



**Ernst & Young AccessAbilities™: unleashing the full abilities of all our people**

Mid-Atlantic ADA Center  
June 28, 2012

**ERNST & YOUNG**  
Quality In Everything We Do

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**I plan to do two things:**

1. Discuss how Ernst & Young employs and supports people with disabilities
2. Share our approach to accommodations

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**Disabilities inclusiveness is a key priority.**

- ▶ Inclusiveness is among top global priorities
- ▶ Core competitive advantage
- ▶ Accountability
  - ▶ Global Sponsor
  - ▶ Americas Inclusiveness Officer
  - ▶ Advisory Council
  - ▶ Steering Committees
  - ▶ Network Leaders



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## Four keys to successful inclusion of people with disabilities

- ▶ Recruit the best talent – in whatever “bodysuit”
- ▶ Provide the tools, resources, information, equipment and environment needed to excel
- ▶ Plan for career growth
- ▶ Educate everyone – not just key groups

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## Our strategy focuses on environment and culture:

1. Enabling people by providing tools, information, resources, and career support
2. Building awareness and educating so people of all abilities feel included



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## We have several networks focused on disabilities

### AccessAbilities™

- ▶ 200 members, with/without disabilities, all ranks, regions
- ▶ Focus on firm-wide changes
- ▶ Advise on initiatives, create activities to build awareness

### Abilities Champions

- ▶ By region and functional group
- ▶ Improve how EY processes impact people with disabilities

### Caregivers Circle; Parents Network

- ▶ Knowledge resource and support groups
- ▶ External experts run calls; post information on internal sites

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**We focus on three areas. The first is safety and productivity.**

- ▶ Emergency evacuation plans, audits, education
- ▶ Accommodations consultations
- ▶ Technology accessibility – e.g. captioning
- ▶ Office accessibility improvements, e.g. electric doors



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**The second is career development.**

- ▶ We plan ahead so disability doesn't limit opportunities
  - ▶ Career paths
  - ▶ Performance issues
  - ▶ Changes in business process
  - ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ We provide support for people with disabilities
  - ▶ Coaching and mentoring
  - ▶ Consulting
  - ▶ Networking internally and externally

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**The third is education.**

- ▶ Key groups – recruiters, human resources, managers, trainers, technology staff
- ▶ Build awareness through embedding in business group events, communications
- ▶ Include in online newsletters, meetings and events
- ▶ Include messages and photos in sites and materials
- ▶ All our resources made available on an internal site

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## We use a variety of materials. These include quick reference guides ...



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## and videos that tell stories.

- ▶ AccessAbilities video – our people discuss working with disabilities and how each of us can be more inclusive
- ▶ AccessAbilities “minutes” – EY people share true stories about working with disabilities that teach what and what not to do



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## We create handbooks on special topics

*Getting support, supporting others* offers guidance on non-visible disabilities.

- ▶ Explains accommodations
- ▶ Discusses disclosure, building relationships
- ▶ Addresses concerns of people with disabilities, colleagues, human resources, managers
- ▶ Shares real stories and advice



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## ... and posters to get people thinking about disabilities in new ways.



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## It's key to understand what accommodations are and are not.

- ▶ Employers must reasonably accommodate individuals with known disabilities. Even if no assistance is requested, if we suspect a disability is impacting ability to perform, we must explore accommodations.
- ▶ We are required to "engage in an interactive process".
- ▶ Most accommodations that don't significantly change our business operations would be considered reasonable for a large employers like Ernst & Young.
- ▶ Accommodation does not mean different standards of performance, only different ways of working
- ▶ Accommodation does not mean changing essential job functions

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## Accommodations improve performance and add value to the business.

- ▶ A productivity tool, like technology
- ▶ An investment in building capabilities, like training
- ▶ Requested / implemented by the field; funded and approved by each business unit
- ▶ Simple documentation; positive presumption
- ▶ AccessAbilities consults with all parties; a collaborative, ongoing process with scheduled check-ins

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**Accommodations change how work is done – where, when, with what tools or processes.**

- ▶ Tools and equipment – screen readers, voice to text, ergonomic furniture, electric doors, temperature adjustments
- ▶ Location and schedule – telework, office change, adjusting hours, days
- ▶ Business processes – professional services like reader, interpreter, proofreader, speech therapist, coach, also added reviews, “restatement” memos, quality checklists, etc.

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