will look like. The British Council does not claim to always get it right or have completed its journey towards better access for people with disabilities, but having a guide and a strategic approach are very important as the Council strives to ensure the full participation of disabled people in its work.

In Hong Kong, the British Council has taken many steps in line with its strategic commitment to mainstream disability including: improving access to its facilities by conducting an accessibility audit of its premises with Rehabilitation Power in Hong Kong; enabling disabled candidates to take exams by accommodating their specific needs; using positive images of disabled people in their marketing and communications; and running events to raise awareness about disability both internally and externally.

The British Council Disability Equality Guide can be accessed at www.britishcouncil.org/promoting_disability_equality.doc



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Case Study 2: Taking a Strategic Approach

Organisation: American Express

American Express' Global Diversity & Inclusion Strategy focuses on three areas:

1. Talent Segmentation - how to attract, develop and retain talent.
2. Market Segmentation - how to target key customer segments.
3. Workplace Transformation - how to create an engaging workplace.

Disability is a global priority that spans across each of these three key focus areas. In 2009, American Express created a strategic framework for how to approach disability across the company. Openly acknowledging that the company is at the beginning of its journey to 'disability confidence', American Express has set itself the following goals:

- Understand how disability affects every aspect of the business and start to create a culture of inclusion by removing barriers and enabling all team members to equally contribute.
- Increase the available talent pool and improve recruitment practices by ensuring the recruitment process is fair and accessible.
- Ensure rigorous and robust plans at a market level that can demonstrate progress.

A strong business case bringing these goals to life for leaders and employees is critical to drive engagement. For American Express, the business case is focused on two areas:

- **Our Customers:** By improving our products and services to meet the needs and expectations of disabled customers we will drive business results.
- **Our Employees and Employer Brand:** Becoming more disability confident will enable us to build access to a wider talent pool and improve our employer brand; reduce costs associated with absence, turnover, illness and injury claims; enable a more inclusive workplace; achieve greater retention and employee loyalty; and reduce legal risk i.e. avoiding litigation and fines and the time/cost involved in potential claims or disputes.

To ensure disability becomes a priority, American Express has created Disability Awareness Taskforces (DAT) within a number of markets across the globe led by members of the Country Executive Teams. The establishment of these taskforces has ensured senior leadership ownership, enabling a cross-functional team to drive market-based action plans. These plans are designed to capture the needs of customers, employees and leaders as well as engage local strategic partners.

- **Voice of Customer:** Global webinar (includes quiz format on business case), podcasts from leaders, consistent branding and communications messages.
- **Voice of Employee:** Focus groups, employee focused events; a 'Mega Quiz' to create a fun and interactive way to learn about disability; disability experience events.
- **Voice of Leader:** Leader training/action sessions, panel discussions, events with local organisations.

Based on the company's experience, American Express has the following advice for companies looking to get started in addressing disability:

- Identify **Business Champions** to help create that 'call to action' on why becoming a disability confident organisation makes good business sense.
- Utilise **Steering Committee/Taskforce structures** with key decision makers to ensure disability becomes a priority.
- **Phase your approach** into different stages to deliver a clear, focused strategy:
 - Phase 1: Business Sponsorship/Benchmarking
 - Phase 2: Employee Experience: Accessibility/Awareness/Recruitment
 - Phase 3: Customer Experience: Access, Service, Brand Marketing



Case Study 3: Taking a Strategic Approach

Organisation: Ocean Park

Hong Kong's Ocean Park aspires to be a world leader in providing excellent guest experiences in a theme park environment connecting people with nature. The company's strategic commitment to addressing the needs of those with disabilities, is supported at the highest levels and is best articulated by Ocean Park's Chief Executive, Tom Mehrmann:

"Being an inclusive organisation, welcoming all people - including those with disabilities, both as guests and members of our team, is key to our vision and mission. We do a number of things to drive this. Firstly, we work hard to create the right organisational culture. We ensure all our employees receive the thorough training they need to serve and work alongside people with disabilities - as part of their initial orientation and also on an ongoing basis. We provide this in the context of our wider Equal Opportunities training, but we also have targeted programmes such as our 'Serving Disabled Guests' training programme. This focuses on appropriate ways of serving disabled guests - for example, disability etiquette and communication skills, including simple sign language, as well as making sure that all our front line staff and supervisors understand what facilities the Park offers these guests. Secondly, we partner with Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and St James Settlement to employ people with disabilities. There are still occasional public perceptions that people with disabilities can only perform certain back-office functions, but we believe we have done much to overcome certain stigmas, or practices associated with individuals who may have disabilities to ensure inclusion and accessibility. We assess candidates' skills and talents and focus on putting them in the most appropriate roles - many of which are guest facing.

We have a number of programmes, which apply to our guests as well. As Hong Kong's People's Park, we want everyone in Hong Kong to be able to enjoy and be inspired by all that Ocean Park offers. Each year on International Day for Disabled People (IDDP) - an event we have supported for 17 years, we offer free admission for families of people with disabilities (specifically holders of the Registration Card for People with Disabilities in Hong Kong), as well as the individual with disabilities. This is in addition to the daily offer of free admission to people with disabilities, which also includes discounts on entry tickets to their carers. And to ensure that we constantly think about the needs of our guests with disabilities we take proactive steps to ensure that our Park and attractions are as accessible as possible. We are particularly proud of our long-standing relationship with the Chair of the IDDP, a wheelchair user himself, who together with others helps us to regularly audit the accessibility of our Park and give us feedback for corrective actions.

There is always more that can be done, but we value the contribution of people with disabilities - both as guests and employees, and I personally am committed to ensuring that our Park and our workplace are as welcoming and inclusive as possible."



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

2. Change Organisational Culture and Behaviour

"The interaction between 'abled' and 'disabled' people is often hindered by stereotypes, fears, avoidance and prejudices."⁴⁶

Disability is a sensitive subject and traditional attitudes, preconceptions, even fear of people with disabilities prevail. This is particularly true in Asia where openness about addressing the subject and personal contact with people with disabilities is limited. It is critical therefore that companies think through how they will change organisational behaviour and create the right culture of inclusion to meet the desired vision and goals. Providing disability awareness training, bringing people into contact with people with disabilities and making management accountable are key in this respect.

Provide disability awareness training

An essential first step in establishing the right corporate behaviour and culture is to provide diversity awareness training to all employees which includes a very clear focus on disability. Training courses may vary - both in their content and delivery format. Some companies provide online training modules, others bring in external trainers or provide experiential learning opportunities. Whatever the format or approach, the EFD recommends that any such training should:⁴⁷

- Cover the economic and ethical case for disability.
- Cover the organisation's policy expectations.
- Include information on disability related legislation.
- Challenge assumptions and change behaviour.

This training, as far as possible, needs to go beyond valuing disabled people to considering how to help the business develop the disability related competencies needed to remove disability specific obstacles. It is observed that very few diversity trainers are disability competent and is best done by people with personal experience of disability. Some companies invest in building the capacity of disabled entrepreneurs to run the training for them. In addition, as far as possible disability training materials should be adapted to the local market context, referencing local laws, providing local statistics and using case studies from the region. The impact of involving Asian spokespeople and champions should also not be underestimated as such measures can go a long way to ensuring that disability is seen as a locally relevant issue and not just an import from the West.

The EFD has a wealth of resources available to its members, including briefing papers for managers of people with different types of disability. Of particular note, is its Disability Communication Guide.⁴⁸ This valuable resource provides information on words and phrases, disability etiquette and specifically what to do when meeting people with different types of disability. It also details what companies and managers should consider when conducting interviews or meetings and other events with people who have disabilities. The Disabled People's Association in Singapore has published a 'Dictionary of Disability Terminology' on its website, highlighting the importance of using the right words:

Towards Disability Confidence

“In the context of disability, negative and patronising language produces, predictably, negative and patronising images and attitudes. Words in popular use mirror attitudes in society and by changing the words we can begin to change those attitudes... By making a conscious effort to use words that do not have negative undertones or bias, we can help to break down barriers.”⁴⁹

Various NGOs in both Hong Kong and Singapore offer disability awareness training to employers, including the Disabled People's Association in Singapore and the Employees' Safety, Training & Rehabilitation Services Limited (ESTARS) in Hong Kong. One particular noteworthy organisation that operates in Asia is Dialogue in the Dark. Working from the principle that 'the only way to learn is through encounter', the organisation delivers a Dialogue in the Dark Business Workshop that gives participants a direct experience of what it is like to be visually impaired. In so doing it is a powerful way to challenge people's assumptions and encourage them to think differently about the perceived limitations of people with disabilities.

Dialogue in the Dark Business Workshop⁵⁰

In the Dialogue in the Dark Executive Workshop, participants rely on visually impaired instructors to guide them in complete darkness for two hours. The participants learn to dare, share and care and work out strategies to solve common tasks together. Communication and cooperation are the essential tools for success. Participants are then escorted out of the darkness for an hour of reflection and debriefing on the transition from disempowerment to empowerment. They learn to use hidden senses more effectively and come to think twice about abilities and disabilities. Dialogue in the Dark has been presented in over 30 countries and more than 160 sites in over 110 cities throughout Europe, Asia, the Middle East and America since its opening in 1988. So far, over 6 million visitors have experienced Dialogue in the Dark, and over 6,000 visually impaired people worldwide have earned an income and recognition through their work at Dialogue in the Dark.

Bring senior executives and employees in contact with people with disabilities

One of the most effective ways to educate people about disability and overcome some of the prejudice and fear is to find ways to bring employees directly in contact with people with disabilities. This might be through workplace initiatives such as inviting a disabled professional to share their personal and professional story, running an internship programme for students with disabilities, or holding informal networking events for senior managers and disabled opinion formers. However, supporting employees to take part in community based projects which benefit disabled people can also be powerful. Enabling people to interact or build relationships with disabled people can be instrumental in removing the fear element, bringing a human face to this subject and opening people's minds to what is possible.

Make management accountable

As with many diversity initiatives, some companies believe that the only way to drive real behavioural change within an organisation is to make management accountable. Advocates of this approach recommend putting accountability for achieving disability goals into managers' performance goals and appraisals. This may be an ambitious goal, particularly for those companies that are only starting to address this issue in Asia, but it is worth remembering this basic business principle and think through how the desired behaviour might be encouraged and rewarded.



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Case Study 4: Changing Organisational Culture and Behaviour

Organisation: Goldman Sachs

Goldman Sachs runs a number of programmes in its offices across Asia specifically designed to raise awareness and educate employees about people with disabilities. eLearning modules are available for employees to access at any time and the company also runs a localised training programme called 'Acting on Disability' featuring disability consultant Simon Minty. In Hong Kong, Goldman Sachs has also partnered with Dialogue in the Dark, an organisation aimed at facilitating social inclusion of marginalised people, to develop its own in-house experiential training and in particular has tailored the 'In the Light Session' to focus on discussion relating to issues in the workplace.

In 2010, Goldman Sachs introduced a region-wide Disability Panel Discussion. The panel comprised a number of employees with different disabilities, who shared their personal and professional experiences of living with disabilities. The aim was to bring employees into direct contact with people with disabilities and demonstrate how such individuals are able to work effectively. The event was such a success that additional sessions were run for different divisions.

As the company seeks to create a more inclusive workplace, Goldman Sachs recognises the importance of executive support and the need for appropriate senior - and local diversity champions to set the business context for these initiatives. Critical to success too is ensuring that as far as possible the training content is tailored to local market conditions, using local statistics and referencing local laws and guidelines.

Case Study 5: Changing Organisational Culture and Behaviour

Organisation: Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)

In 2003, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in Singapore launched an ambitious project to open a store entirely staffed by employees with hearing impairments. The company worked with the Singapore Association for the Deaf to recruit the employees but recognised that in order to make this project a success it needed to invest time and resources into creating the right working environment so that the Deaf employees would be welcomed, enabled and supported by their managers and colleagues. This focused on providing disability training for all. Service departments were taken through a 2-day course that taught them some basic sign language skills but focused primarily on giving them a greater appreciation of what it is like to be deaf and overcoming some of the myths and assumptions about their limitations. Store managers were taken through more extensive training as they needed to be able to manage and communicate with their teams on a daily basis. The set up phase was a huge learning experience for KFC as the company discovered what changes and modifications it needed to make to its restaurant and the way it prepared food for its customers. Examples included using lights to indicate when food was cooked rather than buzzers and developing laminated message cards to facilitate communication. Creating the right culture also extended to educating customers. KFC put a notice on the door to highlight that the store was operated by Deaf employees and prepared a video loop to show people how to order by pointing to a menu card. Today KFC operates three restaurants in Singapore employing 23 Deaf employees. Since 2003 to date, KFC has employed close to 300 Deaf employees.



3. Realise the Potential of Disabled Employees

A growing number of companies are open to employing people with disabilities, but many struggle to know how to tap into this talent pool and get started. Realising the potential of disabled employees requires a targeted effort - including developing appropriate policies, auditing premises and making creative and flexible adjustments in the work environment. In focusing on removing barriers to participation, companies will not only empower their disabled employees, but will also find it easier to empower the contribution of every employee and potential employee.

Develop an equal opportunities policy

As companies look to promote disability equality within their organisations and take steps to protect their disabled employees from any potential discrimination, it is important to develop a comprehensive equal opportunities policy that includes provisions for employees with disabilities. This should provide clear guidance on processes relating to recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, dismissal and redundancy of employees and stress the importance of adopting a consistent approach to all employees - regardless of their disability. It should clarify what is meant by 'reasonable accommodations' and describe the process involved for requesting and approving such requirements. Organisations operating in Hong Kong should also include a statement which expressly states that harassment and vilification on the ground of disability at work is unlawful and will not be permitted. To ensure that the policy is effectively implemented, it is recommended that employers: make the policy known to all employees and, where reasonably practicable, to all job applicants; provide training to all employees who may be involved in human resource matters; and make all new recruits aware of the equal opportunities policy.⁵¹

Take proactive steps to recruit disabled employees

Companies are encouraged to take proactive steps to recruit people with disabilities. This starts with ensuring that employees responsible for recruitment and selection receive appropriate training in hiring people with disabilities. It is important that these people know how to prepare for an interview, what questions to ask and how to follow up with candidates in the most appropriate way. However, if there is to be a greater employment rate of people with disabilities in Asia, it is also necessary for companies to use targeted initiatives to attract disabled applicants. This might involve reaching out to universities or partnering with organisations that have direct access to talent. Such organisations are often well-positioned to advise companies on how jobs can be adapted and what technical aids may be used to enable the fulfillment of the required role. Some companies have experimented with running internship programmes or mentoring programmes for students with disabilities. In taking proactive steps to recruit people with disabilities, the focus should be on bringing on people to fulfill roles that they are suitably qualified for, regardless of their disability. The challenge here is that the recruiter may be limited by their own vision of what is possible - and the key is to ask the candidate how they might approach a particular task rather than make assumptions.

It is "traditional" to make assumptions about what disabled people can or cannot do based on their diagnosis or "label". Thus one used to hear: "Deaf people can't work here". Enlightened and efficient employers now ask: "Could this particular deaf person, with these skills, do this particular job - if we were flexible and more skilled in making adjustments and more disability competent?"⁵²



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Conduct an accessibility audit

In Hong Kong, companies are obliged 'to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy equal opportunity in entering premises and using facilities therein.'⁵³ Companies are therefore advised to audit all their premises and adapt them to ensure that they are as accessible as possible. Organisations such as Hong Kong Rehabilitation Power in Hong Kong and Disabled People's Association in Singapore can assist companies with carrying out accessibility audits and provide advice on how to deal with any problem areas. Whilst companies might be nervous about the level of investment or changes required, they should take encouragement from companies that have been through this process.

"For us it was an extremely useful exercise. Whilst we were not able to respond to all the recommendations straight away, we were made aware of some of the issues and were able to make changes and modifications over time as routine maintenance updates became necessary. For instance when our lifts were being refitted we were able to install braille buttons and when modifications were being made to our security doors we were able to lower the level of the access pads which we knew were too high for people in wheelchairs. My advice to companies is do the accessibility audit so you have the information you need, then make the improvements step by step."⁵⁴

Make 'reasonable accommodations'

"For many people with a disability, the main barrier to equal opportunities, participation and performance at work is not the disability itself, but certain features of the work that could otherwise be reasonably altered."⁵⁵

Once disabled people are in the workplace it is important for companies to take steps to enable them to be as productive as possible. This may require companies to make adjustments or modifications to the work environment. According to the law in Hong Kong, employers are expected to make 'reasonable accommodations' for people with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines a reasonable accommodation as follows:

"necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms"⁵⁶

Examples of reasonable accommodations in the workplace might include:⁵⁷

- Acquiring or modifying equipment.
- Providing a reader or interpreter or appropriate training or supervision.
- Adapting testing or assessment procedures.
- Altering standard working hours.
- Allocating some of the duties of a position to another person.

Towards Disability Confidence



Many companies are wary of this as they fear the cost and inconvenience caused. However, according to research by the Job Accommodation Network in the US, the average cost of an accommodation is less than US \$500 and most accommodations cost nothing.⁵⁸

“Employers should also take into account the potential benefit of adjustments for all employees and customers, e.g. installing a “voice tape” to a lift or having a lift control panel in braille will assist an employee with visual impairment as well as potentially benefiting customers with a similar disability.”⁵⁹

To overcome some of the fears and concerns about how to approach this subject, companies are encouraged to produce clear policies, procedures and guidelines for making requests and then implementing reasonable adjustments.

Resources are currently available to employers to help provide certain facilities in the workplace for employees with a disability. In Hong Kong for example, the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department provides advice and information on employing persons with a disability. However, as Hong Kong’s Code of Practice on Employment under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance highlights:

“the best advisers available are often persons with a disability themselves or disability groups. Employers are encouraged to consult with them directly in order to gain a better understanding of the practical measures that can be taken to accommodate employees with a disability.”⁶⁰

Offer training and development to disabled employees

Specific steps should be taken to ensure that disabled employees have the same opportunity as others to develop their full potential within the organisation. At the basic level this involves ensuring that processes are not biased and that disabled employees have the same option to take up development programmes as other staff. All staff responsible for staff promotion and development should be trained to ensure that disabled employees, including many who become disabled while in work, are actively enabled to realise their potential. Ensuring equal access to training and development also requires training to be made available to disabled employees in an appropriate way or format.



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Case Study 6: Realising the Potential of Disabled Employees

Organisation: UBS

UBS believes that a workforce formed by people of different backgrounds, cultures and experiences is indispensable in today's global environment and actively works to foster an inclusive corporate culture. One of these initiatives is to fully integrate people with disabilities in the workplace. UBS aims to attract, retain and develop the top talent - regardless of difference or disability, helping all employees reach their full potential which in turn better serves clients, supports the businesses and develops each employee.

UBS's diversity traineeship programme is aimed at university students with disabilities who are interested in pursuing a career in financial services. Over the past four years the programme has provided trainees with knowledge to complement their studies as well as the experience of working in an international firm which, in turn, has helped them make an informed decision about working in the financial services industry. UBS benefits through early access to a high-quality stream of talent - one that is generally untapped - and from the potential to create a more diverse workforce. The interview process is similar to other UBS internship programmes where candidates participate in a standard numeracy/verbal test, followed by interviews with the business area. Both the interview process and the traineeships themselves are structured to accommodate the needs and availability of the students as well as the demands of the business. The traineeships typically start at a minimum of three months, and the interns work part-time for up to 20 hours a week.

As part of the on-boarding process, training and coaching is provided to the team recruiting the intern on how to support the intern. In situations where the infrastructure may not be conducive to the individual with the disability, necessary adjustments or additional hard or software support is provided in order for the intern to perform to their full potential. Other adjustments are made on a case-by-case basis. In all UBS offices, business continuity management plans have been developed to include disability evacuation and other emergency procedures.

To date students with disabilities have worked across all business areas, including IT, Operations, Equities, Investment Banking, Legal and Compliance and the CEO's Office. They perform a variety of roles from research, project management, and financial analysis to the provision of administrative support.



Case Study 7: Realising the Potential of Disabled Employees

Organisation: Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre

The Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre has significant experience in employing people with disabilities. It employed its first person with disabilities 20 years ago and today over 8% of its workforce is disabled. Since 2007 the hotel has been partnering with Delta Senior School, an institute serving the needs of children, adolescents and young adults with mild intellectual disabilities to train them to work in the hotel. Specifically this Holiday Inn hotel has co-developed with Delta Senior School a curriculum that trains the students to work in the hotel's housekeeping function, provided resources to set up a mock hotel room at the school and conducts weekly classes before giving them the opportunity to work for 6-months to continue their training onsite. Forty disabled students have been trained in the last three years and a quarter of these have taken on long-term employment with the hotel. Whilst top management support and patience in working with the disabled individuals in the initial phases are critical to the success of this programme, the hotel highlights that their disabled trainees are as productive as their able-bodied colleagues and often prove to be more diligent and loyal.

Currently, the Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre, together with Eureka Call Centre Systems - a company that has adapted its call centre technology to facilitate the employment of people with visual impairments, are pioneering Singapore's first Centres for Training and Integration. Launched in July 2010, these centres are aimed at enhancing the employability and job readiness of people with disabilities and will run for four years, training 150 people with disabilities for other hotels and call centres. The programme is being co-ordinated by the Enabling Employers Network, an alliance of companies set up in 2008 to promote the hiring of disabled Singaporeans.

Case Study 8: Realising the Potential of Disabled Employees

Organisation: Deutsche Bank

Deutsche Bank endeavors to foster an inclusive culture that values a diverse mix of employees, recognises their unique talents and helps them reach full potential. It realises that diverse teams are smarter teams and that success comes from many perspectives. Hence, it is committed to providing a workplace that embraces differences of all forms including differently-abled employees.

Recently, Deutsche Bank's India franchise launched a 6 month certification programme in association with NASEOH (National Society for Employment Opportunities for Handicapped) for differently abled prospective employees. This created a platform for candidates to have hands-on experience, understand ways of working, build confidence and enhance their employment skills. For the bank, it made employees more sensitive to the needs of this talent pool. The selected participants were extensively trained in the following subjects: Basics of Banking, Corporate Etiquette and Know Your Customer (KYC) Process and were certified by Deutsche Bank. Each trainee was given a buddy to help them settle in at the bank. At the end of the training, the trainees successfully completed KYC forms for over 550 corporate banking clients and helped the bank deliver a business critical outcome.

Deutsche Bank's Service Centre has also taken several steps to make the organisation disability-friendly. This includes conducting accessibility audits and engaging with local NGOs who can help source the right talent and build the bank's position as an inclusive employer. The service centre has also run programmes to create the right corporate culture and sensitise the wider employee base - enabling the smooth integration of differently-abled colleagues into the workforce. This includes sharing the experiences of these employees in an internal newsletter.



4. Value Disabled Customers

Most companies when they start addressing the issue of disability start from the perspective of the workplace issues discussed in the previous section. However, there is much to be done in terms of considering the external or marketplace perspective. As highlighted previously, people with various disabilities make up a key part of any company's customer base, and by ignoring their needs and interests, companies are potentially alienating a significant proportion of their target customer population. Valuing disabled customers involves considering the interests and needs of people with disabilities - working from the marketing and delivery of the product or service right back to the initial point of product or service design.

Ensure company is accessible

Valuing disabled customers starts with a company demonstrating that it is interested in attracting the business of disabled people by taking steps to enable them to access the organisation, its products and services. This applies at various levels - not just in terms of the physical accessibility of an office premise or retail outlet, but also in terms of information and marketing materials. Many companies are missing out on engaging with disabled people - whether it be as potential employees or customers, simply because individuals cannot access information about them on their websites or read their marketing brochures. Ensuring the accessibility of their corporate website is an essential first step.⁶¹ The Disabled People's Association in Singapore is active in promoting equal access to the internet and has developed a handbook which aims to help in the development of websites and other electronic content that is universally accessible.⁶² It also provides Web Accessibility Auditing and Certification for Accessible Websites. Other ways of ensuring accessibility include providing information in alternative formats, such as large font, braille or electronic format.

Communicate appropriately with disabled customers

The extent to which a disabled person may feel valued by a company will be reflected in many ways by the messages that a company conveys both directly and indirectly about itself. Companies should think carefully about their branding and communications strategies and ensure that the language, imagery and medium do not serve to exclude people with disabilities. This may be as simple as including positive images of people with disabilities in marketing literature and campaigns, altering the language, or using a variety of formats in communications. Companies should also consider the way they deliver customer service or manage complaints with disabled customers.

Design products and services with disabled people in mind

Ultimately companies should be looking to reach a point where their approach to disability is such that the needs of disabled people are automatically built into the design brief for new products and services. To do this effectively, companies need to find ways to get closer to disabled customers, consulting with them and ensuring that their views are heard in market research and satisfaction surveys. Very few companies in Asia have reached this stage. However, those that do are likely not only to reap the benefits of being first movers in capturing this market share, but also to profit from developing products and services that benefit a far wider range of people than originally intended, namely the growing 'silver market'.



Case Study 9: Valuing Disabled Customers

Organisation: MTR

Carrying an average of 3.9 million passengers every weekday, Hong Kong's rail operator, the MTR Corporation, is regarded as one of the world's leading railways for safety, reliability, customer service and cost efficiency. As such improving access and facilities for all passengers - not only those with disabilities, but also the elderly, people traveling with babies or small children and those who need step-free access, is critical. As part of its commitment to valuing disabled customers, the MTR Corporation provides station by station accessibility information on its website and highlights the facilities it offers for people with different types of impairment. Examples of each are listed below.

- **Facilities for Visually Impaired Passengers:** Tactile guide paths, tactile station maps, escalator audible warning signals, buzzer sounds when door is closing, braille plates installed on ticket machines.
- **Facilities for Hearing Impaired Passengers:** Induction loops, information cards to facilitate communication between passengers and communication staff, flashing information maps, LCD Infopanel.
- **Facilities for Mobility Impaired Passengers:** Disabled toilets, portable removable ramps, wide gates allowing wheelchair access.

Case Study 10: Valuing Disabled Customers

Organisation: Hong Kong Disneyland

Hong Kong Disneyland Resort is dedicated to creating magical memories for all its guests of all ages and of all backgrounds and abilities. With a dedication to providing 'inclusive tourism', the company recognises the importance of valuing its customers with special needs and ensuring that there are no barriers to their enjoyment of the resort. Hong Kong Disneyland has published its own 'Guide Book for Guests with Disabilities' which provides an overview of the special services and facilities available and a review of the accessibility of each attraction. The services it offers guests with special needs are also promoted on its website. The resort strives to provide mainstream access whenever possible so all guests can use the main entrance to an attraction. The park is built on a piece of flat land and attractions require no or minimal level change. Nearly all its attractions, shops, restaurants and shows are accessible to all. Parade routes and show areas have designated viewing areas for guests with disabilities. Standard wheelchairs are available for rental and a special shuttle is available to transport people with disabilities between attractions on request. Service animals are welcome in nearly all locations throughout the resort. Tactile maps are provided throughout the resort in English and Traditional Chinese with braille and both audio and braille guides are available to provide guests information about the attractions. Some attractions and service locations use an inductive loop audio enhancement to assist guests requiring use of a hearing aid with communication. The resort also provides sign language interpretation for guests at some live theme park shows (eg "Festival of the Lion King") with a minimum of seven days' notice.



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Assessing Disability Confidence: A Senior Leader's Strategic Checklist

Source: The Employers' Forum on Disability

Senior business leaders can assess to what extent their organisations have achieved disability confidence by reviewing the following strategic checklist:

- Do you have a widely understood written commitment - publicly supported by senior executives - to valuing disabled people as talent, employees and customers, and becoming a disability confident organisation
- Can your colleagues readily explain why disability confidence is good for business?
- Do managers know what they and their teams should do if you are to at least meet your legal obligations to disabled applicants, employees and customers? And why best practice always transforms legal obligation to business benefit? (Applicable in certain geographies in Asia only.)
- Have all your premises been carefully audited and then adapted to ensure they are as accessible as possible, for as many employees and customers as possible? Does every refurbishment leave them even more accessible?
- Do you train and equip your people to welcome disabled and older clients and to quickly make those adjustments which enable them readily, and with dignity, to access your goods and services? Do you enable your corporate and public sector clients to benefit from disability confidence?
- Do your IT colleagues ensure technology enables disabled applicants and employees to realise their full potential? Are all your online recruitment, e-commerce, internet and intranet processes attractive and accessible to disabled applicants, employees and customers?
- Is everyone responsible for promotion and staff development trained to ensure that disabled employees, including the many who become disabled while in work, are actively enabled to realise their potential?
- Do you have well publicised policies which enable you to deliver confidential, timely and effective reasonable adjustments, to include communications in alternative media for disabled applicants and employees?
- Do you require suppliers to be 'disability competent' particularly those which directly affect your ability to deliver adjustments to applicants, employees and customers, such as IT, Facilities Management, Recruitment, Occupational Health, Market Research, HR, Training, new product development?
- Do your investments in corporate responsibility reflect the emerging global positioning of disability as a civil and human rights issue, and as an economic as well as societal priority



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Hong Kong and Singapore are making progress in terms of encouraging and promoting the greater participation of people with disabilities in society. There is an encouraging move away from the traditional 'medical' model to the 'social' model of supporting people with disabilities and a growing awareness of the need to enable people with disabilities to contribute on a more equal basis to society. Whilst more can always be done, governments in both geographies have taken commendable steps in this regard.

Now, the challenge and opportunity is for the corporate sector in this region to also realise the benefits of engaging on the subject of disability. Much can be learnt from the experience of companies in the US and Europe, where the needs of disabled people are not only more widely recognised but also embedded into day-to-day management and business thinking.

What is required in Asia is a significant shift in the way that businesses view disability - from merely a corporate philanthropic gesture to a strategic business issue. We need to see a gradual mainstreaming of the subject - what has been referred to in this Resource Guide as the building of disability confidence, such that considering the needs of disabled stakeholders becomes integral to the way that business is done.

In order for this shift to occur, companies need to understand the business case for realising the potential of disabled employees and valuing disabled customers. In so doing they will be motivated to take steps to remove barriers and make reasonable adjustments to enable people with disabilities to maximise their contribution - both as employees and customers. The good news is that such steps will not only benefit the growing number of people with disabilities, but in driving a more flexible and responsive approach, will ultimately benefit all employees and all customers.

Community Business is committed to its mission of 'leading, inspiring and supporting companies to have a positive impact on people and communities' and in this respect to helping companies become more confident in employing and serving people with disabilities. It is our hope that this Resource Guide will help companies understand the business rationale and encourage them to take steps to build a culture of inclusiveness into the very fabric of the organisation. Inclusive environments and cultures speak volumes about a company's brand and values - and serve as a key market differentiator, from both a customer and employee perspective. There is much work that needs to be done - but the benefits of a diverse workforce will always outweigh the costs.



Appendix 1: Disability Advisory Group



CHONG Chan Yau

Chong Chan Yau is currently the Director of Student Development of HKU. Chan Yau has also served as the Executive Director of Oxfam Hong Kong and is a member of the Board of Oxfam International - an organisation working for lasting change to global poverty. Chan Yau is active in promoting civil society in Hong Kong. He is the Chairman of the People's Council on Sustainable Development and a member of the Education and Publicity Subcommittee of the Council for Sustainable Development which is an advisory committee to the Hong Kong SAR Government on sustainability issues. Chan Yau is visually impaired.



Joseph KWOK

Joseph Kwok was the Chairman of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, which advises the Government on development and monitoring of disability concerned policies and services. He was an invited speaker at the 2004 Annual Conference of National Disability and Business Council of USA 2004 and the Global Diversity Network in 2005 and 2006. He had been an active member of the Multi-stake Holders Committee of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on disability concerns, and participated in the drafting and monitoring of the Biwako Millennium Framework for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 2003-2012, post BMF strategic planning, and the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Hansen LEE

Hansen Lee is the Chairman of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee Subcommittee on Access, being the principal advisory body to the Government on the subject of the Access, Transport, IT, Sport and Recreation needs of persons with disabilities in Hong Kong. He is also a member of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, a member of Task Force on Digital Inclusion of Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and also an advisor of The Hong Kong Association of the Deaf. In 2009, Hansen was awarded the Medal of Honour for his valuable contribution to the well-being of the disabled.



Porsche POH

Porsche Poh is the Founder and Executive Director of Silver Ribbon (Singapore), a non-profit organisation that combats mental health stigma and encourages early treatment in Singapore. She is also a Mental Health First Aid Instructor certified by University of Melbourne and MHFA Singapore. She is currently a Board Member of World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) (2009 - 2011), a committee member of Action Group for Mental Illness (AGMI), a member of the SGH-Postgraduate Allied Health Institute (PGAHI) Advisory Board and a member of the Clinical Practice Guidelines on Schizophrenia Workgroup. She is also presently serving on the stakeholder board of the Singapore Mental Health Study. In 2008, she received The Outstanding Young Persons of Singapore (TOYP) Award, a prestigious award to recognise young leaders who have excelled in their field of expertise as well as making a difference to society.

Towards Disability Confidence



Susan SCOTT-PARKER

Susan Scott-Parker OBE is the Founder and Chief Executive of Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD), the world's leading employers' organisation focussed on disability as it affects business. Susan established a unique senior leadership team chaired by EFD's President John Varley, Group CEO Barclays Bank. The President's Group signals to colleagues, customers, and government that disability is a strategic business and societal priority. Together with the Director General of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Susan also chairs EFD's Business Taskforce on Accessible Technology. In 2005 Susan led the development of the Disability Standard and a biennial benchmark exercise that measures business performance on disability. Known internationally for her ability to mobilise employers to the mutual benefit of business and disabled people, Susan helped the ILO to establish the Sri Lankan Employers' Network on Disability, continues to work closely with the Australian Employers' Network on Disability and other emerging networks. Susan pioneered the world's first leadership programme for people with disabilities, in partnership with the Coverdale Organisation.



Professor T H TSE

T H Tse is a Professor in Computer Science at The University of Hong Kong and has been actively promoting equal opportunities for people with a disability for about forty years. He has been a vice-chairperson of Rehabilitation Alliance Hong Kong, an honorary secretary of the Hong Kong PHAB Association, a council member of SAHK, a member of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) of the Government of the Hong Kong SAR, the Chairman of the RAC Sub-Committee on Access, a member of the Admissions, Budgets and Allocations Committee of the Community Chest, a committee member of the Digital Solidarity Fund of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, a member of the Organizing Committee for the Hong Kong Abilympics, and a member of the Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.



Nadine O VOGEL

Nadine O Vogel is the Founder and President of Springboard Consulting LLC. Springboard works with multinational corporations in the US and around the globe, on mainstreaming disability in the workforce, workplace and marketplace. Prior to founding Springboard, Nadine held a variety of senior level positions in both Corporate America and the non-profit sectors. Nadine is the author of DIVE IN, Springboard into the Profitability, Productivity and Potential of the Special Needs Workforce, a must-read business book. She has also authored numerous articles and is recognised as a powerful motivational, inspirational speaker. Recognised for her civic and professional activities, Nadine has received many awards and featured on media. Nadine received an MBA from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, CA and a BS in Industrial Psychology from the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC. She resides in New Jersey with her husband and two daughters, both of whom have special needs.



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore



Deborah WAN

Deborah Wan is a veteran social worker and sits on the Advisory Committee on Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities, the Advisory Committee on Social Work Training & Manpower Planning, and the Medical Council of Hong Kong. She has been involved in the field of community psychiatric rehabilitation for over twenty years and served as the chief executive of the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (NLPRA) between 1981 to 2010. Deborah is also the Chair of the Commission on Work & Employment of the Asia-Pacific Region of Rehabilitation International and Vice Chairperson of the Joint Council for the Physically and Mentally Disabled in Hong Kong.



Judy WEE

Judy Wee is the Founder and Principal Consultant of LevelField Consultants, which conducts access audits and provides advice to developers, architects, town planners, facility managers, service providers and businesses on universal design concepts and addresses issues on compliance to the Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility. She hopes to improve the level of awareness on the need for a safe and accessible built environment to improve the quality of life for everyone in society. She holds an MSc in Accessibility and Universal Design. Since the early 1990s, Judy has been actively involved in regional-, national- and community-level committees and tasks forces, to advocate for policy changes on issues pertaining to accessibility of public buildings & the built environment, public transport & infrastructure, housing as well as promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream society. This work involved collaboration with government officials, grassroots organisations, civil societies, academia and institutions. She has been instrumental in the publication of the Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility in Buildings in 1995, 2002 and 2007. A person with physical disabilities herself, Judy believes that people with disabilities should be empowered to live lives to the fullest. With this belief, she advocates the need for an inclusive environment to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream society.



Nelson YIP

Beijing Olympics torchbearer and official representative of the Paralympics Equestrian Events, Nelson Yip is chief executive of 3 companies. An advocate of industry development and community service, Nelson holds several executive positions on both governmental and non-governmental committees. A competitive equestrian, certified PADI scuba diver, columnist and keen musician, he holds a BSc in Statistics and Computer Science, an MA in Quantitative Analysis in business and an MBA. He is CEO of EP Power and Appetizup Co Ltd.



Appendix 2: Disability Resources

Hong Kong



平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

Equal Opportunities Commission's "Barrier-free Life" Website

The EOC has recently launched a new webpage, namely "Barrier-free Life" which aims to promote barrier-free resources covering various aspects of life and encourage discussions on different accessibility issues. The webpage covers the following areas: premises, transportation and travel, apparel and dining, employment, information technology, language, accessibility training and resources, arts and sports, culture, as well as treaties and local legislation. For more information see: www.eoc.org.hk/EOC/GraphicsFolder/showcontent.aspx?content=Barrier-free%20Life&mode=ce



香港復康聯會
Joint Council for the Physically and
Mentally Disabled

The Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities

The Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities (the Joint Council) is an umbrella organisation of some 140 rehabilitation organisations and self-help organisations of persons with disabilities in Hong Kong. The aims of the Joint Council are at promoting the coordination and improvement of services and facilities for persons with disabilities, participating in policy review and formulation, conducting public education and developing new rehabilitation programmes. The Joint Council plays an important role in both local and international rehabilitation field.

The Joint Council was incorporated into the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) and became the Rehabilitation Division of HKCSS in November 1965. For more information, see www.hkcss.org.hk/rh/index_e.htm



Hong Kong Rehabilitation Power (HKRP)

Founded by 9 dedicated disabled professionals in 1995, HKRP is a non-profit organisation which strives to enhance the welfare of handicapped persons and individuals with physical, mental health and chronic illnesses in Hong Kong. Their mission is to empower people with disabilities to become self-sufficient, live independently, and blend into all walks of life. They are also advocates of the betterment of Hong Kong's policies on disabilities and rehabilitation and the barrier-free access across the territory by launching "Barrier-free Community Check" Campaign where checks were conducted with a vast variety of corporations, organisations and schools on whether the transports, social and commercial amenities are made wheelchair-user-friendly. For more information, see: www.rehabpower.org.hk/



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Selective Placement Division

The Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department provides free recruitment service to employers and free employment service to job seekers with disabilities. Its objective is to assist people with disabilities in securing jobs in open employment that best suit their abilities, skills, qualifications and experience, with the ultimate aim of integrating them into the community and helping them to be financially independent. For more information, see: www.jobs.gov.hk/isps/

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) is the executive arm for implementing the welfare policies formulated by the Labour and Welfare Bureau. SWD strives to provide members of the public with a wide range of welfare services, such as social security and this includes offering a wide range of services to people with disabilities. For more information, see: www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/

Shine Skills Centre

Shine Skills Centre is a member of VTC Group which provides dedicated skills training and support services for development of people with disabilities aged 15 or above, helping them to develop their potential and enhance employability. For more information, see: www.shine.edu.hk



A Hong Kong Travel Guide With a Difference by Sarah Fuller of Wheel Away Disabled Travel

This Hong Kong city guide is the first accessible city guide of its kind in Asia for people with disability and contains detailed information on accessible transportation, over 100 hotels, 370+ restaurants, and top tips for sightseeing and shopping. It contains practical information about getting around Hong Kong, and is not only for people with disability, but also for seniors and families with children in prams who struggle to find a straight forward way around. For more information see: www.wheelawaydisabledtravel.com

Towards Disability Confidence

Singapore



BizLink Centre Singapore Ltd (BizLink)

Bizlink Centre is a non-profit voluntary welfare organisation with more than 20 years of capabilities and experiences in solely providing vocational assessment and training, sheltered and open employment services for the needy disadvantaged People with Disabilities. Their mission is to reach out to people with disabilities in Singapore to assist them in achieving independence, dignity and integration into the mainstream of society through open and sheltered employment. For more information, see: www.bizlink.org.sg



Disabled People's Association (DPA)

The Disabled People's Association (DPA) is a non-profit, cross-disability organisation, officially registered in Singapore in 1986. Their mission is to be the voice of people with disabilities, helping them to achieve full participation and equal status in the society through independent living. DPA's services include providing IT Services, Training, Public Education Talks and etc. DPA also promotes Universal Web Accessibility in Singapore and provides web accessibility audit and certification for accessible websites. For more information, see: www.dpa.org.sg

Enabling Employers Network

The Enabling Employers Network is an alliance of like minded employers who seek to champion and advance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Singapore. The network members come from a variety of industries that have already engaged PWDs as part of their workforce. Since its inception in 2007, the EEN has reached out to over 1000 Singapore companies from all industries advocating fair employment for PWDs. They have also provided valuable advice on how to hire and integrate this manpower resource amongst their industry peers.

Currently heading this initiative as Chairman of Enabling Employers is Mr Shantha De Silva, Director of Operations - Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines, InterContinental Hotels Group. The Secretariat to the Enabling Employers Network is the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF). For more information, see <http://jobs-odf.com.sg/Home/EnableEmployers.aspx>

Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS)

The Ministry of Community Development, Youth, and Sports (MCYS) is a ministry of the Government of Singapore responsible for building a cohesive and resilient nation that can overcome challenges through their policies, community infrastructure, programmes and services. MCYS's mission is to build a cohesive and resilient society by fostering socially responsible individuals, inspired and committed youth, strong and stable families, a caring and active community and a sporting people. For more information, see: www.mcys.gov.sg



A Resource Guide for Employers in Hong Kong and Singapore



National Council of Social Services (NCSS)

The National Council of Social Services (NCSS) is the umbrella body for about 400 member volunteer welfare organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in social services, to enhance the capabilities of social service organisations and to promote strategic partnerships for social services. In 2009, S\$198 million was disbursed to 526 programmes in the social service sector. For more information, see: www.ncss.org.sg

Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices

Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices (TAFEP)

TAFEP's mission is to promote fair and merit-based employment practices so that employees can realise their full potential and help employers achieve organisational excellence. Leveraging its unique tripartite identity, TAFEP works in partnership with employer organisations, unions and the government to create awareness and facilitate the adoption of fair employment practices based on merit of skills or ability and not on discriminatory criteria such as age, race, gender, religion, family status or disability. For more information, see: www.fairemployment.sg

International



Dialogue in the Dark

Dialogue in the Dark is a social enterprise that was started in Germany and has now spread all over the world to over 26 countries and 150 cities. It is a unique and inspiring experience, with three different programmes targeted for different demographics: the Experiential Exhibition for the public, the Executive Workshop for corporations, and Educational Activities for students. They believe in the power of the medium - darkness. By providing the opportunity to encounter with visually impaired people, they offer participants and visitors a unique and new experience. Their programmes not only foster learning, but are also innovative and entertaining. For more information, see: www.dialogue-in-the-dark.com



Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD)

The Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD) is the world's leading employers' organisation focused on disability as it affects business. Its mission is to enable companies to become disability confident by making it easier to recruit and retain disabled employees and to serve disabled customers. They make it easier to employ and do business with disabled people. For more information, see: www.efd.org.uk



Springboard Consulting

Springboard Consulting run by disability expert, Nadine Vogel works with US and global firms on how to appropriately support employees who either have a disability or who have a child or other dependent with special needs through diversity, work life and human resource initiatives. Springboard Consulting organises the annual Disability Matters Awards Banquet and Conference in the United States. The highly coveted awards are given to corporations that are leading the way in terms of supporting people who either have a disability or who have a child or other dependent with special needs in the workplace through diversity, work life and/or human resource initiatives and in marketing to this segment of the population in the consumer space. For more information, see: www.consultspringboard.com/



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- ¹¹ As per the Digest, figures refer to the number/prevalence rate of persons with one or more of the eight selected types of disability, viz (a) restriction in body movement; (b) seeing difficulty; (c) hearing difficulty; (d) speech difficulty; (e) mental illness/mood disorder; (f) Autism; (g) SpLD; and (h) AD/HD. A person might have more than one selected type of disability and hence the overall number/prevalence rate of persons with disabilities is smaller than the sum of the numbers/prevalence rates of persons with individual types of disability.
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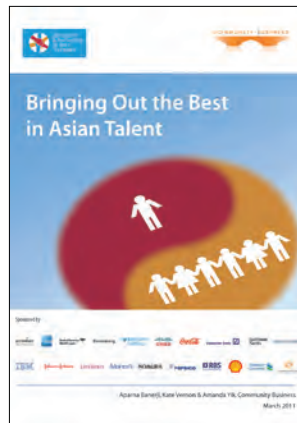
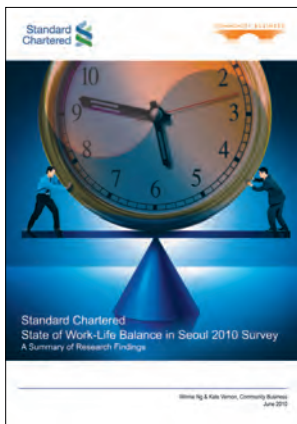
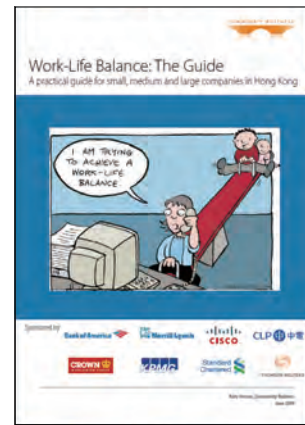
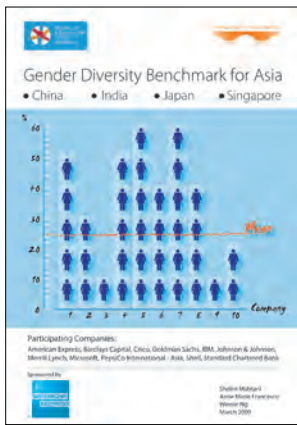


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"Corporations throughout the world are responding to the compelling business and ethical case for attracting and retaining employees from the widest possible pool of talent - including people with disabilities. They are also increasingly aware that disability confident companies which learn how to adapt for disabled applicants and colleagues will in turn help them to respond to the rising expectations of hundreds of millions of disabled people worldwide, as customers and stakeholders in the communities in which they do business. We are delighted to support Community Business to enable global business to work to the mutual benefit of business and people with disabilities everywhere."

[Susan Scott-Parker, The Employers' Forum on Disability](#)

Businesses that are creative and innovative in creating employment opportunities for disabled people at the same time empower the productivity of the entire workforce, thus responding constructively to the challenges of a society in which they do business. In turn businesses will achieve long term sustainable development. I commend Community Business for bringing this important subject to the attention of the corporate sector and am delighted to endorse this publication.

[Joseph Kwok, Rehabilitation Advisory Committee of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region](#)

"It is noteworthy that employers are not only opening up employment opportunities for PWDs but they are also starting to recognise the contribution that PWDs can make to their organisations. More encouragingly, employers are demonstrating heightened awareness of the value of hiring PWDs based on merit, focusing on what they can do, rather on what they cannot. To grow as responsible employers, we need to focus beyond the bottom line: we may want to look at the "top line" where our workers can strive to do their best. A company able to care for and put in the effort to bring out the best in their employees with disabilities will surely be a company that will bring out the best in all their workers."

[Shantha De Silva, Enabling Employers Network, Singapore](#)

This publication is also available in large font format and accessible PDF format and can be downloaded from the Community Business website. For further information please contact us directly.

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