National Business Disability Networks: Disability Inclusion Hubs for Committed Employers

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Background

Diversity is cited as a top value by almost every organization, however, people with disabilities often are overlooked or under-supported.

Very few organizations include initiatives for hiring people with disabilities. And many don’t consider whether their policies and practices are making it harder than necessary for people with disabilities to fully participate.
What is Workplace Disability Inclusion?

• Disability inclusion is about creating an inclusive workplace where people feel welcome and comfortable and where they are seen, valued, and appreciated for what they bring to the table.

• “Not in spite of their differences, but including their differences.”
Why Is It Important?

• Disability inclusion is a critical part of any business
• It provides people with disabilities the same opportunities to participate in society as others
• Without disability inclusion, your business isn’t doing all it can to support its current employees.
• Disability inclusion is also crucial to your hiring process. Companies that aren’t proactive about disability inclusion are losing out on qualified talent.
• Companies with strong disability inclusion programs have better access to talent and better employee retention.
Benefits of Inclusive Workplaces

- Boost productivity and innovation
- Improve reputation
- Appeal to different learning styles
- Avoid lawsuits and bad PR
- Access to talent
- Boost camaraderie
- Increased engagement and retention
Key Obstacles to Disability Inclusion in the Workplace

- Attitudinal barriers
- Environmental barriers
- Institutional barriers
- Lack of knowledge
- Inaccurate concerns over cost and difficulty
Overcoming the Challenges

1. Get management commitment / buy-in
2. Remove recruitment barriers
3. Promote accessibility and create safe spaces
4. Hire an expert
5. Communicate with your employees
6. Promote diversity at all levels
7. Be transparent
A Case Study of the Nigeria Business Disability Network (NBDN)
Who We Are

• A network of businesses that aim to create a workforce culture that is respectful and welcoming of people with disabilities.

• A unique platform for business-to-business support and peer-to-peer learning on disability issues.

• We help create a disability smart business environment by helping employers see how and tap into the potential and capabilities that over 30 million Nigerians with disabilities could bring to increase business revenue, growth and enhance brand reputation.

Vision
To be an employer-led network championing the inclusion and benefit of people with disability in the workplace.

Mission
To technically support, raise awareness and exchange knowledge among private and public organisations on disability inclusion in the workplace.

NBDN adopted the ILO GBDN Ten (10) principles.

- Respect and promotion of rights
- Equality of treatment and opportunities
- Job retention
- Attention to all types of disabilities
- Evaluation
- Non-discrimination
- Accessibility
- Confidentiality
- Collaboration
- Knowledge sharing

Membership Constitution

- 70% Private Sector
- 20% Organisation of people with disabilities
- 10% Development partners and international NGO
Our members are from diverse sectors – finance, telecoms, FMCG, service, NGOs etc. They are multinationals and national companies operating in Nigeria, at different levels of the journey - disability committed, confident, and leaders.
NBDN as a Disability Inclusion Hub for Employers - How We Help

1. Support private and public organizations to be disability inclusive both in practice and policy in Nigeria
2. Create and lead a network of Organizations committed to promoting the value people with disability add to business
3. Serve as a knowledge and resource hub for disability inclusion in the workplace in Nigeria
4. Strengthen awareness about, and drive compliance with the employment component in Nigerian Disability Act
5. Facilitate disability advisory service like disability audit, disability policies etc. amongst organizations
6. Conduct research on an as-needed basis for continuous improvement and relevance of disability inclusion in organizations
7. Enhance employability of people with disabilities via training & development, coaching, mentoring and other efforts
8. Showcase organization members who are championing disability inclusion, their lessons and the benefit they derive from retaining employees with disabilities
Impact on Employer Members’ Companies

- Inclusive business culture
- Disability inclusive talent acquisition and recruitment processes
- External and internal communication of disability-inclusive policies and practices
- Accountability and self-identification
- Disability inclusive outreach and recruitment
- Flexible and reasonable accommodations
- Accessible information and communication technology
Some Other Benefits to our Employer Members

**Peer Learning**
Webinars, working groups, conferences, joint publications and tools

**Expert Support**
Technical advice and exclusive contact to organization of people with disability and development partners

**Strategic Positioning**
Showcase members disability inclusion work to local and global audiences through website, newsletter and social media
Received funding from Sightsavers

Ownership fully resides with the private sector and no longer with the incubators.

Increase in membership with about 21 private sector members (100% increase from 2020)

Full commitment by board and other members through the provision of expertise and resources

Officially joined the ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) in December 2021

Enhanced partnerships between the private sector, DPOs, CSO networks and policy makers to put disability inclusion issues in the development and implementation of policies.

Strengthened capacity of members towards developing inclusive workforces.

Technical support provided to members by Sightsavers creating more value add towards attracting members

Joined the Nigeria Partnership for Disability-Inclusive Development to provide a more coordinated approach towards achieving disability inclusion in the nation

Currently undergoing legal incorporation in accordance with the Nigerian law

Establishing finance modality to ensure sustainability post Sightsavers initial funding.

Organized the virtual Nigeria Business and Disability Round Table, bringing together different stakeholders from the private sector, IDOs and OPDs to learn best practices and share experiences.
The Future We Are Working Towards

- Leveraging technology to drive disability inclusion and engagement
- Collaborative partnerships with private sector organizations on inclusive programs in the workplace
- Initiatives to create employment opportunities for PWDs in the corporate world
- Advocacy for disability inclusion
- Engagement with government and corporate leaders on disability policies, engagement, and programs
- Participation in global agenda to drive disability inclusion and diversity
Q&A
Thank you

To know more about us, Visit: www.nbdn.org.ng