



SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY INTO SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

A toolkit for small and medium enterprises
in tourism and hospitality

Hospitality Disability Network WA Inc.



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FOREWORD

Hospitality Disability Network WA Inc. is delighted to publish this toolkit to provide small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism and hospitality industry with practical guidance to support their efforts to employ people with disability.

This toolkit is part of the Disability Employment Tourism Local Navigators Pilot, which is funded by the Department of Social Services.

We appreciate the input from a number of tourism and hospitality businesses in the Perth region who informed the development of this toolkit through their generous participation in workshops, surveys and one-on-one discussions. Their contribution benefits the industry as we all strive to increase disability confidence and contribute to a more inclusive community for all.



INTRODUCING HOSPITALITY DISABILITY NETWORK WA

Hospitality Disability Network WA Inc. (HDNWA) is proud to be the only industry-led initiative for employers in the WA tourism and hospitality industry who are open to disability employment.

A not-for-profit organisation, our volunteer board and committed team are hospitality, tourism and disability employment professionals with a hands-on approach to helping employers understand the benefits to their business that employees with disability can bring to their services.

Why is this important?

Because one in five Australians of working age have a disability, but only 53% participate in the workforce compared with 84% for people without a disability. This group of people with disability is therefore an untapped resource to help fill the shortage of labour in the tourism and hospitality industry. It may also be an important part of your social value brand – how you want to be perceived by your stakeholders and customers – which is continuing to be vital in attracting talent and customers.



PURPOSE

To support the hospitality and tourism industry in Western Australia to increase sustainable employment opportunities for people with a disability.

VISION

To build disability confidence in the hospitality and tourism industry and become the leading industry employing people with disability in Western Australia.

VALUES



Impact

We make a difference through the pursuit of meaningful employment for people living with disability.



Challenge

We are courageous. We challenge bias and advocate for positive change.



Integrity

We are honest and fair. We do what we say we will do.



Respect

Everyone is an individual and should be treated as such. Everyone deserves courtesy and empathy.

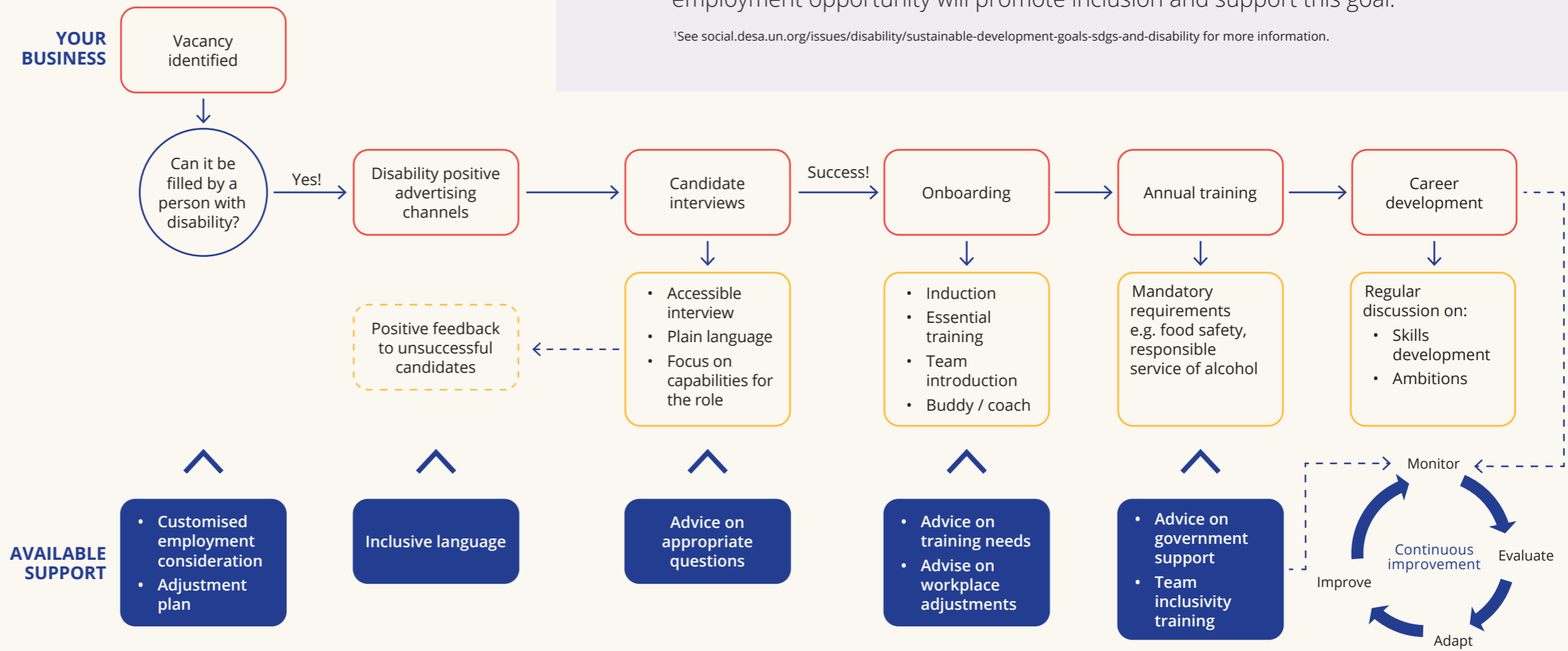
EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

There are many ways to promote employment of people with disability in your business.

People with disability can join your business through a range of channels such as online advertisements, signage at your premises asking for staff, word-of-mouth, referral from an existing staff member, or using a paid recruitment service.

What many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are surprised to learn is that they can access tailored, no-cost recruitment and onboarding support through government-funded employment services providers (Disability Employment Services or Job Services Australia). Rather than paying to advertise through commercial websites, employers can take advantage of free online recruitment support through Workforce Australia for Business. An added bonus is the possibility of wage subsidies and funded workplace modifications to help support your new employee.

Employment phases



Did you know?

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are relevant for people with disability. For example, Goal 8 is 'decent work and economic growth' for member nations. This includes employment for people with disability. Another goal closely linked to this is 'reduced inequalities' – giving a person with disability an employment opportunity will promote inclusion and support this goal.¹

¹See social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-and-disability for more information.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS

Employers can access a range of Australian Government initiatives to support sustainable disability employment. For tourism and hospitality SMEs in particular, they can leverage HDNWA's experience in navigating these services to save them time in accessing support programs to secure back and front of house employees ready to 'hit the ground' running in busy service environments.

JobAccess

JobAccess is a free service for information and expert advice on employing a person with disability. It offers information and access to a range of no-cost supports through its Employer Toolkit that give employers practical advice they can apply in their business, including inclusive policies and recruitment, getting your workplace ready, and managing staff.

They even provide policy and procedure templates that you can tailor to your business. This includes information to help consider what your business may include in a Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

JobAccess is also the gateway to accessing support for employees with disability through the Employment Assistance Fund.

Employment Assistance Fund

The Employment Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for work-related modifications, equipment and services to help people with disability get employment and perform their work as independently and productively as possible. Both new and existing employees may be eligible for assistance.

For employers, the Fund makes accommodating workers with disability in the workplace easier. It can help cover the costs of supports and services, such as:

- modifications to the physical work environment
- modifications to work vehicles
- adaptive technology
- information and communication devices
- Auslan interpreting services can be funded for employees who are deaf or hearing impaired
- assistance is available for disability awareness training.

Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support

To help eligible apprentice employees with disability reach their full potential, the Australian Government provides employers with support through Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS).

Apprentices can also access additional support for their off-the-job training, such as tutoring, interpreting and mentoring support. This is paid to the Registered Training Organisation, but it is good for employers to be aware of because it encourages their apprentices to get as much support as possible to complete their training and add value to their business.

To find out how your business could access DAAWS incentives for an apprentice with disability, visit www.apprenticeships.gov.au.

Disability Employment Services

Disability Employment Services (DES) help employers to recruit and retain employees with disability (please note that HDNWA is not a DES provider). DES providers operate from hundreds of locations Australia-wide where they assist job seekers with disability, injury or health condition.

For employers, DES providers offer free services such as:

- helping to design a job to make it suitable for employees with disability
- recruitment advice and job matching
- support to help new employees with disability settle into their role, including on-the-job and offsite support
- disability awareness training for employers and their staff
- support to access financial supports, such as wage subsidies, workplace modifications and assistive technology.

Job Services Australia

Australia's largest government funded employer service, Job Services Australia (JSA) providers support disadvantaged job seekers, including those with disability. Providers work in a similar way to those in the DES program, helping to match employers with available candidates and helping employers and job seekers to access apprenticeships and traineeships.

Workforce Australia for Business

Designed to provide a one-stop-shop online recruitment solution for employers, Workforce Australia enables employers to access tools to help them find and hire the right people with ease. Registered employers can create a business profile to advertise jobs and to search and review candidates.

For busy tourism and hospitality employers, this is a hassle-free solution available through www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/businesses/help/hire/platform and backed by an Employer Hotline on 13 17 15.

No-cost online disability awareness training

Supported by funding from the Australian Government, Disability Awareness has developed a range of free online disability awareness training modules, which can form part of your staff training plan. This is particularly beneficial for busy tourism and hospitality businesses, where staff often work long and unsociable hours, so a self-paced online solution is a great option.

Learn more about the disability awareness e-learning modules through www.disabilityawareness.com.au.

CUSTOMISED EMPLOYMENT

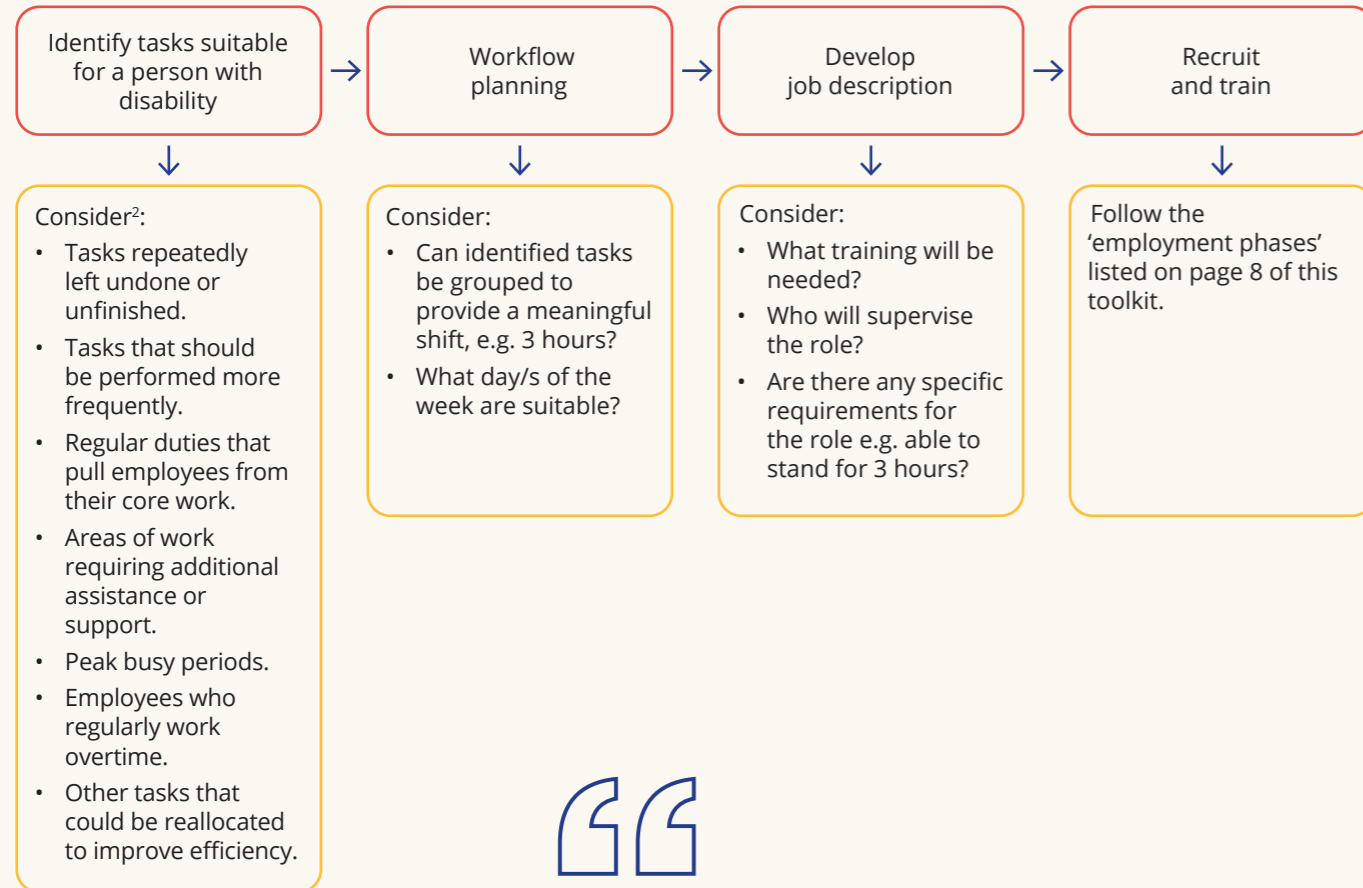
A great way for a business to expand the opportunities it provides to people with disability is to consider customised employment, sometimes known as 'job carving'. The exercise aims to free-up existing employees to focus on their core tasks, while a person with disability has the opportunity to undertake the non-core tasks and in doing so gain meaningful employment that benefits everyone.

To get to this point, the employer needs to understand the tasks each role performs across their organisation and which of those tasks can best be fulfilled by someone else, especially where new roles can be created for a person with disability. While an employer can do this analysis themselves, HDNWA's team can also help by connecting them with DES or other providers who offer this service.

How can customised employment work in practice?

A café pays their manager \$45 per hour. Her duties include a customer-facing role, promoting private hospitality events, and laundering linen. If the laundry task was handled by someone else, say at \$27 per hour, the manager has more time for their core duties that returns direct value to the business by increasing sales. The café gains an additional resource who may be able to provide support in other areas during peak service times while also creating a social and economic benefit by providing a meaningful employment role for a person who loves doing laundry!

Customised employment process



Did you know?

Employees with disability have better retention rates, higher attendance, and experience fewer occupational health and safety incidents than those without.

² Based on the Australian Human Rights Commission IncludeAbility initiative's guide at www.includeability.gov.au/resources-employers/customising-job-person-disability

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

With the underemployment of people with disability in Australia, giving someone an opportunity to join your business will help them to achieve economic independence, positive health impacts, and community inclusion. Often it can be the first opportunity that sets them on a path for a long and fulfilling career...and what better industry than hospitality and tourism?

Research shows that people with disability are highly loyal employees due to better retention rates, have higher attendance, and experience fewer occupational health and safety incidents than those without disability³. This means that disability confident employers can reap the benefits of inclusive employment practices.

We also know that it's beneficial to staff a business that reflects the community in which it operates – given that around 20% of Australians live with disability, tourism and hospitality businesses can expect that almost one in five of their customers live with disability⁴. This means that having staff with disability will support a more inclusive business for staff, customers, and the wider community.

³For more information see www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/6-economic-and-social-benefits-employing-people-disability

⁴For more information see www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia-in-brief/contents/how-many-people-have-disability





Did you know?

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 'People with disability in Australia' 2022 publication shows that just 53% of working-age people with disability are in the workforce, compared with 84% of those without disability⁵. This is despite people with disability typically being highly reliable and enthusiastic. Tourism and hospitality businesses can support disability employment by becoming disability champions.

⁵See www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/employment/labour-force-participation for more information.

ACCESSIBLE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

There are many simple things employers can do to make their recruitment practices more inclusive for people with disability.

Advertising your vacancy

Advertising should be pitched using inclusive language and demonstrate your credentials as an inclusive employer. For people with disability, this may include:

- Focusing on language around people passionate about providing a customer experience and having a strong work ethic rather than physical attributes.
- Emphasising that you have accessible premises and flexible work arrangements or your willingness to make reasonable adjustments and being able to adapt work to accommodate diverse needs.
- Making it clear if there are any essential requirements of the role, like climbing stairs, manual handling etc., or pre-employment medical assessments that candidates need to be aware of.
- Highlighting your association with HDNWA or other like-minded organisations representing the industry and people with disability.
- Stating in the advertisement 'We're an inclusive employer and welcome people with disability to apply'.

Conducting an accessible interview

There are many ways to make an interview accessible to more people. Taking some simple steps will give candidates the best chance to shine and make a positive impression on you!

Accessible interview strategy	Why this helps find the best candidate for the role
Be clear prior to the interview about the expectations and details	<p>Consider ways to put the candidate at ease about the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the interview start time, say how long it's expected to last and your expectations on what to wear on the day. Explain what will happen during the interview, such as: 'The interview will be very relaxed. First, Alayah will show you around the dining area and kitchen, then Aisha will sit down with you to go through the interview questions. You can also ask us any questions you have about the role.' Give a timeline for when you'll get back to candidates, e.g. 'Aisha will call you by Friday to let you know the outcome.'
Consider inviting the candidate to bring a support person	<p>For some candidates, this will be the first time they've ever had a job interview and they may find it nerve-racking. To help, you can invite them to bring a support person to the interview. This could be a member of the HDNWA team, someone from their DES provider, or a friend.</p>
Provide questions in advance	<p>Interview questions aren't typically provided in advance to candidates, which means they need to think quickly at the interview. But for many neurodiverse people or others with disability who've been out of the workforce for a while, the stress of providing a coherent answer quickly won't always present their capabilities in the best light.</p> <p>An easy solution is to support interview candidates by offering questions in advance of the interview so that they have time to prepare.</p>
Use plain language	<p>Try to avoid long words and jargon in your written information and verbal communication. Also consider using images and diagrams to help reduce the number of words needed to explain things.</p>

Accessible interview strategy	Why this helps find the best candidate for the role
Ask questions relevant to the job	<p>You may rely on a list of standard interview questions, but this won't always genuinely reflect what's involved in a role. For example, hypothetical questions that the person performing the role would be very unlikely to need to manage on their own, such as a power outage or telecommunications failure.</p> <p>Focusing on questions that directly relate to the role itself will better reveal a candidate's suitability.</p> <p>And remember to never ask a person 'what's your disability?' – apart from risking embarrassment to the candidate, it could be seen as discriminatory because there's no legal obligation for a person to disclose their disability.</p>
Relax – candidates are first and foremost a person, just like you	<p>Showing that you're at ease during the interview process will help the candidate to calm any nerves they may have, setting the scene for an interview where they can be themselves and focus on demonstrating their enthusiasm for the role.</p>

Giving feedback to candidates

Whether successful or not, candidates benefit from feedback on their interview. While finding the time in a busy business to do this can be hard, positive feedback really has an impact by giving them a confidence boost that can help them in applying for future roles. Examples include:

- Even though you weren't successful this time, you presented yourself very professionally which is very important in our industry.
- Our team enjoyed meeting you and agree that you'll be much more ready to start bar work once you've finished your hospitality course.
- While another candidate was successful, with your permission I'd like to give your details to another café owner I know because they've just started looking for a barista.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION

Supporting an employee with disability to secure a job is fantastic. Employers can help maximise the chance of their new team member achieving sustainable employment by understanding their ambitions and supporting an inclusive workplace.

Workplace adjustments

The Australian Government can provide financial support for reasonable workplace adjustments that helps a person with disability perform their job. These are available through the Employment Assistance Fund – see page 11 for more information.

Inclusive workplaces

A disability inclusive workplace sets the scene for staff to work harmoniously together and best serve your customers. Simple things SMEs can do to foster inclusiveness include:

- Accessing free disability awareness training for the team, especially in advance of a new staff member with disability joining, which enables everyone to think first of the person's strengths, not their disability. This also supports leaving the choice up to the person with disability to talk about it rather than it 'being announced' by someone else to the team.
- Making inclusiveness a topic at staff meetings.
- Ensuring invitations to any events and celebrations you hold for staff are extended to all staff and are accessible.
- While it can be nuanced and not perfect for everyone's situation, check that the language used in your policies, standard operating procedures, and other communications is as inclusive as practical.
- Leaders 'walking the talk' by showing how they interact with courtesy and respect to staff and customers with disability.
- Be open to feedback from your employees and customers to make things better for everyone.



Career progression

Like any other person, an employee with disability will often be just as keen to progress in their role, your business and the tourism and hospitality industry. Giving them the opportunity to develop requires the employer to consider career pathways, which may include:

- Understanding their personal goals around work and where they see themselves in a year – sitting down with them to discuss this and how they've been performing to date will help them to consider how they're progressing toward their goals and, with your support, where they can improve.
- Observing their competencies and where these can complement other tasks in your business. For example, being very organised in managing laundry may translate well to table setting, or if a person with the skill to mix cocktails is encouraged into customer service training then they'd have more confidence to promote a wider range of beverages that enhances the overall customer experience.
- Knowing what training is out there, such as by talking with HDNWA, so you can better encourage and support employees to enrol in relevant training, including publicly funded training and reduced fee qualifications.

BUSINESS AND DISABILITY CHAMPIONS

Large businesses who get positive results from hiring a person with disability often have 'disability champions' in their organisation as a focal point to source new ideas, advocate for best practices, and promote disability awareness. For an SME, this idea can be applied by:

- Offering disability awareness training to their team to promote an inclusive workplace culture and challenge assumptions being made about ability.
- Using key dates in the disability calendar, such as the International Day of People with Disability, to communicate the occasion to stakeholders through posters and any social media you use, which could include special promotions offered to customers to mark the occasion.
- Buddying up the new employee with a more experienced one who will be there to show them the ropes, understand your processes, and network with other members of your team.
- Actively developing training pathways for employees with disability to develop their skills and career.
- Find reasons to celebrate and recognise the entire team in championing disability confidence.
- Getting involved in employer networks, such as HDNWA, as a great way to increase disability confidence and share best practice successes with like-minded employers.

Disability Confidence Checklist

HDNWA can assist and guide you with all of these checklist items.

- Written commitment to being a disability confident employer, such as through a Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Complete disability confidence training for the team, with regular reinforcement during toolbox talks and staff meetings.
- Recruitment and onboarding process that gives people with disability a fair chance to understand role requirements and respond to vacancies and interviews.
- Inclusive working environment like having a process in place for reasonable adjustments, using images instead of words to describe menus, and using inclusive language in communications.
- Compliance with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act and WA Equal Opportunity Act.
- Partnerships with organisations like HDNWA to continue to build disability confidence.

HOW HDNWA CAN HELP EMPLOYERS

Being WA's only industry-led initiative of its type, HDNWA offers a strong value proposition to tourism and hospitality industry employers.

HDNWA's proven model to help employers in being disability confident streamlines the process for them to find successful candidates for their business and then sustain their employment. We do this by:

- working with each of our members to understand their business requirements
- engaging with employment services providers and other referrers to identify candidates.
- providing tools (like this one), e-learning platforms, workshops, inhouse staff training and continuing support to provide the best and most sustainable result for both you and your new employee. Visit www.hdnwa.org.au for more information.

This means when a role becomes available, we quickly identify a candidate who we've pre-screened and are confident will be suitable for your business. A key benefit for employers is avoiding the need to interact with multiple employment agencies when sourcing a new hire – we're their single point of contact.

Our model works because our team are tourism and hospitality industry professionals who appreciate that, in selecting the best candidates, it's about them contributing to a business and working with a team to create a compelling customer experience. We also understand the practicalities, such as the attributes needed for busy front of house roles like being able

to stand up for an entire shift and professionally interact with guests.

We know how to put in place practical ways of working to support our employer members to help people with disability flourish in their role. And we're just a phone call away to provide reassurance and any additional guidance should members need assistance along the way.

The benefits of joining our employer network

Employer members benefit from access to our tailored training platform and the opportunity to interact with other employers within our network. This is a great way for employers who are more disability confident to share their experience with those who've recently joined our network. Members also help each other by providing referral pathways for candidates to progress their careers in our industry.

The sense of camaraderie between our members helps HDNWA sustain our vision of disability confidence in the WA's tourism and hospitality industry.

We welcome new employer members – please contact our team to learn more.





Our unique service model for employers



We facilitate & connect

We support member employers to source talent for available roles, then match them to jobs, pre-screening so you get the best interview candidates. We provide follow up to help your team and new employee work well together.



We build confidence

You'll be confident in your choice of candidates. We offer bespoke workshops that increase the knowledge and capacity of managers, and break down barriers that prevent diversity and inclusion in hospitality organisations.



We empower & advance

When a candidate is placed in your organisation, we offer support to assist the person and the business with reasonable adjustments required in the workplace.



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