

Talking About Inclusion@Work

Lead the Way: Inclusive Business Culture



WHAT IS INCLUSIVE BUSINESS CULTURE?

The foundation for a disability-inclusive work environment is an inclusive business culture, and this starts with commitment at the highest levels. Communicating such a commitment is especially important when companies want to encourage applicants and employees with disabilities to self-identify, whether due to regulatory requirements, such as those under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, or a voluntarily adopted affirmative action program.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES

Examples of best practices for fostering an inclusive business culture include, but certainly are not limited to:

- ➔ Expressly integrating disability into company-wide diversity and inclusion statements and initiatives;
- ➔ Formal expressions of commitment from top leadership;
- ➔ Having a disability-focused Employee Resource Group (ERG) or affinity group and/or disability employment “champion”; and
- ➔ Conducting employee engagement surveys to gather input on whether the workplace environment is accessible and inclusive.

DISCUSSING INCLUSIVE BUSINESS CULTURE

Use the following questions to spark conversation about this topic in a group setting, for example, with human resource professionals, diversity and inclusion professionals, employee assistance professionals, business executives and supervisors/managers. This is a great opportunity to use these questions to complement EARN’s training, *Lead the Way: Inclusive Business Culture*, available at [AskEARN.org/inclusion-work](https://www.askearn.org/inclusion-work).

- ➔ How do you define the word “inclusive” in the work or employment context? What does the word bring to mind for you?
- ➔ What are some examples of actions you feel your company takes to foster a disability-inclusive culture? Conversely, are there policies or company norms you feel serve as barriers to a disability-inclusive culture?
- ➔ Are you aware if your company has made formal expressions of commitment to disability inclusion? If so, how and/or where have they been made?

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified employees with disabilities. This discussion guide is one in a series of seven, each of which explores a different component of EARN’s Inclusion@Work employer policy framework. To access others, visit [AskEARN.org/inclusion-work](https://www.askearn.org/inclusion-work).