

Hiring People with Disabilities Made Simple

Action: Scene opens with a harried hiring manager at her desk, her phone ringing. She holds her head.

Narrator: Hiring the right people to get the mission done can sometimes be a challenge.

Action: Scene changes to show empty desks.

Narrator: Especially when you need someone who not only has specialized knowledge and experience, but can also work under tight timelines and is a team player.

Action: A group of people appear, collaborating to solve difficult equations on a blackboard.

Narrator: You attend career fairs, actively recruit at local universities, build relationships with professional organizations and military transition centers, and review many resumes.

Action: The hiring manager appears again, against images suggestive of job fairs and recruiting. Meanwhile a diverse group of men and women move by the hiring manager. Her confidence in each candidate varies, as if she is interviewing each candidate.

Narrator: Sometimes, there are only one or two who have what it takes to get the job done, and other times, there are many.

Action: One candidate catches the hiring manager's eye, she becomes excited, and her confidence hits a maximum. The candidate in question is in a wheelchair.

Narrator: And sometimes, the rules for hiring can seem overwhelming and complex.

Action: The manager is back at her desk. Stacks of rule books pile up around her. Steam pours from her ears and her eyes cross in frustration.

Narrator: Have no fear! OPM is here!

Action: A group of faces float by the hiring manager, captioned OPM, inside a bubble. The bubble bursts, and a superhero with the OPM logo stands in heroic form, his cape flowing. The scene disappears, and is replaced by the title of the course, "Hiring People with Disabilities made Simple".

Narrator: This is Hiring People with Disabilities Made Simple.

Action: The hiring manager reappears, and thinks about the candidate she selected.

Narrator: You've found someone who has everything you're looking for. He is very knowledgeable, he has great people skills, and he just so happens to also have a disability.

Action: The candidate appears in his wheelchair in the manager's thoughts.

Narrator: You have a couple of options in this case.

Action: Two signs appear, one saying "Competitive Process" and the other "Schedule A Hiring Process".

Narrator: (Voice changes to a higher pitch) I am familiar with the Competitive Hiring Process, but what is this Schedule A hiring process that you speak of?

Action: The manager tents her hands together and taps her fingers like a super-villain from a movie. The "Competitive Process" sign disappears.

Narrator: Well, it allows you to hire someone with a disability without going through the normal Competitive Process.

Action: A small sign labeled "Requirements" drops down out of the "Schedule A Hiring Process" sign.

Narrator: But first, you have to make sure the person meets the requirements for using Schedule A.

Action: The manager's shoulders slump and her head bows.

Narrator: Don't worry - they're not as complicated as you may have heard.

Action: The manager turns her head. A blackboard appears.

Narrator: First, the person has to have a disability that falls into one of three categories: An intellectual disability, a severe physical disability, or a psychiatric disability.

Action: The phrases "Intellectual Disability", "Severe Physical Disability", and "Psychiatric Disability" are written on the blackboard. The manager turns and begins to sneak out of the scene.

Narrator: Wait! Don't sneak away! No one is asking you to be a doctor or a psychologist.

Action: The manager turns back.

Narrator: The person will provide you with proof of disability. Sometimes, your HR office will refer to this as the Schedule A Letter.

Action: A large sign reading "Schedule A Letter" slides into view. The blackboard disappears.

Narrator: All it really means is that the person has a disability that falls into one of the three categories I just mentioned.

Action: The three phrases "Intellectual Disability", "Severe Physical Disability", and "Psychiatric Disability" are transferred to the "Schedule A Letter". "Severe Physical Disability" is indicated as the operative term to reflect the candidate's position. The letter and the hiring manager move off screen and are replaced by a doctor, a vocational rehabilitation specialist.

Narrator: The letter can come from licensed medical professionals, or vocational rehabilitation specialists. They can also come from Federal or State agencies that issue or provide disability benefits.

Action: Hiring manager becomes more excited.

Narrator: You are now ready to make a job offer. Go ahead - no one is looking. Jump up and down!

Action: The manager looks from side to side slyly, to make sure no one is looking, and then jumps up into the air.

Narrator: Yikes! I forgot to mention... The person may need some type of accommodation to successfully perform the job.

Action: The manager holds her arms out at her sides, her body language saying "now what?"

Narrator: For example, you may need to alter the height of his desk or widen the cubicle to accommodate his wheelchair.

Action: The manager thinks about the candidate trying to use a desk, realizing that modifications may need to be made.

Narrator: There are plenty of resources out there to help you make this a smooth transition. For example, CAP - the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program, provides services and technology to Federal clients free of charge. You can reach CAP at 703-681-8813, or 703-681-3978 for TTY, or online at cap@tma.osd.mil.

Action: The telephone number for CAP appears, as does the TTY number and the web address. The hiring manager writes this information down.

Narrator: Now, that wasn't too bad, was it?

Action: The manager shakes her head "no".

Narrator: For all you smarty-pants who know that there are plenty of laws, rules, and regulations covering this subject, you're more than welcome to visit OPM's Disability website at www.opm.gov/disability. You can also find job readiness and Schedule A samples at the OPM website.

Action: A computer appears, showing OPM's disability website. The address, www.opm.gov/disability appears over the computer.

Narrator: That's it for now. Get out there and start hiring!