

Raising The Game on Disability

Topic 04 – Organisational Barriers Disabled People Face in Employment

June 2013

Time

50 minutes

Objectives

At the end of this topic learners will be able to list the organisational barriers that disabled people face in employment.

Learning Points

This topic will cover the following learning point:

- Organisational barriers disabled people face in employment.

Topic Preparation

- DVD player
- projector and screen

Support Material

TALK DVD (free to order from the Equality and Human Rights Commission)

Validation

Successful completion of this topic will be measured by question and answer.

Method of Delivery

This topic is facilitator led and has been designed to be run as a workshop.

It also includes:

- showing the 'TALK' DVD
- facilitator input
- group exercise

Organisational Barriers Disabled People Face in Employment



Facilitate a discussion with the group around the organisational barriers disabled people face in employment. These are NOT to be confused with the Five Challenges To Work that were discussed in Adviser Skills Workshop One. Following this discussion, show the TALK DVD.

There are four main organisational barriers that disabled people face:

- Policy and Procedural.
- Physical.
- People.
- Institutional.

Ask the learners to suggest what they are.

Let us now look at each of the barriers in turn.

- Policy and Procedural barriers – these are barriers created by inflexible policies and procedures. For example; recruitment/ communication policies/financial policies etc. Some organisations have too many policies in place and that are too

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complex whilst some do not have any in place at all.



Case study example: Ryan Air – story of six blind travellers.

They are friends who live in different places and decided to go on holiday together; each booked separately on line. When they arrived at the airport there were no problems going through check in/ departure. When they went to board the plane they had to be escorted across the tarmac and the pilot noticed that all six passengers were blind. For health and safety reasons he decided, as he only had a basic number of crew on board, that he wouldn't allow the group to fly that day and asked them to leave the plane, stating he thought they would be a hazard to other passengers in the event of an evacuation. H & S can take precedence over disability legislation.



Health and Safety legislation may take precedence over access solutions in some instances, therefore if a recommendation is made to improve access but which could potentially present a hazard to other users of the building, then the recommendation would not be carried out. For example, it is unlikely that a platform stair lift would be acceptable on an escape stairwell, especially if

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it is the only stairwell in the building



Facilitate a discussion about what the group thinks of this decision before continuing with the case study.



The group took Ryan Air to a tribunal and the blind passengers won their case. At the tribunal the blind passengers actually said that in an emergency the first thing to happen is the lights would go out and they considered that they would be best placed to help others in that situation because they are used to coping without lighting.

However, that's not the reason why they won.



Ask the group what do they think the reason was for them winning their case?



The reason was that Ryan Air had at no stage captured the information to be able to anticipate any reasonable adjustments. They had no policy or procedures in place to put contingencies in place or arrange for extra cabin crew to prepare for these passengers. They lost miserably and at a great cost to the organisation.

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- Physical barriers caused by poor access to premises/aids and equipment/goods and services
- People barriers – the most difficult barrier to overcome – attitude/prejudice/behavioural/people barriers.
- Institutional barriers – created by an organisation resisting change – always done things the same way and don't see a reason to do things differently.



Case study example although not disability related:

Marks and Spencer - when shares plummeted and Stuart Rose came in as CEO, he asked the question who is the M & S customer as the store was only catering for white middle class customers – the pleated trouser and A line dress type customer. Stuart Rose then asked who should our customers be? Answer: everyone. As a result he introduced – Per Una, Autograph, Limited collection, he introduced in the food hall Indian food, Thai food, Chinese food – a whole range of different options to cater for a wider customer base and very quickly the shares went up and up and he became Sir Stuart Rose and then became Chairman of M&S.

By asking two simple questions, he engaged with the widest audience.

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Within Jobcentre Plus, we support the most vulnerable people in society in to work. It is vital that we understand the needs of our customer.

TALK DVD



Explain to the learners that we will now watch the TALK DVD.

Before playing the DVD, mention to the group that the DVD portrays a society where disabled people live a full and active life and non-disabled people are a pitied minority – in contrast to how society is as we know it.



Ask the learners to identify examples of the four main organisational barriers that we have just discussed:

- Policy and Procedures
- Physical
- People; and
- Institutional.



Show the TALK DVD.

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Select individuals to comment on how the DVD made them feel.



Ask the group:

What did the DVD highlight?



Answers should include:

- **Policy and Procedures:** application was in Braille only, Bus (rules).
- **Physical:** Lift
- **People:** Hostile attitudes in restaurant, patronising language, condescending 'isn't he brave', an assumption that he needed help (Umbrella)!
- **Institutional:** Boardroom – 'check out the competition' 'Image stakes' – 'damn good PR', Taxi – not stopping, Bus 'we don't make the rules'.



Give delegates work related exercise for when they return to their offices – Ask them to think about a disabled customer accessing our services and think

through the customer journey. Also think about disabled colleagues working in our offices – identify any barriers and notify managers so that solutions can be explored.



Facilitate a discussion around how we know that People/Institutional barriers are the most difficult to overcome.

- What we know is that from the Business Disability Forum survey, 49% of people in the UK are scared of disabled people.
- 50% of disabled people face hate crime such as physical abuse or hate comments (disability Scotland)
- 32% think wheelchair users are less intelligent than non wheelchair users – assume low education
- 25% of non disabled people resent disabled people – ‘they get all the benefits and don’t have to work!’
- 12% of the UK public believe that guide dogs can read bus numbers.

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Ask the learners if they have any questions before continuing with the next topic.

END OF TOPIC 04