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# Thinking outside the box to solve labor challenges in the Transportation and Logistics industries

AUDIT, TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

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Good employees are crucial to the success of any business; unfortunately finding and retaining talent is also one of the top challenges most companies face. With an increasing number of opportunities in the industry, qualified candidates can afford to be picky, and current talent is being lured to competitors. A Department of Labor (DOL) report found that adding to the challenge is inadequate access to non-traditional labor pools such as women, veterans and people with disabilities and the industry suffering from a “fairly low public image”[1].

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with an individual who’s looking to not only fix the labor challenge but help improve the image of the industry. Rhonda Bailey is the Program Coordinator of Project Search, a program offered by Arc Industries that aims to meet logistics employers’ labor market needs through full-time employment of adults with disabilities. Project Search is an adult, six month, paid program teaching job skills specific for competitive employment in the logistics industry with strong emphasis on employability skills.

Unfortunately there are a number of misconceptions about hiring individuals with disabilities such as higher workers compensation costs, inability to perform the job, and causing concern for their customers. Through my discussion with Rhonda I learned that a number of statistics point to just the opposite. Walgreen’s Anderson, South Carolina distribution center employs 185 workers with disabilities and saw their workers compensation claims drop by \$17,000 in a span of nine months. In addition, 90% of individuals with disabilities performed equal to or better than their nondisabled counterparts[2], 62% remained in the same job for 3 or more years[3], and 87% of all U.S. adults prefer to spend money at businesses that hire individuals with disabilities3.

Project Search has seen great success, placing 24 full-time individuals in 16 distribution centers around Central, Ohio including Abercrombie & Fitch, Big Lots, ODW, and DSW. They also boast a placement rate of 100% and a retention rate of 82%. Project Search is proving that thinking outside the box when it comes to hiring can provide great benefits to your company and these individuals that just need an opportunity.

For more information Rhonda can be reached at:

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[1] Department of Labor (2007). Identifying and Addressing Workforce Challenges in America's Transportation Industry.

[2] American Training (December 12, 2012). New data substantiates benefits of hiring people with disabilities for assembly and distribution jobs.

[3] Institute for Corporate Productivity (2014). Employing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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