Building disability-smart organisations
Being disability-smart: why you should do it

Treating disabled people equally is more than just the right thing to do and more than just a legal obligation – it’s vital for the survival and success of any organisation.

People with disabilities already impact on your business. They are your customers, your employees, your suppliers and your stakeholders; ignoring them is a massive missed opportunity, one with reputational risks and a high financial cost.

However, by contrast we know that becoming disability-smart helps organisations improve performance across the board.

Better products and services, stronger relationships with your customers, improved recruitment, more engaged employees, better management and a stronger reputation are just some of the benefits of becoming disability-smart.

Diane Lightfoot
Chief Executive Officer

£212bn
Fact: The Purple Pound is worth £212 billion in the UK alone.
Source: Extra Costs Commission and Scope, 2016

£11.4bn
Fact: Inaccessible websites lose businesses some £11.4bn in revenue.
Source: Click-Away Pound report, 2016
Who we are

Business Disability Forum has over 25 years’ experience of bringing people with disabilities and public, private and third sector organisations together.

We offer a unique range of expert advice, taskforces, learning and development opportunities and events to help our Members and Partners improve all aspects of their business performance.

Our Disability Standard, with its ten criteria covering every area of an organisation, is at the core of everything we do. It helps organisations to measure and improve their progress towards becoming disability-smart.

We equip our Members and Partners with a library of publications and toolkits covering all aspects of business and disability, they also gain access to learning and development and advice provided by a team of expert disability consultants with extensive experience of working with organisations in the UK and overseas.

Our learning and development courses are tailored to your specific needs and cover all aspects of disability-smart practice from employee engagement and disability awareness to reasonable adjustments and disability law.

400 organisations

Fact: Over the last 5 years 400 organisations have used Business Disability Forum’s Disability Standard to improve disability performance across their business.
What does it mean for your customers?

People with disabilities are loyal customers when they get the service and products they need.

But they will quickly walk away if they don't get good service.

They also influence how their friends and relatives buy products and services. This represents at least £212 billion spent in the UK every year.

The skills and expertise your organisation gains by learning to satisfy disabled customers will contribute to developing better products that reach wider markets through better service and customer experiences.

Your suppliers and business partners have a key role to play in you becoming disability-smart. Your disabled customers will not tolerate a different level of service because you have contracted or outsourced part of your business.

How Business Disability Forum can help

Business Disability Forum provides the tools you need to improve the accessibility of your products and services and ultimately build stronger relationships with your customers.

Business Disability Forum, working with Rica, a specialist disabled consumer research company, will help you understand the needs of disabled customers and assess your products and services across a range of disabilities.
What does it mean for your employees?

A third of all employees have a disability or are close to someone with a disability.

It is also likely that some of your employees will acquire a disability at some point in their life.

There are legal requirements to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees but more importantly an organisation that is able to adapt and adjust to get the most from each disabled and non-disabled employee will be more productive.

If you are looking to recruit the best person to fill a job vacancy you may be missing out on talented potential employees because you are not attracting disabled candidates.

Disabled Employee Networks

We can help establish disabled employee networks in your organisation to bring together your disabled employees so that they can provide mutual support, insights into accessibility and act as a formal consultative group.

Disabled employee networks are a vital tool in engaging employees with the process of becoming disability-smart.

Fact: Workplace adjustments can reduce sickness absence and associated costs by 76%.

Source: Microlink 2017

Fact: Employee turnover costs organisations £12.4 billion.

Source: Business Disability Forum Retention survey, 2015
Why join Business Disability Forum

There are a growing number of organisations that are working with us to become disability-smart.

They range from small and medium sized companies to global business groups and come from the private and public sectors. They are businesses, non-profit organisations and public bodies.

We work with our Members and Partners to set and influence policy so that it benefits both organisations and disabled people. Our taskforces and networks are working to establish standards in different areas of business such as the use of information technology, contact centres and procurement. Membership with Business Disability Forum gives your organisation a voice in the debate on standards and disability legislation.

Thinking of joining?

Become a Member or Partner of Business disability Forum. Contact us to talk through the membership option that works for your organisation.

Call our Membership and Business Development team on: +44-(0)20-7403-3020 Or email us at: join@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk.

Need a one off service?

We also offer a number of services and products that we provide for a fee to non-members. These include (but are not limited to):

- Consultancy packages based on the Disability Standard
- Bespoke learning and development training courses and masterclasses
- Content licenses for our full range of toolkits for your intranet so that you can roll our disability support for all staff in your organisation

Contact us to find out more.
We went to Business Disability Forum as we knew they had the skills to help us identify what we’re good at and where we need to improve.

The Disability Standard has been a great tool to give us an objective view of our whole organisational approach to disability equality and as a result, we have been able to prioritise key issues to change in order to make a big difference.”

Mary Walsh, Scope
Contact us

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Business Disability Forum is committed to ensuring that all its products and services are as accessible as possible to everyone. If you wish to discuss anything with regard to accessibility, please contact us.

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