

CAIP Innovative Attitude Change Project Proposal - Advancing Access and Inclusion

<p>Project Title: Dolphin Disabilities Mentoring Day</p>
<p>Submitted by: Dolphin – Jamie Burton</p>
<p>Sector Targeted for Attitude Change: <input type="checkbox"/>Employers, <input type="checkbox"/>Youth (preschool – Grade 12), <input type="checkbox"/>Community (geographic community or community of interest) Employers (though Indigenous Community may also be impacted)</p>
<p>Specific Audience To Be Reached: Employers & identified community leaders - Leaders need to be able to disrupt without interrupting, reshape without stretching and achieve sustainability without complacency. It is important to elevate the conversation from a purely rational “business case” discussion to one that also wins hearts and minds and compels others to become passionate about their sense of work. I believe a leader is one who knows what is possible and can inspire others to believe in that possibility too.</p>
<p>Specific Attitude To Be Established: So many people, who, due to being defined by a disability, are overlooked, mistreated, disrespected and set aside. It is by focusing on abilities and potential that business can hire for innovation, retention and talent mobility.</p>
<p>Geographic Reach: TBD- Would like to focus on northern Ontario, Sask. & NL, as well as specific indigenous communities identified by at risk categories, ie.high rates of suicide, lack of access to internet etc.</p>
<p>Project Description Summary: I would love to see diversity and inclusion become a competitive space, where businesses focus on executing solutions within every line of business. My goal is to see the unemployment rate for those with disabilities, at a lower level, than standard unemployment rates. By demonstrating the depth of talent, the extent of feasible innovation, the increase in market share potential and the outcomes of a comprehensive workplace, I think it is possible to forever change how businesses hire. Business leaders agree that talent acquisition is one of the top 3 challenges in business. 81 percent of top recruiters report that they have trouble finding the skills needed to fill job orders. There are over 1 billion people with disabilities in the world; with double the rate of unemployment as those without disabilities. If disabled people are able to fully engage in the global economy as consumers and employees, this would equate to a 3-7% (\$2-5 trillion) uplift in the global GDP. Why are we not seeing people with disabilities as an untapped talent pool? What are the misconceptions about people with disabilities (pwd’s) which cause us to ignore this potential resolve? Why is it that law is required to be enforced, to ensure that we include pwd’s in the workplace, when 1 in 4 people will become disabled themselves in their lifetime? Disabilities</p>

Mentoring Day is presented as the opportunity to address these questions, and utilizes technology to bridge the communication and knowledge gaps between business, employment and community support organizations, and persons with disabilities. Every event strives to achieve the following goals:

- **To provide mentees access to workplace contacts, environments, skills, & HR process**
- **To increase confidence among job seekers with disabilities**
- **To enhance internship, co-operative education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities**
- **To dispel employers' fears about hiring people with disabilities and promote disability confidence**
- **To give employers an opportunity to benchmark themselves as being accessible to what is a largely untapped pool of talent as well as a massive consumer market.**

It is the personal interaction between mentee and mentor which develops a changed perspective of the human element, and recognizes the shared opportunity to learn.

Project Outcomes:

We must consciously change how we think and operate as leaders and innovators. If we do not realize that there is potential in all, and that everyone deserves an opportunity to contribute, to develop skills, to augment their lives by income or experience; then shame is ours. It is my opinion that we require a culture shift away from a focus on disability, challenge, and difference & move towards focus on ability and potential.

The private sector has a vital role to play regarding the employment of persons with disabilities. By removing attitudinal barriers and making the workplace accessible, employers can greatly contribute to a society where persons with disabilities can participate in work life, and have increased independence.

A personal connection makes attitude change happen – it is the experiential learning exchange & shared opportunity which transitions perspective & attitude.

Project Lead and Partners:

Dolphin
SCI