

# HANDBOOK

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ON MY OWN AT WORK



Co-funded by the  
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## Introduction

If you are reading this handbook, you have either already decided to provide an internship or an employment opportunity to people with Intellectual Disabilities (ID), or you are thinking about it. It might be also that you are just looking for information about intellectually disabled people inclusion and you incidentally found our manuscript.

In one case or the other, this manual will hopefully provide you with the information you might need.

This handbook has been worked out by the partners of the “On my own...at work” (OMO) project, an international project that deals with intellectual disability funded by the European Union.

The EU has funded the OMO project in 2014 with the overall mission of fostering an intellectual disability-friendly management culture within European organizations operating in the hospitality business.

It gathers several professional people, scholars, companies and NGOs. These organizations are devoted to rendering services and to the development and improvement of intellectual disability-related management tools for organizations working in the tourism business, such as s and restaurants, given that jobs provided in such industry have been found to be particularly suitable for people with intellectual disabilities.

The organizations participating the project can count on a large and authoritative group of partners able to provide assistance and support the development of a European network of intellectual disability-friendly companies.

In order to encourage companies to join our initiative, we have created the **Valueable** label.

It is a voluntary auditable and certifiable standard that enables the assessment of an organization culture and policy that is intellectual disability-friendly achieved by providing internships to and employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

It is also a potential source of competitive advantage for companies willing to be different from competitors based on their social commitment.

In order to attain the **Valueable** label, companies need to undergo a process aimed at assessing their compliance with an equal opportunity and intellectual disability-friendly employment policy by adopting the Code of Conduct that we have worked out.

Such Code of Conduct provides the requirements that have to be met in order to obtain the label.

In addition to a general declaration to be an equal opportunities employer, subscribing companies are required:

- *To host internships and /or to hire people with intellectual disabilities. (At least one internship in two years of minimum three weeks, even welcoming trainees from other countries)*
- *Not to discriminate these people as far as selection, recruitment, training, career development are concerned.*
- *Staff awareness raising. Special focus on managers and those in charge of recruitment and training.*

This handbook has been created in order to provide practical advice to adopt the Code of Conduct and comply with its requirements.

The principles at the basis of this handbook are those of ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) *functioning* framework<sup>1</sup>. According to ICF, the functioning of any individual is always an interaction between features of the person and features of the overall context in which the person lives. In order to achieve inclusion, we can either work on people or on the context. The assumption that it is the person who has to adapt to the context is deceiving.

Since it is advisable that any inclusion of a would-be worker with ID as an intern or as a worker should be managed with the support/mediation of an expert Vocational Education Training provider, *this handbook doesn't deal with tutoring practices but focuses on processes which should be implemented by the employer to facilitate such "tutored" inclusion.*

In addition to other few paragraphs that are assumed useful to implement the internship process, the handbook is divided into 3 main sections. Each section represents a phase of the comprehensive inclusion process (from recruitment to intern/employee achievement evaluation) and provides you with the essential practical actions to be taken in order to deal with and organize the activities aimed at correctly enrolling and (possibly) retaining interns with ID able to satisfy your working needs.

Along the reading, you will find some units providing some useful additional information or pointing out the possibility to exploit the tools that we have worked out to support you in the inclusion process. Each unit is characterized by a symbol that denotes the type of provided information.

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## VIDEOS

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We have shot 14 short videos (about 3 minutes each), which describe the good and bad practices that can be adopted in the relationship between a trainee with ID and her/his tutor, as well as with other co-workers.

The most frequent questions addressed by tutors are clarified:

- What kind of support do I have to provide to the trainee/employee?
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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. How to use the ICF: A practical manual for using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). Exposure draft for comment. October 2013. Geneva: WHO.

- 
- What kind of relationship do I have to build up and maintain during the internship or with the employee?
  - What language do I have to use?
  - What type of expectations, which are compliant with the rules and the productivity of the trainee/employee do I have to meet?

Furthermore, some typical situations are illustrated:

- Correction of mistakes
- Stereotypes
- Appropriate professional behavior
- How to memorize job tasks
- Organization of job activities
- Relationship between trainee/employee and tutor

You can find all the videos here [http://www.on-my-own.eu/en\\_GB/videos/](http://www.on-my-own.eu/en_GB/videos/) or look for them on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

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### APP



The “On my own...at work” application has been developed to support the trainee during her/his internship. The aim of the app is to make the trainee more and more independent from the tutor.

The app helps the tutor organize the tasks to be assigned to the trainee in the most appropriate way.

It is much more than a time schedule. It must be customized for each trainee and provides (in addition to other personalized contents) the following support:

- organization of the working week
- organization of the working day
- organization of the activities and actions to be performed to accomplish a single task using checklists in the form of written text, images or videos
- storage of products or tools needed to perform a given task
- and much more ...

The app is downloadable for both Android and iOS.

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### GOOD STORIES



To work out this handbook and the other tools, we have talked to numerous practitioners who have been involved in inclusion processes of people with ID.

Hotel managers and entrepreneurs, psychologists, sociologists, and other experts working in the field of ID, personnel of associations, foundations, VET providers, etc. have shared their experience with us.

They have told us their stories highlighting some good practices that can facilitate the inclusion process. These practices are illustrated in the “Good stories” units and may be useful to understand how to take appropriate actions in front of some typical situations or issues that might emerge along the inclusion process of people with ID.

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### WATCH OUT

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The enrollment of a person with ID in the organization has to be carefully managed. People involved in the process are required to take some provisions in order to ensure that it is really inclusive.

Therefore the manuscript provides some units pointing out possible pitfalls that have to be appropriately handled and some adjustments that have to be made in order to guarantee that their procedures are actually disability-friendly.

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## Disability-friendly philosophy and culture

The first step toward the successful implementation of a program of disabled people work inclusion is to promote a disability-friendly philosophy and culture within the organization.

You may already have achieved projects that relate to disability as part of your Corporate Social Responsibility or Diversity Management policy, or also as stand-alone projects. In this case, your organization is probably already sensitized about disability-related issues and prepared to welcoming and cooperating with workers with ID.

If this is not the case, you have to be aware that you need to adopt an **integrated approach to dealing with a diverse workforce** that will involve your entire organization. This approach allows diversity to be managed in an efficient and effective way and maximum benefit is obtained both for the organization and the individuals concerned.

Promoting and spreading a disability-friendly mindset among your workers can be done leveraging on internal (HR personnel, dedicated teams, etc.) or external resources (consultants, specialized agencies, etc.).

Sensitization and awareness initiatives should be taken in order to dispel negative stereotypes from the employees' thoughts and actions when addressing or working with persons with disability.

Specific training on disability-related issues should be **provided to all workers**, particularly those involved in the recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention processes.

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### GOOD STORIES

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#### **The Italian Association of People with Down syndrome fosters a disability-friendly culture**

The tutors of the Italian Association of People with Down syndrome (AIPD) play a fundamental role in the promotion and spreading of a disability-friendly culture in Italian enterprises.

It happens very often that entrepreneurs, company managers and employees do not believe in the potential of people with intellectual disabilities.

The role of the AIPD tutors is to clarify that, even if it is true that trainees with ID may take more time in achieving some tasks, they still can reach their goals and perform their job tasks as anybody else.

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The mediation activity carried out by the AIPD tutors is in fact very often related to the motivation and the engagement of managers and employees working in a company.

[www.aipd.it](http://www.aipd.it)

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## VIDEOS

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### **#We are all different – As able as anybody**

Keywords: stereotypes.

It is important to be aware of the stereotypes about intellectual disabilities.

The individual comes before the label.

Every person is different and is able to actively participate in the teamwork.

[http://www.on-my-own.eu/en\\_GB/videos/](http://www.on-my-own.eu/en_GB/videos/)

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## Overall internship process

The OMO code of conduct foresees three different level of commitment by the hospitality businesses. As already explained, such commitment can include internships and /or employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

The different steps of the *internship process* will be accurately described below, because:

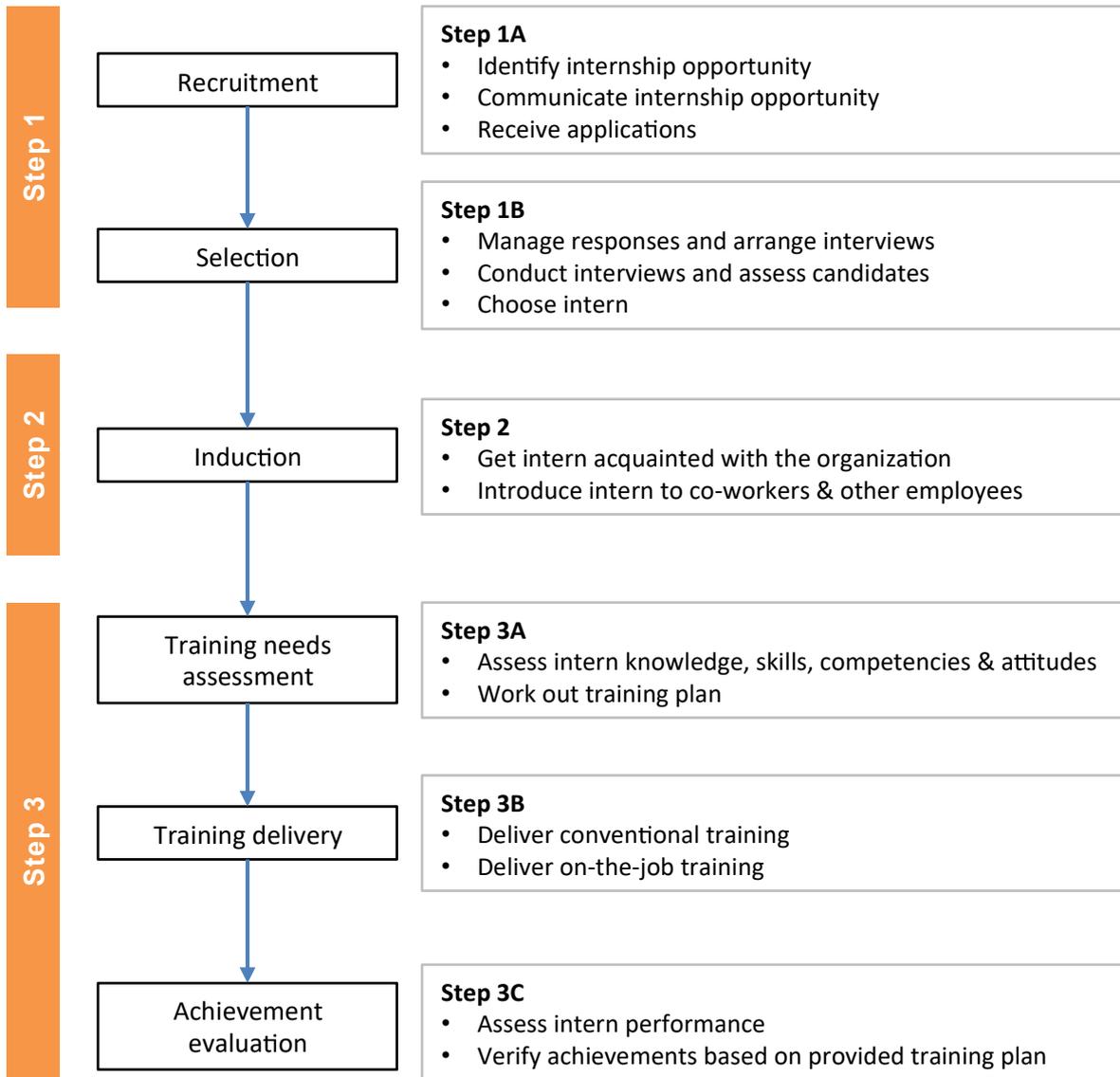
a) most of the time , a period of internship takes place before the real recruitment of a person with ID. Internship is frequently intended as the necessary but not sufficient “door” to employment;

b) selection, induction and training are steps of the recruitment process as well, just in case it happens without previous internship.

A specific chapter on career retention and development has been added, in order to cover also specific topics related to employment.

The internship process includes different phases that have to be managed appropriately in order to be sure to make them inclusive.

- **STEP 1** – The process starts with the actions aimed at finding candidates willing to apply for the internship and select the one who, based on an assessment procedure, is considered the most skilled and capable to perform the assigned job.
- **STEP 2** – Then, the intern undergoes the induction/orientation procedure aimed at acquainting her/him with the organization.
- **STEP 3** – Afterwards, the intern/employee is assessed in order to elaborate a customized training plan. Training is delivered along the internship or in the first . Lastly, the intern undergoes the final assessment aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the training and hence her/his achieved advancement.



## The key actors

The process of enrolling an intern/employee with ID in the company involves **different actors** that work both in the company and in other external organizations. Each actor has its responsibilities, role and tasks, and contributes to the success of the overall inclusion process.

### Business actors

- **Top managers / entrepreneurs** – Decide and establish the objectives and the characteristics of the inclusion process. Have the fundamental task of showing a direct and strong commitment in the attainment of the inclusion program so as to encourage the involvement of all individuals working in the organization.
- **Human Resources (HR) managers / entrepreneurs** – Depending on the size of the organization, the HR function may not be present. In smaller organizations, in fact, the activities related to the personnel management are typically carried out by the entrepreneurs. Oversee the recruitment and selection process, the management and development of company's interns and employees. The HR managers intervene in the enrollment process of a person with ID after the decision of the Top managers or of the entrepreneurs. A fundamental task of the HR managers is to engage and motivate:
  1. the Department manager that will accommodate the intern/employee,
  2. the people who will work closely with the intern/employee,
  3. the rest of the employees.

In consultation with the Department manager, the HR managers may contribute to choose the employee who will have to support the intern/employee (Internal tutor) and contribute to work out the intern's training plan. Ongoing, the HR managers monitor the intern training process and will manage the possible hiring.

- **Department manager (DM)** – It is a crucial actor in the inclusion process. The Department manager collaborates with the HR managers (or performs the activities attributed to the HR when it is not present in the company). The Department manager selects the employee who will support the intern/employee (Internal tutor), motivates the employees of her/his department, detailing the activities to be performed by the intern and her/his Internal tutor. The DM supervises the entire internship process.
- **Internal tutor (IT)** – Is the employee who supports and works together with the intern/employee for the entire training period and who concretely takes care of her/his training process. The IT has to be instructed on how to behave correctly and reports regularly about the progress and possible issues encountered by the intern.

- **Company's employees** – Albeit indirectly, the entire personnel is involved in inclusion process of the intern/employee with ID. The creation of an open and collaborative atmosphere is in fact critical to the success of the integration process.

## External actors

- **Agency** – Whereas there are cases where the company interacts directly with candidates and interns with ID (and, in some cases, with their families), in the majority of cases there is an organization that supports and facilitates the inclusion process. The Agency, an operator specialized in the field of training and employment of people with disabilities, provides a mediation activity that consists in offering support along the entire inclusion process. The Agency works with the business in order to provide guidance and assistance, as well as to address possible problems that may arise during the internship of the person with ID. Depending on the context (country, region, normative system, etc.) where the business is located, the Agency may have different juridical forms. It can be a public institution, a private organization, a foundation or an association, with varying degree of specialty in the field of intellectual disability.
- **External tutor (ET)** – Once started the cooperation between the Company and the Agency, this latter identifies a person who will closely follow the inclusion process of the intern with ID. Supporting the personnel from the recruitment to the end of the internship, the ET delivers dedicated assistance and guidance during the entire training period, and provides support in addressing possible issues that might emerge.
- **Personal social network** – To have trainees or employees with ID often means taking part to a wider life project to favor the overall autonomy of a person. The business aspect is just one of those on which the interns/future employees are working. People with ID are usually surrounded by people, such as their family members or, in the case they live independently, by dedicated persons who support them in their daily life. Whereas the relationship between the intern and the business is of a professional type, in general relatives and possible people are kept informed of the advancement of the intern and approve and endorse the various stages of the process. The contact with families and other possible people is generally managed by the Agency and the ET, while the business may not even get in touch with them.

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## GOOD STORIES

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### When internships are the springboard for hiring

At the 5 Star Hotel Melià in Milan, Italy, internships completed by youngsters with ID have been so successful that managers decided to start a new training project aimed to permanently hire an employee with ID.

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This has been possible appropriately **involving the key actors** along the entire hiring process.

In achieving the recruitment and selection activities, **managers** have been supported by an **external agency**.

Once the **intern** was identified, hotel managers chose the employee who was going to be the **internal tutor**. Specific training and motivation sessions in order to train her/him on his/her expected supervision effort have been undertaken. Moreover, all the staff has been sensitized to foster a disability friendly working environment. The internship lasted 6 months, during which the Hotel management assessed the intern success on the job and a better and better attitude towards the job. The external association has been continuously involved in the training as well as in the final assessment in order to assist the Hotel and to suggest tips and expedients to overcome minor problems. The overall process included all the key actors. This led to a positive assessment of the results at the end of the internship time, and to the decision to permanently hire him.

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## **Step 1 – Recruitment and selection**

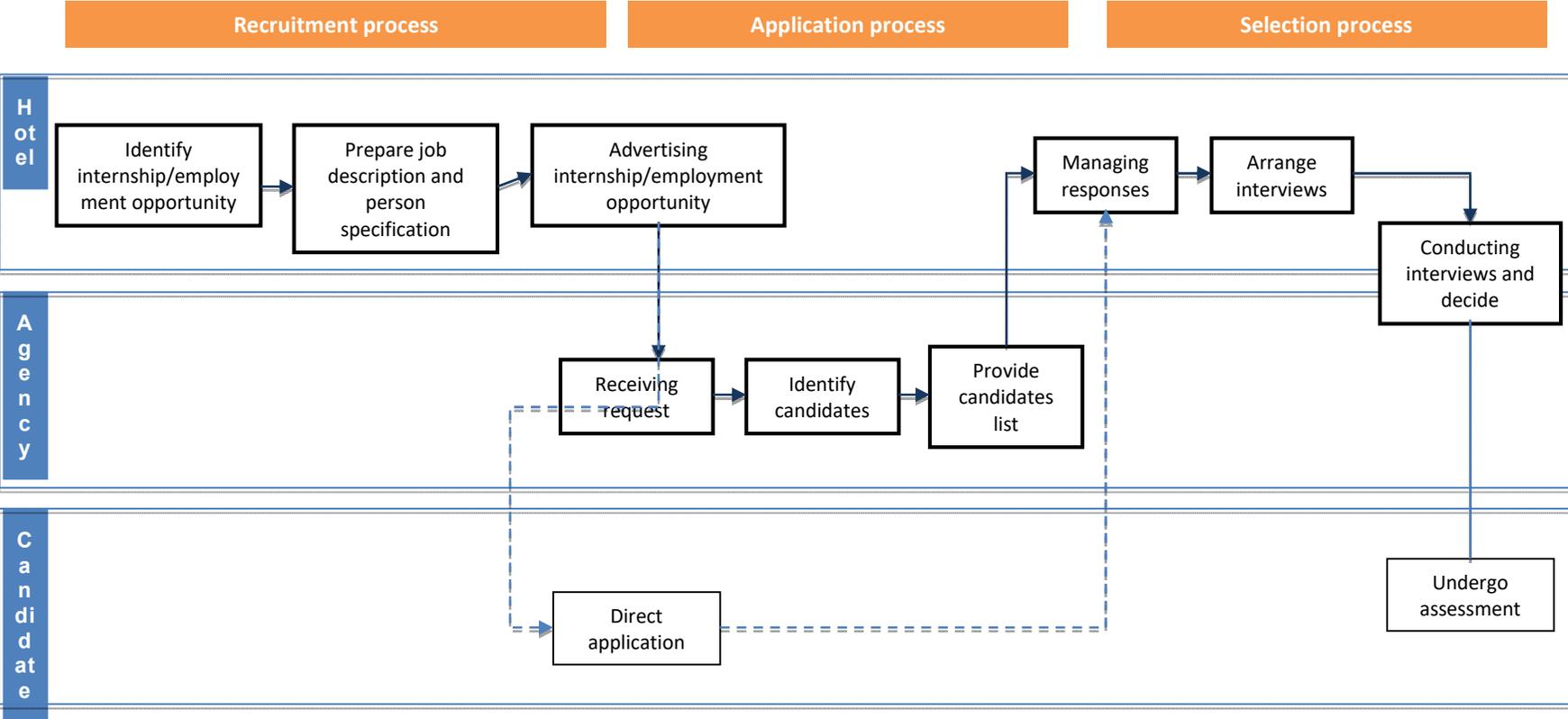
The recruitment and selection process is of major importance for finding prospect interns (and obviously employees) and enrolling them effectively in the organization.

### **Recruitment**

- Is the process of searching the candidates for internships/employment and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization.
- The basic purpose of recruitment is to create a pool of applicants to enable the selection of best candidates for the organization, by attracting more and more interns/employees to apply in the organization.

### **Selection**

- Involves the series of steps by which the candidates are screened for choosing the most suitable persons for vacant posts.
- The basic purpose of selection process is to choose the right candidate to fill the various positions in the organization.



## Step 1A – Recruitment process

- Based on the willingness and the needs of the organization, the HR/entrepreneur identifies the job position to be covered by an intern.
- (If not done previously) Possibly with the Department manager, the HR/entrepreneur prepares the job description and identifies the minimal skills needed to perform the job.
- The HR/entrepreneur provides the advertising of the opportunity to attain an internship.
- Communication of an internship opportunity can be done directly contacting a specialized external Agency or through other channels.

Whereas in the majority of cases the recruitment process of a person with ID is done in cooperation with an Agency, **other channels** can be exploited to advertise the internship opportunity, such as walk-ins, educational institutions, HR consultants, etc. One of the most often-recurring methods of sourcing people with ID without the support of an Agency is through **employee referrals**.

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### WATCH OUT! Reasonable accommodation

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#### **Making the application process inclusive**

- Job and person specifications must be drawn up in such a way that they should clearly indicate the essential skills and the marginal/desirable skills.
- Do not make assumptions about what someone with a particular disability can or cannot do.
- When we say people with certain disabilities can do this or that job, we are assuming that people with the same kind of disability have the same abilities. Each individual is unique in terms of interests, skills and abilities. It is crucial to understand each person's unique situation.
- Use words that are inclusive of all potential candidates.
- Application forms can be confusing and are often badly designed. Try to make them as user friendly as possible.
- The application form should be made available in alternative formats i.e. large print, easy reading, etc.
- If the internship is advertised via Internet, make sure that it is presented in accessible formats.

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#### **Job analysis and job description**

Whereas businesses of larger dimension have probably already gone through a process of job analysis and have worked out the job description of jobs of their organization, smaller businesses may not. Following, the description of the processes and some tips to achieve them are provided.

Job analysis is the process to determine:

- **purpose** - the reason for the job,
- **essential functions** - the job duties which are critical or fundamental to the performance of the job,
- **job setting** - the work station and conditions where the essential functions are performed,
- **job qualifications** - the minimal skills an individual must possess to perform the essential functions.

Job analysis provides an unbiased basis for enrolling, evaluating, training, accommodating and supervising all interns and employees.

### Tips for achieving a good Job Analysis<sup>2</sup>

<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the rationale behind the job?</li> <li>▪ What aspect of business operations is supported by this task?</li> <li>▪ What internal/external customer is served?</li> </ul>
<b>Essential functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What activities actually constitute the job? Is each really necessary?</li> <li>▪ How much time is spent on the job performing each particular function? Are the tasks performed less frequently as important to success, as those done more frequently?</li> <li>▪ What is the relationship between each task? Is there a special sequence that the tasks must follow? Are there often variances or exceptions to be addressed?</li> <li>▪ What physical activities are required to do the tasks?</li> <li>▪ How much physical exertion is needed?</li> <li>▪ How much mental/emotional exertion is required (working under tight deadlines, handling problems, complaints, etc.)?</li> <li>▪ What methods, techniques or tools are used?</li> <li>▪ What are the quality standards?</li> </ul>
<b>Job setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Location</i>: What is the job location? Where are the essential functions of the job carried out? Can the job be done in another location?</li> <li>▪ <i>Movement</i>: What movement is required of employees to accomplish the essential functions of the job?</li> <li>▪ <i>Conditions</i>: What are the physical conditions of the job setting (hot, cold, inside, outside, underground, dry, air-conditioned, noisy, etc.)? What are the social conditions of the job (works alone, works around others, works with the public, works under close supervision, and works under minimal supervision, etc.)? What is the work schedule? Are there work shifts?</li> </ul>
<b>Job qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the general skills needed for the job (ability to read, write, communicate, calculate, computer skills, problem solving skills, etc.)?</li> <li>▪ What knowledge is necessary?</li> <li>▪ What specific training is necessary? Can it be obtained on the job?</li> <li>▪ What previous experience, if any, can replace or be substituted for the specific training requirements?</li> </ul>

### Application process

- In the case no external Agency intervenes in the process, candidates provide directly their application.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN), Job Analysis [http://askearn.org/refdesk/Supervision\\_Management/Job\\_Analysis](http://askearn.org/refdesk/Supervision_Management/Job_Analysis) , retrieved 05/17/2016.

- Given that in our case people with ID are involved, when no Agency mediation is present, it is very plausible that the family or other people of the candidate personal network actively take part in the application process.
- In the case the support of an external Agency is provided, the Agency identifies possible candidates with suitable characteristics for performing the job and provides the list to the company's HR/entrepreneur.

### Step 1B – Selection process

- Once responses are received by the company, they are managed by the HR personnel, who provide to arrange the interviews/assessments with the applicants.
- In the interviews, also the Department manager is involved.
- In the case an external Agency is involved in the process, some personnel of the external Agency support conducting the interviews/assessments.
- It can happen that the Agency person taking part in the interviews/assessments will be afterwards the External tutor of the intern with ID.

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#### **WATCH OUT! Reasonable accommodation**

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#### **Making the assessment process inclusive<sup>3</sup>**

- An employer should apply the same criteria to assess the ability of people with disabilities and those without disabilities.
  - It may be however necessary to make some accommodations for applicants who have ID.
  - Selection tests and interviews should be sensitive, objective and unbiased.
  - The assessment process for internships/jobs should be oriented towards selection and not filtration.
  - A change in testing format may be required and consists in the use of a different medium or method to present the same information (for example large print, easy reading).
  - Extra time could be required to perform the assessment.
  - Extra breaks could be required during the assessment (candidates could be more easily fatigued or have anxiety-related problems).
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<sup>3</sup> Public Service Commission of Canada, Assessment of Candidates with Disabilities, <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/ppc-cpp/acs-cmptnc-evl-cmptnc/acs-evl-cnd-hndcp-eng.htm>, retrieved 05/17/2016.

## Step 2 – Induction

Induction, also called orientation, is the process of acquainting new interns or employees with the organization.

It is the process through which **a new person is introduced to the job and the organization**. It consists in the process of receiving and welcoming an intern/employee when she/he first joins a company and giving her/him the basic information she/he needs to settle down and start working.

Some of the benefits achievable through a correct induction process are:

- reduce start up costs (associated with job learning),
- reduce anxiety,
- reduce employee turnover,
- save time for supervisor and colleagues,
- develop realistic job expectations and job satisfaction.

The idea at the basis of induction is to **make new interns/employees feel comfortable in the new environment**, expedite proficiency, enhance adjustment to work group and norms, and encourage positive attitude.

The orientation process helps a new intern/employee to know the job, its content, policies, rules and regulations, as well as the people with whom she/he is supposed to interact while working.

### Identification of Internal tutor

Since the beginning of the intern experience at the organization, it is necessary to identify the Internal tutor.

At this stage, it is extremely important to properly **define the match** between the intern and the IT.

In accordance with the HR management/entrepreneur, the Department manager selects the employee who will be the Internal tutor. In the case an Agency is involved in the inclusion process, the External tutor instructs the IT in order to optimize the activities aimed at appropriately train the intern.

The IT is an **experienced employee** and possesses the knowledge and competencies needed to perform the job activities. She/he takes care of the needs of the intern and supports her/him along the entire process of achieving job autonomy, teaching the trainee how to appropriately carry out the work.

The IT is not required to have special characteristics, but has to be **motivated and committed** to the inclusion project.

It is extremely important to **develop an emergency management plan that specifically addresses the needs of the intern** with ID. One (usually the IT) or more than one person of the organization has/have to be trained, in order to intervene promptly to support the intern in case of emergency.

#### **Preparation of intern co-workers<sup>4</sup>**

It is also necessary to take a few measures and provisions in order to appropriately manage the acquaintance of the intern with the new employment environment and with the group of people with whom she/he will work, as well as with the training process the trainee is going to undertake.

The overall goal, analogously to what happens in any other working place, is to build up a team of friendly and supportive co-workers, willing to cooperate in order to maximize the outputs of their activities.

The HR/entrepreneur and the Department managers should ensure that the intern feels comfortable in the workplace, and guarantee that the intern gets the accommodations that she/he may require.

The intern co-workers have to be sensitized about disability-related issues and be instructed about disability etiquettes.

They may also be trained on communication ways/techniques to better communicate with colleagues who have difficulty in understanding verbal language.

It is important to ensure that the induction and orientation programs are **accessible and inclusive** to accommodate persons with ID. The accommodations are arranged in consultation with interns/employees with ID, based on their individual needs, as well as with the External tutor when the process is realized in cooperation with an Agency.

Internal communication at the workplace, such as safety signs, room signs, etc. should be adjusted and made accessible based on the intern's needs.

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#### **WATCH OUT! Reasonable accommodation**

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#### **Making induction an accessible process**

- Information should be in accessible formats for a person with

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<sup>4</sup> The 14 videos, mentioned at pag.4, have been expressly produced aiming at sensitizing co-workers.

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intellectual disability.

- Internal signs should be in accessible format for a person with intellectual disability.
  - Documents to be filled up should be in accessible format for a person with intellectual disability.
  - Assistance in filling up forms for a person with learning disability should be provided.
  - The people involved in the induction should be trained in order to appropriately manage the orientation process.
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## Step 3 – Training

Training may include both conventional instructing activities and tools (courses, seminars, presentations, documents, technological devices, etc.) and on-the-job training.

On-the-job training consists in training the intern at the place of work while he or she is doing the actual job. The overall purpose of this process is to make the intern with ID more and more autonomous in performing the job activities.

The IT should guarantee constant support and coaching along the entire internship. The replacement of the IT, even for short periods, may cause tension and stress in the trainee. Especially at the beginning of the internship, in fact, the IT is seen by the trainee as the only person to follow. In drawing up the work shifts, the Department manager must take this into account and in case of leave or temporary indisposition of the IT, a second tutor should be instructed in advance so to be able to substitute him/her.

The approach of the IT must be **very professional**: A too emotional attitude is likely to shift the working relationship into a friendly kinship. The IT and the intern are colleagues, not friends, therefore the way they interact with each other has to be maintained strictly professional.

In the case an Agency cooperates with the business, the IT can refer to the External tutor to ask for advice or solve issues that might emerge in the relationship with the intern, as well as to manage matters involving other employees or customers.

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### VIDEOS

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#### **#Business is business – Be professional**

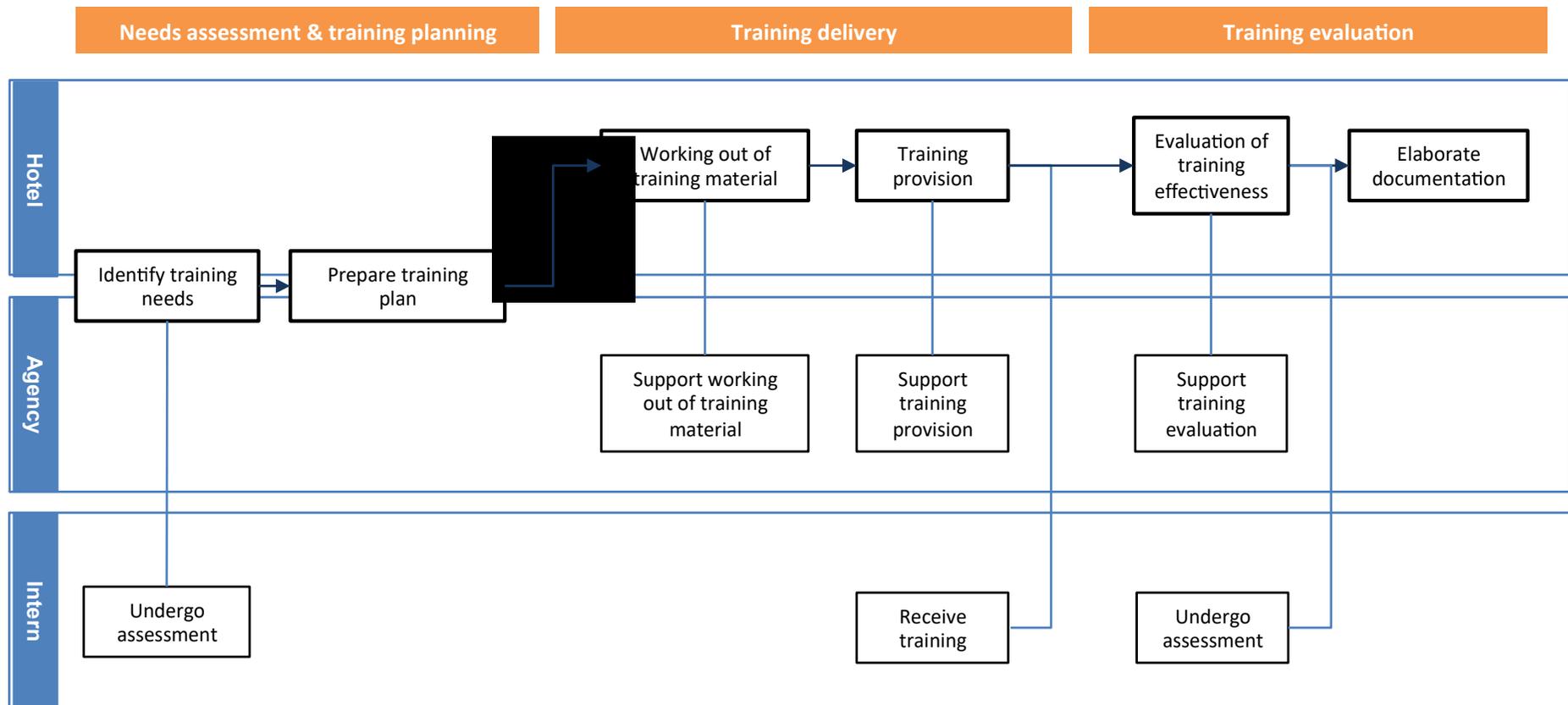
Keywords: Professional Role, Formal & informal.

It's important to explain the formal/informal rules in the workplace. It's highly recommended to respect the private life and not to mention it during working time, in order to avoid confusion or misperceptions of the roles and the boundaries between trainee and tutor.

We can play at work, but there are rules to follow and work to do. Pauses are the best times to get together with colleagues. In the work context, we are colleagues and not friends.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a\\_HTO7JFcQU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_HTO7JFcQU)

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Boxes with thicker contour lines represent the sequential activities of the process.

### Step 3A – Needs assessment and training planning

Before starting the actual training, an assessment of the skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes of the intern is realized in order to identify her/his training needs. The intern herself/himself may also communicate the perceived competency gap that she/he wishes to fill.

Then, the HR management/entrepreneur, the Department manager and the Internal tutor, when present also the Agency, meet and discuss the intern training needs in order to develop the training plan to be achieved during the internship. The plan may provide both on-the-job training and conventional training activities (courses, reading material, technological devices, etc.).

The training goals are established, as well as the possible intermediate advancement achievements, and the training plan is worked out and illustrated to the intern.

Afterwards, the HR management and/or the Department manager present and illustrate the training plan to the employees operating in the Department where the intern will work.

### Step 3B – Training delivery

The overall goal of training delivery is to teach the trainees the skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes necessary to safely and efficiently perform their jobs.

An appropriate intern training, development and education, delivered at the right time, provides big payoffs for the business, such as increased productivity, knowledge, loyalty, and contribution.

Interns with ID have to undergo the same training as everybody else. Managers and entrepreneurs should not assume that a disabled person will be either unwilling or unable to undertake demanding on-the-job training or receive a more conventional type of instruction, such as attend courses, learn from documental material (presentations, reports, etc.) or technological devices.

During the training process, based on the training needs assessment, the intern may acquire or improve her/his:

- Technical/professional skills related to the performed job (know-how),
- Relational competencies (how to work with colleagues and supervisors, deal with clients, etc.),
- Cross competencies (dress code, respect of work schedule and obligations, acknowledgement of job performance standards, etc.),
- Physical and mobility capabilities (the so called “aesthetic capabilities”).

## Same job, same responsibilities

While working, trainees with ID have the same responsibilities as any other colleague and are given the same instructions and directions of other employees performing the same job/hired in the same job position.

Providing an internship to a person with ID does not necessarily imply interventions to modify or redesign either the job or the tasks assigned to the intern.

However, both more conventional learning process and on-the-job learning may need to accommodate the intern's specific needs. It is important to discuss the need for any modifications or reasonable adjustments with both the intern and the External tutor, if present, as this latter is knowledgeable about the adjustments that interns with ID may possibly require.

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### VIDEOS

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#### #To each his own time – Respect tasks and times

Keywords: Different pace, Goals

Every person establishes his/her own time management. It could take more time for trainees than other workers to perform one task but this does not mean that they will not reach the goal.

The tutor should promote the right understanding of the trainee due to the need of adjusting the intensity of the working pace.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qwBRiBsq08>

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## Communication matters

During the training, both the IT and other involved employees need to pay special attention to communication.

The language should be **direct, explicit, clear and simple**.<sup>5</sup>

Especially in the initial phases of the internship, the explanations and the tasks will have to be repeated until the information is fully understood and memorized by the trainee.

Very often, in order to facilitate the intern learning process, assistive tools, such as checklists, technological devices are worked out and provided.

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<sup>5</sup> European standards for making information easy to read and to understand, at: [easy-to-read.eu](http://easy-to-read.eu)

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## VIDEOS

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### #Fast & Bossy – Clear and simple instructions

Keywords: Targeted Communication.

The tutor should provide clear, simple and precise instructions, taking into account an adequate language for the trainee's level of understanding. New activities or changes have to be introduced little by little, through continuous repetitions and training.

Sometimes, it's necessary to subdivide the instructions that are given to the trainees, one at a time, making sure that they understand all the vocabulary and the given instructions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQog3vAiOg4>

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Once the tasks are learned, memorized and become a routine for the trainee, the need of constant supervision decreases and then ceases. Thus, the steady presence of both the ET and the IT becomes less and less necessary along the increase of the intern's capability to work independently.

In order to facilitate the learning process, it might be necessary to:

- plan gradual and steady training steps;
  - avoid providing the intern with contradictory or overly complex stimuli;
  - work out assistive tools, such as a "list of things I have to learn", checklists, etc., which can support and facilitate the learning process of the intern;
  - customize the schedule and duration of job activities.
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## APP

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## WATCH OUT! Reasonable accommodation

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### Train the trainer

- Interns with ID are to be trained as any other intern or employee.
  - Do not assume that they are unwilling or unable to undergo training activities.
  - Do not assume that, while working, they have different responsibilities of other interns and employees.
  - Instructions and information should be clear and direct.
  - Avoid providing too much information and too many instructions at the same time.
  - Orally and written provided information should be in accessible formats for a person with ID.
  - If needed, work out assistive tools, such as checklists.
  - If needed, provide adjustments to job tasks (duration, schedule, etc.).
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### Step 3C – Training evaluation

At the end of the training period, the intern undertakes a final assessment aimed at verifying her/his achievements.

Progressions are evaluated based on the results of the initial assessment and the training plan elaborated at the beginning of the internship.

Subjects who might be involved in the final assessment include the HR managers, the Department manager, the Internal and External tutors, as well as intern co-workers who might be asked to formulate an appraisal of the intern performance while doing the job.

Evaluation is relevant for both the trainee and the company.

- **For the trainee**, the result of the evaluation is important to gain awareness about herself/himself, her/his own capabilities, acquired skills and competencies, ability to perform assigned tasks, and to meet the standards of the work environment.
- **For the company**, the assessment is relevant to ascertain the effectiveness of implemented training activities, as well as to decide whether or not to continue the professional relationship with the person with ID, either renewing the internship or formalizing a hiring.

Assessment procedures may vary widely among companies. Some companies use formal, written documents; others use less formal, often oral, procedures.

Managers and entrepreneurs must treat interns with ID the same as all other interns or employees.

In the case an Agency is involved in the process, this might provide ad hoc tools and formats worked out to achieve the appraisal procedure.

At the end of the assessment, intern supervisors should discuss the evaluation with the trainee.

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## GOOD STORIES

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### **Trainee assessment at ADECCO Foundation Italy**

Cooperating with the Italian Association of people with Down syndrome, ADECCO Foundation Italy adopts an integrated approach to assess the achievements of people with ID who undertake a training process. The assessment includes:

- Cross skills (punctuality, dress code, etc.),
- Professional skills (e.g. in the case of an assistant cook if she/he can cut vegetables, prepare a sauce, etc.),
- Relational capabilities (attitudes towards customers, supervisors, and colleagues).

The Foundation uses specific evaluation formats for each job.

The assessment process provides different phases involving different people:

- First stage: is that of self-assessment where the intern herself/himself evaluates her/his own achieved progresses,
- Second stage: the evaluation is performed by the External tutor, who has followed the intern along the entire training process,
- Third stage: the assessment is accomplished by the Internal tutor of the hotel.

The process has the overall purpose to promote a path of increasing self-awareness and autonomy of the person with ID.

[www.fondazioneadecco.org](http://www.fondazioneadecco.org)

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## Retention and career development

Even though internships do not always turn into hiring, Top managers and Entrepreneurs should think about them as a way to find competent workers and verify if they are able to fulfill the company needs by assessing their capabilities directly on the job.

Internships are indeed very often the first step along a wider path of a hiring procedure.

**Retention policies definitely contribute  
to the effectiveness and efficiency of a company.**

In addition to addressing the various needs of interns and employees to enhance their job satisfaction, in fact, retention policies essentially aim to reduce the significant costs involved in hiring and training new staff.

Analogously to any other internship, also those that involve people with ID should be considered as gateway processes to hire new employees.

In the case an intern is hired by a company, a career development plan should be worked out based on the appraisal of the actual competencies and skills and those needed to perform higher-level tasks.

Career development decisions for any employee, included those with ID, have to be based on performance, skills, qualifications, experience, and other managerial and behavioral competencies needed to achieve the higher-level job objectives.

It is however important to understand that a decision such as this should be based on an objective appraisal of the employee's potential and prior performance.

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### GOOD STORIES

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#### **Career development at Tacabanda restaurant**

After an appropriate period of practice, the Tacabanda restaurant (Asti, Italy) hired a youngster with ID, who is on the way of his professional development.

The new employee is in charge of managing all internships that are accomplished in the organization.

He has the keys of both the restaurant and the hotel and he autonomously manages all the matters the new interns have to deal with.

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## Conclusions

Many companies are already addressing intellectual disability.

They may do it as part of a wider diversity strategy, such as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility policy, or just as the result of the personal commitment of business owners, entrepreneurs and managers.

However, it is worth to know that they do not do it just for “philanthropy”.

They do it also because they recognize that diversity within their workforce brings many business benefits and is a real potential source of competitive advantage. It is a central factor in enhancing efficiency, productivity and overall business success.

Enrolling intellectually disabled people in a business workforce is compelling.

Employers of intellectually disabled people have in fact consistently found that these employees effectively contribute to the achievement of business objectives:

- They are as productive and reliable as any other employee,
- They tend to have better attendance records, stay with employers longer and have fewer accidents at work,
- Most of them only require minimal adjustments at work,
- Staff morale and organizational atmosphere are enhanced,
- Organizations, which prove to be accessible to disabled employees, in addition to customers, are more appealing to clients and all other stakeholders.

Finally, involving intellectually disabled people in the workforce improves the company image by showing that apart from economical benefits, it also pursues social objectives.

## Useful additional resources

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