## Introduction

Hi, my name is Kim Donaldson, thank you for joining me today and for your interest in diverse workplaces. I am a Career Facilitator with the Neil Squire Society and I value the partnerships with community, industry, and government that we create. That being said, I would like to acknowledge the traditional territories on which we work, learn, and play across Canada. I work out of Victoria, BC and serve communities on the traditional territories of the Lkwungen peoples.

To briefly introduce myself – I provide customized employment services to persons with disabilities. From the work that I do, I know the direct impact that employment has on everyone. Purpose, financial stability, increased self-esteem and improved mental health are just a few benefits that we can all feel from gainful employment. However, what is lesser known, and what I work to inform community members on, is how hiring persons with disabilities is good for business. I know that this conference brings together various stakeholders and I’m going to speak to a topic that I think can create a win-win scenario for everyone involved.

## Statistics

If you’re an employer, maybe you’ve experienced concern around hiring an employee with a disability. Some common misconceptions that exist are that employees with disabilities require costly accommodations, extensive job modifications, or have poor attendance.

However, you may be interested to know that hiring employees with disabilities can be good for business - very good.

* In reference to common employer fears, most persons with disabilities don’t need any extra accommodations and
* 37% require a one-time cost accommodation of, on average, $500.
* 86% of employees with disabilities have an equivalent or higher attendance rate than employees who don’t identify as having a disability.

One of the most impressive statistics on employees with disabilities is that they have a 72% higher employee retention rate. Why does this matter?

## Recruitment/Cost

Payroll expenditures of over 30% of gross revenue is one of the most common reasons that businesses fail. New employees can cost anywhere from 30% to over 150% of their annual salary.

Direct costs of any hire include

* Advertising which may include posting, social media, and career events,
* background checks,
* in house or agency recruitment efforts
* training and onboarding materials
* as well as the time of current employees who may be putting in overtime to cover the vacancy.

Indirect costs involved in hiring and employee replacement are largely related to time. On average, it takes 8-12 weeks to source and replace a knowledge worker. There is also the time involved in interviewing, training and onboarding the new employee.

Finally, employee turnover effects morale. Some team members may have had to put in overtime and/or be experiencing burnout, and once one employee leaves it can be a slippery slope leading to other departures.

That higher retention rate is starting to look pretty good, right?

## Cost/Benefit Analysis

A simple cost benefit analysis may help us explore this topic a little further. In terms of costs, we’ve already seen these numbers - 58% of hires with disabilities require NO extra accommodation costs and 37% require a one-time average expense of $500. The most common accommodation requested is the ability to work from home – and we’ve all seen how easy that can be.

And the benefits? The President’s Group recently released statistics showing that diverse workplaces have better business outcomes, are twice as likely to meet or exceed financial targets, six times more likely to be innovative (solve problems creatively), and six times more likely to anticipate change.

And guess what soft skills Hays Recruiting Experts suggested are most relevant in the new era of work? Adaptability, Problem Solving, and Creativity.

In addition to boosting internal morale, business can become more attractive to employment seekers as younger generations are actively looking for companies that show a clear commitment to diversity and inclusion. A recent Monster survey (Monster is an online employment website) showed that 83% of Generation Z candidates confirmed that a company’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is important when choosing an employer.

## Summary

To summarize, recruiting and hiring is one of the most expensive costs in business. As we’ve seen, recruitment costs can be reduced by lowering turnover and that can include persons with disabilities - who often bring skills that are, and will continue to be, most needed for businesses to survive and excel in the modern era of work.

The business case is clear, reconsider the funds that you’re allocating to a new applicant tracking system and open up your hiring pool to employees with disabilities.