

ILR survey finds HR pros value disability focus

June 18 2012, By Mary Catt

(Medical Xpress) -- Disability-focused employee networks are key to retaining and advancing workers with disabilities, according to ILR School research released with the Society for Human Resource Management June 7. Such employee affinity groups are "very effective," according to 54 percent of human resource professionals surveyed by ILR's Employment and Disability Institute; another 20 percent ranked them "somewhat effective."

"It is critical that management be provided the insight and tools to in turn create real [career opportunities](#) for workers with disabilities," said Susanne M. Bruyère, ILR School associate dean, professor of disability studies and director of the Employment and Disability Institute.

Other findings in the joint survey of 662 [human resource](#) professionals, who are members of the Society for [Human Resource Management](#), include:

- Nearly half ranked "very effective" the practice of having a return-to-work disability-management program for [employees](#) who experience a work-related absence due to illness, injury or a disabling condition; another 36 percent ranked it "somewhat effective."
- About 47 percent ranked "very effective" their organization's encouragement of flexible work arrangements for all employees, e.g., flextime, part-time and telecommuting; 37 percent ranked it

"somewhat effective."

Also notable is data specific to the career development of workers with disabilities:

- Forty-seven percent ranked having a structured mentoring program to support employees with disabilities "very effective;" 31 percent ranked it "somewhat effective."
- Forty-six percent ranked offering special career planning and development tools for employees with disabilities "very effective;" 31 percent ranked the practice "somewhat effective."

According to the findings, nine percent of organizations represented in the survey include in senior-management performance appraisals the progress toward retention and advancement goals for employees with [disabilities](#).

"Don't forget basics and don't make assumptions -- be sure supervisors know where to find needed information about specific accommodations when an employee with a disability inquires," Bruyère said.

Nearly one in five HR professionals surveyed said a supervisor's lack of knowledge of what accommodations to make can be a barrier to retaining and advancing employees with a disability. Fewer than 32 percent of respondents said their organizations track data on accommodations such as type and cost.

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Provided by Cornell University

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