A Handbook for
Employers who will recruit Persons with Visual Impairments

By

**Yayasan Mitra Netra
(Mitra Netra Foundation)**
INDONESIA

**Resources for the
Blind Inc.**
PHILIPPINES

**Soa Mai Center
for the Blind**
VIETNAM

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Contents

Introduction

Job opportunities in the formal sector for visually impaired individuals remain extremely limited. This situation certainly deserves attention, given that job opportunities in the formal sector are a basic human right. There are three handbooks in this series that are designed to promote job opportunities for visually impaired individuals in the formal sector.

The first is a handbook for visually impaired individuals who want to work in the formal sector; the second is a guidebook for employers hiring visually impaired individuals; and the third is a handbook for parents as part of the support system preparing their visually impaired kids for formal employment.

The second publication in this series of handbooks will help employers understand the importance of diversity and inclusivity in the workplace, focusing on how to accommodate employees with visual impairments effectively. There are seven topics in the handbook, including understanding and recognizing Individuals with visual impairments, identifying environment-based visual impairment barriers and how to resolve the barriers, preparing to employ individuals with visual impairments, collaborating with organizations focused on the preparation and recruitment of individuals with visual impairments, evaluation and appraisal systems for employees with visual impairments, and the lesson learned from employers in recruiting and employing employees with visual impairments.

Through this handbook, employers are encouraged to find qualified candidates among people with disabilities, who often show a high level of loyalty. In addition, by offering tips on how to recruit workers with visual impairments, the handbook also incorporates support systems tailored to workers with visual impairments. It is hoped that this handbook will contribute to maximizing the productivity and job satisfaction of people with visual impairments.

Furthermore, employers should be aware that hiring people with visual impairments can be economically beneficial (for example, when selling accessible goods and services, the community of persons with disabilities then becomes a consumer base).

The compilation of this series of guidebooks is inseparable from the results of a collaborative study titled "The Keys to Success for Persons with Visual Impairments Working in the Formal Sector" conducted in 2024 in three countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam) by the Mitra Netra Foundation, Resource for the Blind Inc. (RBI), and Sao Mai for the Blind. This study was fully supported by the Nippon Foundation.

We hope that this handbook will not only benefit the three target groups (visually impaired individuals, employers, and parents), but also all other stakeholders, including disability rights experts and academics who are interested in the issue of formal sector employment for visually impaired individuals. This is expected to be only the first series of handbooks we develop to serve as inspiration for visually impaired individuals to strengthen their resolve to work in the formal sector. This concludes our introduction, and we wish you all the best in using this handbook as a reference. Enjoy the book and happy reading.

Chapter 1:
Understanding and Recognizing Individuals with Visual Impairments

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) adopted by the United Nations defines persons with disabilities in Article 1 as **"...those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."**

Definition of Persons with Visual Impairment

Visual impairment is a term experts use to describe any kind of vision loss, whether it's a total loss of vision or partial vision loss.

Some people are completely blind, but many others have what's called legal blindness. They may have some sight, but have lost enough vision that they'd have to stand 20 feet from an object to see it as well as someone with perfect vision could from 200 feet away. Here are the key categories:

1. **Partially Sighted:** The person has some usable vision but may need assistive devices or accommodations to perform tasks that require sight.

2. **Low Vision:** Refers to a condition where visual acuity is severely diminished, and the person finds it difficult to carry out everyday activities even with corrective lenses.

3. **Legally Blind:** A person is considered legally blind if the best-corrected vision in their better eye is 20/200 or worse, or if they have a field of vision that is 20 degrees or less.

4. **Totally Blind:** Individuals who have no perception of light or vision at all.

For people with visual impairments to be able to fully participate in daily life, they need reasonable accommodation and accessibility. They may require assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers) or voice overs.

Chapter 2:
Identifying Visual Impairment Barriers and How to Resolve the Barriers

Identifying barriers for employees with visual impairments is critical to creating an inclusive workplace. These barriers can be physical, technological, or social, and they can hinder productivity, participation, and access to opportunities. Here are common barriers that employees with visual impairments may face:

1. Physical Barriers

- **Inaccessible Workspaces:** Offices may lack clear signage, tactile paths, or proper lighting, making it difficult for employees with visual impairments to navigate independently.

- **Poorly Designed Layouts:** Cluttered or unsafe office layouts with furniture, equipment, or obstacles that aren't easily detectable can pose mobility challenges.

- **Transportation Difficulties:** Employees with visual impairments may face difficulties commuting if the workplace is not easily accessible via public transportation, lacks accessible parking, or lacks drop-off points.

2. Technological Barriers

- **Inaccessible Software and Systems:** Many workplace software applications, websites, and digital platforms are not designed with screen readers or other assistive technologies in mind, making it difficult for visually impaired employees to access or interact with them.

- **Lack of Assistive Technology:** Employers may not provide or support essential assistive tools such as screen readers, braille displays, magnification software, or voice-activated systems.

- **Digital Content Not Optimized:** Documents, presentations, or reports may not be formatted in accessible ways (e.g., PDFs without text recognition, and images without alt text), making it harder for employees with visual impairments to access necessary information.

3. Communication Barriers

- **Non-Visual Cues:** Meetings, training sessions, or informal discussions that rely heavily on visual information (e.g., presentations, graphs, body language) can exclude employees with visual impairments if there are no verbal descriptions or alternative formats provided.

- **Limited Accessible Training Materials:** Onboarding materials, training videos, and manuals may not be provided in accessible formats (e.g., braille, large print, or audio).

4. Social and Attitudinal Barriers

- **Misconceptions and Stereotypes:** Colleagues or managers may hold misconceptions about the abilities of visually impaired employees, thereby underestimating their capabilities, or excluding them important projects or decisions.

- **Lack of Awareness:** Co-workers may not know how to interact appropriately, leading to awkwardness, avoidance, or excessive offers of help that diminish independence.

- **Discriminatory Attitudes:** Some may believe that hiring or accommodating employees with visual impairments is burdensome, leading to discrimination in recruitment, promotions, or assignments.

5. Organizational Barriers

- **Lack of Inclusive Policies:** An absence of clear policies on accommodating employees with disabilities can make it difficult for visually impaired employees to request necessary adjustments.

- **Insufficient Support:** Employers may not provide sufficient support, such as job coaches, mentorship programs, or employee resource groups (ERGs) that focus on disability inclusion.

- **Limited Career Advancement Opportunities:** Employees with visual impairments may be excluded from leadership development programs or other opportunities for advancement due to assumptions about their limitations.

6. Cultural Barriers

- **Exclusion from Informal Networks:** Social gatherings or informal interactions (e.g., lunch meetings, after-work events) that are not designed to be inclusive can

marginalize employees with visual impairments, hindering their ability to build strong professional relationships.

- **Dependence on Visual Communication:** In work cultures where communication largely depends on visual media (e.g., whiteboards, diagrams, or visual collaboration tools), employees with visual impairments can be left out.

Resolving environmental barriers for employees with visual impairments involves making both physical and digital workplace accessible and inclusive. Here are strategies to address these barriers:

1.   Physical Environment Adjustments

- **Accessible Office Layout:** Ensure that walkways are clear of obstacles and clutter. Furniture should be arranged in a way that allows easy navigation, with wide corridors and clearly defined paths.

- **Tactile and Audio Cues:** Use tactile markers (e.g., textured flooring) or audible signals (e.g., beeping indicators at elevators or doors) to help visually impaired employees navigate the office.

- **Signage with Braille and Large Print:** Ensure that all signage (e.g., restrooms, exits, conference rooms) includes braille and high-contrast, large print for easy reading.

- **Adequate Lighting:** Ensure that the office is well-lit, without creating glare, to help employees with low vision. Task lighting can be installed at individual workstations for employees who need it.

- **Accessible Workstations:** Design workstations that accommodate assistive devices and technologies (such as screen readers or magnification tools) and are easily adjustable (e.g., height-adjustable desks).

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Install accessible emergency alarms that provide both audible and visual signals. Ensure there are clear evacuation plans that account for the needs of employees with visual impairments, including tactile or audible guides to emergency exits.

2.   Technological Environment Improvements

- **Assistive Technology:**
  - Provide screen readers (e.g., JAWS, NVDA) for employees who are blind or have low vision, enabling them to use computers and access digital content.

- o Offer screen magnification software (e.g., ZoomText) for employees with low vision, allowing them to enlarge text and images on their computer screens.

- o Ensure that employees have access to braille displays or voice recognition software if necessary.

- **Accessible Digital Platforms:**

- o Ensure that internal software and systems are compatible with assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers).

- o Conduct regular accessibility testing of company websites, intranets, and apps, ensuring they meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

- o Provide accessible document formats, such as PDFs with text recognition, large print, and documents formatted for screen readers (e.g., use of headings and alt text for images).

3. Training and Support for Navigating the Environment

- **Orientation and Mobility Training:** Offer specialized training for visually impaired employees to familiarize them with the office layout, including the location of key areas like break rooms, restrooms, and emergency exits.

- **Accessible Transport:** Arrange for accessible transportation options if commuting is a challenge, or ensure that the office is located near public transportation that is accessible to individuals with visual impairments.

4. Promoting Inclusive Communication

- **Verbal Descriptions of Visual Information:** In meetings or presentations, ensure that visual content (e.g., charts, slides) is described verbally. This allows visually impaired employees to fully participate in discussions and decision-making processes.

- **Accessible Meetings:** Provide meeting materials in accessible formats (e.g., large print, braille, or digital formats compatible with assistive technology) ahead of time so that employees with visual impairments can review them.

- **Use of Assistive Devices in Meetings:** Allow employees to use assistive devices, such as portable braille displays or screen magnifiers, during meetings to follow along with presentations or documents.

5.   Creating a Positive and Inclusive Workplace Culture

- **Disability Awareness Training:** Educate all staff about the needs of visually impaired employees to foster an environment of understanding and support. This can help reduce misunderstandings and ensure that employees know how to assist appropriately if needed.

- **Mentorship and Peer Support:** Establish mentorship programs or peer support groups where visually impaired employees can share their experiences and receive guidance on navigating the workplace.

- **Inclusive Social Events:** Ensure that social events or team-building activities are designed to be accessible and inclusive, allowing all employees to participate.

6.   Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- **Regular Accessibility Audits:** Conduct regular assessments of the workplace to identify environmental barriers that may arise over time. This includes both physical and digital audits.

- **Employee Feedback:** Create channels for visually impaired employees to provide feedback on accessibility issues, and act on their suggestions to continually improve the environment.

- **Adapting to Changing Needs:** Recognize that the needs of visually impaired employees may change over time, and be ready to adapt the environment accordingly.

Chapter 3:
Providing Accessible Facilities and Reasonable Accommodations

Providing accessible facilities and reasonable accommodations is essential for creating an inclusive and supportive workplace for employees with visual impairments. These accommodations help employees perform their job duties effectively while ensuring that their work environment is accessible and supportive of their needs. However, It is not necessary to have accessible buildings and systems in place before employing visually impaired individuals. Instead, focus on making gradual, progressive improvements that will eventually create an ideal situation (or mention a twin-track principle)

Below is information on how to provide accessible facilities and reasonable accommodations for employees with visual impairments:

1. **Assess the Workplace for Accessibility**

    Conduct a thorough assessment of your workplace to identify areas that may need modifications to be accessible for employees with visual impairments. This includes evaluating both physical spaces and digital environments.

2. **Offer Reasonable Accommodations Based on Individual Needs**

    Reasonable accommodations should be tailored to the specific needs of each employee with a visual impairment. Engage in open discussions with employees to identify accommodations that will help them perform their jobs effectively.

3. **Provide Accessible Information and Communication**

    Ensure that all workplace information, documents, and communications are available in formats that employees with visual impairments can access.

4. **Train Staff on Disability Awareness and Inclusion**

    Training employees and managers on disability awareness and inclusion is crucial for creating a supportive workplace culture. This ensures that all staff understand how to interact respectfully and effectively with employees with visual impairments.

5. Develop Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

It is important to ensure that emergency procedures are fully accessible for employees with visual impairments. This involves providing clear instructions and ensuring safe navigation during emergencies.

6. Create a Supportive Work Culture

Fostering an inclusive and supportive culture is essential for helping employees with visual impairments feel valued and integrated into the workplace.

7. Legal Compliance and Policies

Adhere to legal requirements for providing reasonable accommodations under laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the U.S., or other relevant national disability laws, which require employers to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities unless doing so would cause undue hardship.

8. Regularly Review and Update Accommodations

Employees' needs may change over time, so it's important to regularly review and adjust accommodations to ensure they remain effective.

Chapter 4:
Preparing to Employ Persons with Visual Impairments

Preparing to employ individuals with visual impairments involves taking a proactive approach to create a supportive, accessible, and inclusive work environment. Here are steps to help employers prepare effectively:

1. Understand Legal Requirements and Rights

Understand local laws and regulations regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities. These laws typically mandate reasonable accommodations and prohibit discrimination based on disability.

Ensure that your recruitment, hiring, and employment practices comply with anti-discrimination laws and are designed to provide equal opportunities for all candidates.

2. Create an Inclusive Recruitment Process

Write job descriptions that focus on essential job functions and skills, avoiding unnecessary emphasis on tasks that might exclude individuals with visual impairments (e.g., "must have excellent vision"). Ensure job postings are accessible by using platforms compatible with screen readers.

Make sure the online application process is fully accessible, offering options for visually impaired candidates to submit their applications via different formats (e.g., electronic submissions compatible with assistive technology).

Be prepared to provide accommodations during the interview process, such as offering alternative formats for any written tests, conducting interviews in accessible spaces, and allowing candidates to use assistive technology if needed.

Advertise job openings through channels that reach individuals with disabilities, such as disability employment organizations, specialized job boards, or community groups.

3.   Provide Reasonable Accommodations

Before hiring, evaluate the essential job functions and identify what accommodations might be needed to support a visually impaired employee in performing those tasks.

Plan to provide assistive devices such as screen readers, magnification software, braille displays, or voice-recognition software. Partner with assistive technology specialists to determine the right tools for each individual's needs.

Set up a flexible, ergonomic workstation that can be adjusted to meet the specific needs of an employee with visual impairments, ensuring space for assistive technology and clear navigation.

4.   Prepare the Physical and Digital Workspace

Make physical adjustments to the office environment to ensure it's easy to navigate. Use tactile and auditory cues, provide clear, high-contrast signage with braille, and keep walkways and paths unobstructed.

Ensure that your digital systems, including email platforms, internal software, and websites, are compatible with screen readers and other assistive technologies. Use accessible formats for documents and provide materials in alternative formats when necessary.

5.   Training and Sensitization for Staff

Provide training for all employees on how to interact and collaborate effectively with visually impaired colleagues. This can help create a culture of respect, inclusion, and understanding in the workplace.

Offer specific training on the types of accommodations that may be required and how to assist visually impaired employees without being intrusive or undermining their independence.

Ensure that managers and supervisors are aware of legal requirements, inclusive practices, and the specific needs of visually impaired employees so they can support their teams effectively.

6.   Establish Support Systems

If needed, provide orientation and mobility training for employees to help them navigate the workspace independently.

7. Create an Inclusive Culture

Encourage open communication between employees and management about the needs and accommodations of visually impaired employees. Ensure that employees feel comfortable requesting accommodations without fear of judgment.

Recognize Strengths: Focus on the strengths, skills, and contributions of employees with visual impairments, avoiding stereotypes or assumptions about their abilities.

8. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback

Regularly assess the effectiveness of accommodations, making adjustments as needed to ensure the employee is supported in their role.

Establish channels for employees with visual impairments to provide feedback on workplace accessibility, accommodations, and overall job satisfaction.

Stay informed about the latest advancements in assistive technology, workplace accommodations, and disability inclusion practices to continuously improve the work environment for all employees.

Identifying Positions for Employees with Visual Impairments (Job Placement/Job Analysis)

Identifying appropriate positions for employees with visual impairments involves a thorough job analysis and consideration of necessary accommodations. This process helps ensure that employees are placed in roles where they can perform effectively, contribute meaningfully, and have access to career growth opportunities. Here's how to identify suitable positions and conduct a job analysis:

1. Conduct a Job Analysis

A job analysis is a systematic process of evaluating the essential tasks, skills, and conditions required for a specific job. It helps determine the suitability of the role for a visually impaired employee by identifying necessary accommodations or adjustments.

2. Analyze Task Requirements

Evaluate whether tasks depend heavily on visual input and consider how those tasks can be performed using assistive technology or alternative methods. For example, data entry may be suitable for someone with a visual impairment if screen readers or magnifying software are provided. Similarly, roles requiring verbal communication, analysis, or decision-making may be easily adaptable.

3. Identify Suitable Job Categories

Some job categories are naturally more adaptable for individuals with visual impairments. Identifying roles that rely on skills other than vision, or roles that can be modified with assistive technology, can lead to a more successful placement.

4. Match Skills and Interests to the Job

Consider the employee's skills, qualifications, and career aspirations when matching them to a position. Visual impairment does not limit the range of jobs an employee can perform; rather, it may require different tools or methods to achieve success. Matching skills and interests to appropriate roles ensures job satisfaction and career progression.

5. Incorporate Assistive Technology and Accommodations

When evaluating positions, determine the assistive technologies or accommodations needed for the visually impaired employee to perform the job effectively.

6. Consider Flexible Work Arrangements

Many job roles can be adapted for employees with visual impairments through flexible work arrangements. This can include:

Some employees with visual impairments may prefer working from home, where they have customized environments or access to specific assistive technologies.

Allow for flexible working hours to accommodate transportation needs, medical appointments, or fatigue that might result from the extra cognitive effort required in certain roles.

7. Provide Job Carving

In some cases, employers can use job carving, a process where specific duties of a position are modified to match the strengths of a visually impaired employee.

8. Offer Training and Support

Provide training on how to use assistive technologies specific to the job. Ensure the employee feels confident and supported in using these tools effectively.

Offer opportunities for professional development in areas like technology, communication, or leadership to ensure that employees with visual impairments can grow within their roles.

9.   Evaluate and Adjust as Needed

Continuously evaluate whether the role fits the employee and make adjustments to the environment, tasks, or tools if necessary. Job responsibilities may evolve over time, and it's essential to ensure that the role remains accessible and appropriate for the individual.

Promoting and Disseminating Job Opportunities for Individuals with Visual Impairments

Promoting and disseminating job opportunities for individuals with visual impairments requires a targeted approach to reach this talent pool, break down barriers, and foster inclusion. Here are steps that employers can take to promote job opportunities effectively:

1.   Partner with Disability Organizations and Networks

2.   Create Inclusive Job Advertisements

3.   Use Inclusive Recruitment Channels

4.   Engage University and College Career Services

5.   Offer Internships and Apprenticeships for Individuals with Disabilities

6.   Host Open Houses and Information Sessions

7.   Leverage Employee Referrals and Networks

8.   Collaborate with Government and Public Programs

9.   Promote Your Inclusive Hiring Practices

10.   Continuous Networking and Engagement

Recruitment Process for Employees with Visual Impairments

Recruiting employees with visual impairments involves making the recruitment process accessible, inclusive, and equitable. Here's a step-by-step guide to designing an inclusive recruitment process:

1.   Job Posting and Advertisement

Ensure that job descriptions are written in a clear, concise, and inclusive manner. Avoid unnecessary language that might discourage applicants with visual impairments, such as "must have excellent eyesight." Instead, focus on the essential functions of the job and the skills required.

Make sure that the job postings are available on platforms accessible to individuals with visual impairments. Ensure compatibility with screen readers, provide text-only versions, and avoid using images with embedded text.

2. Application Process

Ensure that your online application system is compatible with screen readers and other assistive technologies. It should have simple, keyboard-friendly navigation and provide clear instructions for each step.

Provide candidates with alternative ways to submit their applications, such as by email, phone, or by sending in a physical copy, especially if the online application is not fully accessible.

Include a clear point of contact for applicants to request accommodations during the recruitment process, such as alternative formats for application materials or assistance during the interview.

3. Pre-Screening and Selection Process

Ensure that the criteria for pre-screening do not unintentionally discriminate against individuals with visual impairments. Focus on qualifications, skills, and experience rather than on physical or visual abilities unless they are essential to the job.

If pre-employment assessments or tests are required, provide accessible versions (e.g., screen reader-compatible tests, tests in braille, or audio formats). Ensure that time accommodations or alternative formats are available if necessary.

4. Interview Process

Provide Accommodations During Interviews: Be proactive in offering reasonable accommodations for the interview process, such as:

Alternative formats of interview materials (braille, large print, or electronic formats).

Accessible interview locations: Ensure that in-person interview sites are easy to navigate and accessible to individuals with visual impairments.

Assistive Technology: Allow candidates to use their own assistive technology or provide tools such as screen readers or magnifiers if needed.

For virtual interviews, ensure the platform is accessible and that the candidate has the necessary technology and support to participate fully. Offer alternative formats for the materials shared during the interview, such as digital documents compatible with screen readers.

The interview focuses on the candidate's skills, experiences, and qualifications rather than their disability. Avoid making assumptions about what tasks they can or cannot perform due to their visual impairment.

Provide disability awareness training for interviewers so they understand how to conduct inclusive interviews and how to interact respectfully with candidates with disabilities. This training should cover appropriate language, etiquette, and an understanding of reasonable accommodations.

5.   Post-Interview Process

After the interview, provide feedback in an accessible format, such as through email or a phone call, and ensure that the follow-up communication is compatible with assistive technology.

Be ready to discuss and provide any further accommodations required throughout the hiring process, such as during onboarding or job orientation.

6.   Selection and Hiring

Ensure that hiring decisions are based solely on the candidate's qualifications and ability to perform the essential functions of the job, with reasonable accommodations if necessary.

Document Accommodation Needs: Once an offer is made, engage the candidate in a discussion about any accommodations they may need to perform their job effectively. This could include assistive technology, workspace adjustments, or specific training.

Employers should be ready to fulfill accommodation requests based on individual needs.

7.   Onboarding

Ensure that all onboarding materials are provided in accessible formats, such as large print, braille, or screen reader-compatible electronic versions.

Ensure that any assistive technology required by the employee is set up and functional before or shortly after their start date.

Provide accessible training sessions during onboarding and ensure that materials are compatible with assistive technologies. If the employee needs specific training for their assistive technology, ensure that is arranged.

Chapter 5:
Collaborating with Organizations Focused on the Preparation and Recruitment of Individuals with Visual Impairments

Collaborating with organizations that focus on the preparation and recruitment of individuals with visual impairments can significantly enhance a company's efforts to build a diverse and inclusive workforce. These partnerships can help employers access a wider talent pool, ensure a smooth recruitment process, and provide necessary support and accommodations for candidates with visual impairments. Here's how companies can effectively collaborate with such organizations:

1. Identify Relevant Organizations

There are many local, national, and international organizations that specialize in supporting individuals with visual impairments in preparing for and securing employment.

2. Establish Formal Partnerships

Creating formal partnerships with organizations dedicated to supporting individuals with visual impairments can streamline your recruitment efforts. Here's how to establish and maintain these relationships: Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for Ongoing Engagement, Financial or In-Kind Support.

3. Engage in Joint Recruitment Events

Partner with organizations to co-host or participate in recruitment events, such as job fairs, career expos, and information sessions aimed at individuals with visual impairments. These events provide a direct way to connect with candidates and demonstrate your company's commitment to diversity and inclusion. They engage in joint recruitment events such as Disability-Specific Job Fairs and Workshops and Seminars.

4.   Provide Internships and Job Training Opportunities

Offer internships, apprenticeships, or job shadowing opportunities specifically for individuals with visual impairments. Partner organizations can help identify suitable candidates and provide support in preparing them for these roles.

5.   Offer Mentorship and Career Development Programs

Create mentorship programs in collaboration with organizations that support individuals with visual impairments. Mentorship helps candidates build confidence and acquire the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

6.   Promote Awareness and Education

- Offer disability inclusion and awareness training within your company, in collaboration with partner organizations. This will help your employees understand the unique challenges that individuals with visual impairments face and how they can contribute to a more inclusive workplace.

- Collaborate with partner organizations to host public-facing webinars or workshops on the benefits of hiring individuals with visual impairments. This can improve public perception of your company as a disability-friendly employer and promote inclusive hiring practices more broadly.

7.   Leverage Expertise from Partner Organizations

Partner organizations often have deep expertise in the needs of individuals with visual impairments and can provide valuable insights into creating a more inclusive work environment.

8.   Promote Success Stories

Highlight the success of your collaboration through testimonials, case studies, and success stories from employees with visual impairments. This can help demonstrate your commitment to disability inclusion and inspire others to take similar actions.

9.   Continuous Feedback and Improvement

Maintain open communication with partner organizations to continuously improve your recruitment and hiring processes for individuals with visual impairments.

Chapter 6:
Evalution and Appraisal System for Employees with Visual Impairments

Evaluating and conducting appraisals for employees with visual impairments requires ensuring that the performance management system is accessible, equitable, and free from bias. The goal is to measure employee performance based on job-related skills, outcomes, and contributions, while providing reasonable accommodations and support. Here are strategies for effectively evaluating and conducting performance appraisals for employees with visual impairments:

1. Use Accessible Performance Management Tools

- Ensure that any performance management tools or software used in the appraisal process are compatible with assistive technologies, such as screen readers or magnification tools. This includes online forms, performance dashboards, or self-assessment platforms.

- Provide performance evaluation documents in accessible formats, such as large print, braille, or electronic formats compatible with assistive technology, to ensure that employees with visual impairments can engage fully with the process.

2. Define Clear, Job-Specific Performance Criteria

- Performance evaluations should be based on the employee's ability to fulfill the essential functions of their job, regardless of their visual impairment. Clearly outline the key responsibilities and performance indicators for the role.

- Ensure that the criteria used to evaluate performance are related to the role and not influenced by physical or visual characteristics. For example, avoid evaluating employees based on tasks that are not essential or that can be accomplished with accommodations (e.g., focusing on visual tasks when reasonable alternatives are available).

- Develop performance goals that are objective, measurable, and directly tied to the employee's job responsibilities. This allows for fair assessments and reduces the risk of subjective bias during appraisals.

3. Provide Reasonable Accommodations for Job Performance

- Evaluating the performance of employees with visual impairments ensures that accommodations (such as assistive technology, modified tasks, or accessible work environments) are in place and functioning properly. If an employee is not meeting performance expectations due to lack of accommodations, address that before making any assessments about their abilities.

- Consider whether flexible working hours, remote work, or other adjustments can help the employee perform their job more effectively. Make sure these accommodations are taken into account when evaluating overall performance.

4. Training and Sensitization for Supervisors

- Supervisors and managers conducting appraisals should receive training on disability inclusion, particularly how to evaluate employees with visual impairments without bias. This includes understanding the accommodations that may be in place and how they impact performance.

- Assumptions about what employees with visual impairments can or cannot do. Performance should be evaluated based on actual outcomes and contributions, not on preconceived notions.

5. Conduct Objective, Evidence-Based Evaluations

- Base performance evaluations on tangible results and outcomes, rather than on subjective opinions or perceptions. For example, if an employee's job involves meeting specific targets or deadlines, assess how well they met those objectives.

- Collect feedback from peers and managers who have directly worked with the employee. Ensure that their feedback is focused on work performance and not influenced by the employee's visual impairment.

6. Encourage Self-Evaluation and Open Communication

- Encourage employees with visual impairments to complete self-assessments as part of the performance appraisal process. This allows them to reflect on their accomplishments, challenges, and any support or accommodations they may need.

- During the appraisal meeting, foster open communication. Ask employees to share their perspectives on their performance, challenges they faced, and any accommodations that could improve their productivity.

- Create an opportunity for the employee to discuss whether their current accommodations are effective or whether additional accommodations are needed to improve performance. Address any concerns raised during this discussion promptly.

7. Provide Constructive, Actionable Feedback

- Provide constructive feedback that is focused on the employee's work, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement without linking them to their visual impairment. The disability should not be a topic of the performance conversation unless it directly relates to accommodation needs.

- Set clear, actionable goals for the next performance period. Work collaboratively with the employee to establish realistic expectations and identify any accommodations that may be necessary to achieve these goals.

- If additional training, resources, or accommodations are needed, outline a plan for providing these in collaboration with the employee.

8. Review the Effectiveness of Accommodations

- Regularly review the accommodations provided to employees with visual impairments as part of the performance appraisal process. Ensure that accommodations are still relevant, effective, and supportive of the employee's ability to perform their job.

- If the employee's role has evolved or new challenges have emerged, discuss potential changes to accommodations. Offer additional support, such as upgrading assistive technology or providing extra training on new software tools.

9. Provide Opportunities for Growth and Development

- During the appraisal, discuss the employee's career development and growth opportunities. Identify areas where the employee can further develop their skills and provide access to relevant training, mentorship, or career advancement opportunities.

- Ensure that any professional development programs, workshops, or training opportunities are accessible and inclusive for employees with visual impairments. This includes making sure that training materials are available in accessible formats and that accommodations are provided during training sessions.

11. Create an Inclusive Appraisal System

- Regularly review the performance appraisal data to identify any patterns or potential biases against employees with visual impairments. Ensure that the appraisal process is fair and equitable for all employees.

- Based on feedback from employees and data analysis, make adjustments to the performance management process to enhance its inclusivity. This could involve changing how feedback is collected, modifying performance criteria, or improving access to tools and resources.

Chapter 7:
Lessons Learned from Employers in Recruiting and Employing Employees with Visual Impairments

Mr. Agung Sachli

Chef Executive Officer (CEO) PT. Imamatek, Indonesia

"Imamatek upholds the principle of providing equal opportunities for all employees to contribute their best in creating products or services."

My name is **Agung Sachli**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PT. Integritas Makmur Mandiri Teknologi, better known as Imamatek. As a company, Imamatek upholds the principle of providing equal opportunities for all employees to contribute their best in creating products or services that help businesses or individuals achieve their goals.

PT Integritas Makmur Mandiri (Imamatek Corp) is a rapidly growing software development company. Imamatek, in line with its vision of "Creating a Quality Life Through Technology," will continuously innovate by developing business software that is relevant to market needs.

The principle of equality and expanding inclusion for people with disabilities, which is currently implemented at Imamatek, began from an incident during an internal evaluation. We promoted a vacant programmer position in our company through a job search website, Jobstreet. Imamatek took the initiative to announce that the vacancy was available for individuals with disabilities.

In my mind, I initially thought that only people with physical disabilities, those who are deaf or mute, would apply for the programmer position. However, after the vacancy was posted, the Human Resources Department (HRD) team informed me of a unique candidate – a blind individual who submitted his curriculum vitae (CV) to apply for the programmer position.

Without focusing on the candidate's background and driven by curiosity about his abilities, we scheduled a test and interview. During the logic test, a question arose: how would this candidate be able to read from a computer screen?

I then learned something new—about a technology called a screen reader that helps the visually impaired read using a computer. This allowed the candidate to complete the test we provided. Even so, I still wasn't fully convinced and gave him an additional task to create a program within three days.

In the first batch of candidates, we selected three non-disabled candidates and one blind candidate. We initiated a programming training program. Indeed, during the training period, the blind employee lagged slightly behind the others. However, I discovered that this delay was not due to a lack of intelligence or inability to grasp the material but rather because the training materials were visual, which made it difficult for the blind employee. We realized that we were unprepared to provide appropriate training materials for a blind candidate.

This became a key concern for us as a company striving to be inclusive. After discussing the matter with the blind employee, we gained a better understanding of the difficulties he faced when reading the training materials. The company then adapted by providing more complete and detailed descriptions.

Three months of training passed, and the three non-disabled candidates successfully completed the training and probation period with satisfactory results, leading to their permanent employment. Meanwhile, the blind candidate, who had initially lagged behind, was unable to pass the training and probation period.

Considering the company's lack of preparation in providing suitable training materials for the blind candidate, I, as the company's leader, decided to extend the training and probation period for the blind candidate by an additional three months, with training materials adapted for visual disabilities.

As a result, after three more months of training and probation, the blind candidate successfully passed with a satisfying performance. We then welcomed Ravindra as part of PT. Imamatek's workforce.

When asked why I insisted on giving Ravidra a chance to continue his training and probation, I believed that there would be greater benefits in recruiting employees with disabilities. Aside from gaining employees with a strong work ethic, who work hard and do not easily give up, we also believe they will demonstrate high loyalty to the company. We recognize that employees with disabilities face challenges in the workplace due to their limitations, but if they have a strong work ethic, are competent, and are loyal, their performance will not disappoint.

We did have concerns about slower work performance from visually impaired employees, but this was only during the early adaptation process. After working at PT. Imamatek for a year and a half as a programmer, Mr. Ravidra's competence has been tested in various situations, and he is now on par with non-disabled employees.

We are now trying to rx`ecruit another visually impaired employee. Of course, we expect to face the same process and challenges as we did when hiring Mr. Ravidra. However, for us, fostering inclusion and providing job opportunities for disabled employees—whether they are visually impaired, deaf, mute, or physically disabled—has become a principle that PT. Imamatek will continue to uphold.

Mr. Dominic Risalda

IT Manager of Thermo Fisher Scientific, The Philippines

"A lot of the visually impaired have technology now that they can use to be able to perform their tasks like anyone else on the team."

I am **Dominic Risalada**, and working as an IT Manager at Thermo Fisher Scientific. My company focuses on instrumentation, molecule development, and pharma-related and clinical research groups.

I have a broad team in the IT department, and the clinical system provides IT support in clinical research. We are the ones who provide support. It's what we call user administration. However, aside from user administration, we also do proactive support like application management.

We are involved as well with creating certain processes that would help us and the business. The overall goal is to provide support to the business when it comes to clinical systems.

The company hired persons with visual impairment two years back. I didn't have a headcount then. However, my functional manager was already asking me if I wanted to push through with hiring persons with disabilities. And the initial count for hire was only one person but we ended up with having 3 slots available.

On my team, there are currently two persons with visual impairments, and we are working together.

We already have visually impaired team members in the clinical system support in our other groups from Sofia, Bulgaria, who joined two years ago. We already have a program.

When they started it, I got interested. I was sold on the idea of visually impaired employment because based on what I know and what I have read, it is difficult for them to secure opportunities.

They are one of the groups with the most limited opportunities, even if they are very skilled. I initially didn't know what to do, but I went with it. It was really intentional to hire the visually impaired.

There was something in writing, but only a few of us were aware. Moreover, there were SOPs regarding the orientation program, but it was just a task that we had to check out, like reading or watching the training course and that's it. It means it's not something very comprehensive.

Mr. Aldrin, one of the new hires, asked if we all underwent a training program for visual impairment, and we all said no. He was impressed that the team seemed very trained in interacting with persons with visual impairment.

Regarding the recruitment process, I would say it's practically the same. Our manager in Sofia, Bulgaria, and my functional manager, shared their insights with me to not change it. This was because it doesn't matter if they're visually impaired or not in the process. That process still applies, though it could also mean that there are some small parts and details that we might need to change.

However, a lot of the visually impaired have technology now that they can use to enable them to perform their tasks like anyone else on the team.

To be honest, our company/public institution hasn't prepared any additional accessibility features in the recruitment process for people with visual disabilities because it doesn't matter if they are visually impaired or not. In the process, the same thing still applies, though it could also mean that there are some small parts and details that we might need to change.

However, the technology now is very accessible to them, and they use it so well to perform their tasks efficiently.

There is no onboarding process in our company, particularly for introducing persons with visual impairment. Nonetheless, our company has certain tools ready and accessible for persons with visual impairments, like JAWS and NVDA. I researched it myself. Because even back then, the two team members in Bulgaria were already using the same software. That's why we acquired it and became familiar with it.

As long as workers with visual disabilities have been working here, there haven't been no significant issues regarding their disability. Mr. Aldrin and Mr. Kevin, who were hired, are always asking if there's a need for adjustments. We just need to source the assistive devices like the software licenses.

When we started, we were only planning to hire 1 person with a disability but ended up opening 3 slots for them because we saw the potential in what they could do.

During their time working here, they've been doing really well. Maybe the only thing I can say is they're still adjusting, but that is normal for anyone who's new. Most of all, they are doing great. I'm happy with their performance.

With their current skill set and level of expertise, the present working environment is inclusive to them. They are the ones who ask us if they are doing ok, and we always say there are no problems at all.

Ms. Lucia Lusida

Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of D'Impact Indonesia
"I am someone who can help people with disabilities actualize themselves."

I am **Lucia Rani Lusida**, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of D'Impact Indonesia. I established the company in 2018, and employing people with disabilities has been my passion from the start. D'Impact is a consulting firm, mainly in the field of human resources, focusing heavily on capacity development such as leadership activation, and culture activation, which has been proven worldwide through our partnership with the master license from Engage & Grow Global to assist corporations and individuals in cultural activation and leadership; and I also conduct coaching.

D'Impact is a company that can assist our clients, mainly companies, in recruiting new employees, headhunting, outsourcing, and enhancing the capacity of existing employees.

In addition to my passion, my motivation to establish D'Impact began with two inspirations. First, when I was running a travel business in a multinational company, I encountered a group of people, one of whom was disabled. There were about 10 people flying from Bali to Jakarta, all very cheerful and actively interacting with each other. However, I noticed one of them did not have arms or legs. This person, despite their disability, was incredibly happy, being carried and helped by others. I became very curious about this individual.

Upon deplaning, I saw my friend posting a photo with this person, who turned out to be Nick Vujicic, a famous motivational speaker from Australia, born without arms or legs. I saw how remarkable he was, and I noticed how much support he received from those around him. This inspired me to think about becoming someone who could help people with disabilities to actualize themselves.

Second, I attended a mass at Jakarta Cathedral, where there was an Easter celebration with many people with disabilities. I felt deeply moved. It seemed like a calling to do something for people with disabilities. After retiring, I acted on that calling. Initially, I wanted to create a payroll outsourcing company that could employ people with disabilities, but over time, there were many different requests beyond just payroll outsourcing. I followed these new paths, realizing that maybe God's plan was not for outsourcing but something different. Now, I employ several people with disabilities who assist me.

D'Impact holds regular weekly meetings where we learn about the needs of our disabled colleagues, such as Melissa, who is visually impaired and cannot see the visual materials I bring. Therefore, I no longer send images but instead prepare descriptions or text. Another example is Mey, who is hearing impaired. My team collaborates during our meetings, with Melissa acting as the translator, typing out what's discussed so that Mey can follow along well.

Currently, D'Impact employs three people with disabilities: Melissa, who is visually impaired; Mey, who is hearing impaired; and Patricia, who has a physical disability. All of them are women, though this is not a deliberate choice. There is also a man named Iknas, but he has been busy with other activities and recently had surgery. He will be active again soon.

I believe that if you trust someone, they will make good use of that trust. If, for some reason, someone cannot, then perhaps they are not the right fit for my company, because we operate based on output. I treat people with disabilities just like any other employee. My expectations are the same for everyone. I don't make things easier for them, and they all have their own targets. By doing so, I feel they will take pride in themselves. They will think, "I have a different ability, not a disability." I believe that they have special talents. That's why I treat them equally, with no discrimination. If they fail to meet their targets, I'll correct them, just as I would with any other employee. Just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean we should pity them and lower expectations. No! It's the same for non-disabled employees.

When recruiting, I reached out to a foundation that helps people with disabilities. I requested "professional" employees, those with a minimum education of a bachelor's degree, and a solid educational background. Sometimes people have their own intelligence but lack access to opportunities, and that's where I step in to provide them with that chance.

I asked the foundation for some profiles and then conducted interviews. During the interview process, I emphasized perseverance. They must not be afraid of challenges, which is the key trait I'm looking for. But this applies not only to people with disabilities but also to non-disabled individuals. I emphasize that they must be resilient and willing to push forward through challenges. That's one of the key factors I consider during the interview.

As for the foundation that helped me recruit employees with disabilities, I was introduced to them through the Jakarta Cathedral, LDD KAJ. I met with the disability management team, and coincidentally, I attended the Easter Mass and saw many people with potential. One example is a high school student who suddenly became blind. She was brought by her grandmother and was extremely frustrated. Her grandmother mentioned how bright she was, which deeply touched me. That's why I feel compelled to help her and others like her, who also have great potential.

We don't initially provide special training for employees with disabilities, but I give them small tasks, and they manage just fine. Over time, senior staff members and other colleagues help them adapt. At the beginning, they may feel shocked, but because I select individuals with perseverance, they don't give up. I simply encourage them, telling them to try again, and eventually, they succeed.

During Melissa's career development transition, a multinational company expressed interest in hiring people with disabilities and wanted to recruit Melissa. I told the company to give it a try, and if it didn't work out, they could return her to me. I lent Melissa to them because she was talented and reliable. I told them not to worry about payment; I would continue paying her salary.

Eventually, Melissa worked with them for more than a year and a half, almost two years, even though they initially planned for just three months. They kept extending her contract, and I was thrilled because it meant that Melissa gained exposure to a larger corporate environment, which was a learning experience for her, especially since my company is of a smaller scale.

We hope to continue having an impact on people with disabilities, whether it be physical, visual, or hearing impairments. My team is diverse, and I'm open to recruiting more people with disabilities. Currently, I'm exploring a collaboration with a company to create tutorial videos, which is where we aim to head.

Employees with disabilities also need to have soft skills, but it's not about imposing specific soft skills on them. Each person has different strengths and weaknesses. Some may struggle with communication skills, others may lack attention to detail or may be shy or reluctant to speak up. Their soft skills vary. That's why, in my view, each individual's needs must be carefully considered, depending on the specific requirements of each person with a

disability. This should be understood by institutions or foundations that provide soft skills capacity-building programs, including the Mitra Netra Foundation.

I was introduced to the organizataion through Melissa, who invited me to an event organized by Mitra Netra. I attended and was deeply inspired by Mr. Bambang and Mrs. Aria. To me, they are strong and resilient figures, especially Mr. Bambang, who, despite his age, still has an incredible spirit.
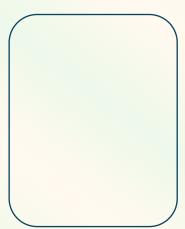
Ms. Pham Thi Thanh Truc

Staff of German International Cooperation Organisation (GIZ), Vietnam

"We recognize that a person with visual impairments can bring a unique set of skills and perspectives to the workplace…"

I am **Pham Thi Thanh Truc** and work as a staff in the German International Cooperation Organisation (GIZ). In my institution, there is one person of a visual impairment employee.

For the first time, we started the process of recruiting interns without the purpose of looking for individuals with visual impairments. However, we would never reject any recommendation or introduction to interns with visual impairments. It is because we also have a network with various organizations who also introduced one intern with a visual impairments; then, our managers decided to recruit him after the interview. After that, we considered the process which can also be inclusive for individuals with visual impairments.

We provide accessibility and reasonable accommodation for employees with visual impairments. Initially, we provided accommodations through our HR department, which worked closely with our employees to identify their needs and provide support. For example, we arranged for one intern to support the intern with a visual impairment for their transportation needs for the first time, and also support with translation from English into Vietnamese or vice versa when we were in a meeting (because our intern with a visual impairment was not so good in English during the internship period).

GIZ does not have any obligation regarding recruiting persons with visual disabilities to be employees in GIZ. However, we have a strategy for finding formal workers from the visually impaired community, we partner with organizations that specialize in placing visually impaired individuals in employment, and we also participate in job fairs and other recruitment events that target the visually impaired community. Also, we provide training

and support to help our employees with visual impairments adjust to their new roles and overcome any challenges they may face.

However, one challenge in the recruiting process is finding job openings that are suitable for individuals with visual impairments. Another challenge is providing accommodations and support to ensure our employees with visual impairments can perform their jobs effectively.

Regarding creating an inclusive work environment, GIZ promotes diversity and inclusion throughout our organization, and we encourage all employees to respect and appreciate the differences among their colleagues. We also provide training on disability awareness and inclusion to help our employees understand the needs and challenges of individuals with disabilities.

In addition, GIZ builds trust by providing clear communication and feedback, and by working closely with our employees to understand their needs and concerns. We also provide opportunities for professional development and growth to help our employees feel valued and empowered.

As an organization, we believe that every employee is valued and contributes to the organization's success in their own unique way. We are committed to creating an inclusive and accessible work environment that allows all employees to thrive, regardless of their abilities.

Regarding employees with visual impairments, we believe that their performance and contribution are not defined by their physical abilities. We recognize that people with visual impairments can bring a unique set of skills and perspectives to the workplace, and we are committed to providing the necessary accommodations and support to ensure their success.

In fact, many employees with visual impairments have made significant contributions to our country – Vietnam in general. Some companies or organizations have implemented various accessibility measures to ensure that all employees have equal access to information and opportunities. Though we are still young in the process of recruitment, we already thought about this and are also on the way to making a plan to create a good and inclusive working environment for people with disabilities in general and individuals with visual impairments in specific.

We also recognize that employees with visual impairments may require additional accommodations or support to perform their job duties. We are committed to working with each employee to identify and implement any necessary accommodations, and we have a dedicated that provides support and resources for employees with disabilities. For example, we already discussed how to support our employees with visual impairments, and we thought about implementing a range of accommodations, such as assistive technology or braille signage. We also planned to provide regular training for our colleagues on how to

work effectively with employees who have visual impairments, and we thought about ways to encourage open communication between employees, and managers to ensure that everyone feels supported and able to perform their job duties well.

Ultimately, our goal now is to create an inclusive and accessible work environment where all employees can succeed and reach their full potential. We believe that employees with visual impairments are an integral part of our organization in the future, and we are committed to supporting their performance and contribution to the organization.

Ms. Pham Thieu Mi

The Head of Operations at Adecco Vietnam

"Our visually impaired employees consistently impress management with their strong performance."

Adecco Vietnam is a member of The Adecco Group. It is a leading human resource firm that connects talented individuals with the right career opportunities, and we provide a broad range of services, from recruitment to staffing and HR solutions. We work closely with businesses across various sectors to ensure they have access to the talent and resources they need to succeed. There are 15 people with visual employees in our company.

Our company's policy does not place any restrictions on any group of people. We seek employees who are capable and suited to the job we are hiring for, rather than basing our decisions on their gender, background, or disabilities.

We started to recruit persons with visual impairment in 2022, we were looking for candidates for the position of customer service staff for an insurance company. We recognized the potential and suitability of visually impaired workers for this position. We connected with organizations/associations for the visually impaired, such as the Sao Mai Center for the Blind, to find visually impaired candidates who met our company's requirements. We then organized orientation meetings to introduce the job positions we were recruiting for and how to apply. The next step was to receive applications and conduct interviews. We selected suitable candidates and proceeded with the interviews.

Overall, the recruitment process for a visually impaired worker is exactly the same as for a sighted person. We do not have a separate process designed for visually impaired workers,

because we want to ensure equality among all candidates. Our company's philosophy is that job opportunities are for everyone, and our mission is to connect the right people with the right jobs based on their abilities.

We do not encounter many difficulties in hiring visually impaired employees because the recruitment process is applied equally to both sighted and visually impaired workers. We did face some challenges in finding high-quality candidates suitable for the job.

Our company provides reasonable accommodations for visually impaired employees. We understand that the biggest challenges for visually impaired individuals are navigating unfamiliar environments and accessing documents.

Additionally, once the candidates passed the interview and were hired, we assigned staff to guide and introduce them to various areas, such as the office layout, departments, lunch area, and restrooms, to help them visualize the office space. We provided support during the first 3 to 5 days. Once they became familiar with the new environment, they were able to navigate independently without assistance.

We also supported this by installing the screen reader software on their work computers, enabling them to perform their tasks. Our IT department has been informed and is always ready to provide technical support in case they encounter any issues during their work. We also understand that they may face difficulties with printed documents, so we try to provide the necessary materials in electronic formats for easier access. Contracts, notifications, and training materials are sent to them in accessible formats.

Regarding the availability of regulations to employ persons with visual impairment, there are currently no specific legal obligations regarding the recruitment of visually impaired individuals. While there are tax reduction policies for businesses that hire people with disabilities in general, there are no specific regulations related to the recruitment of visually impaired people.

In creating an inclusive environment, we have tried to provide the necessary initial support so that visually impaired employees can integrate into their new work environment and collaborate with sighted colleagues. We offer orientation guidance during the first few days and install screen reader software on company computers so they can work effectively. Visually impaired employees work in shared spaces with sighted colleagues, rather than being placed in a separate area. Additionally, other company activities, such as cultural performances, year-end parties, or team-building competitions, are communicated to all employees, including visually impaired staff. Sighted employees are also made aware of appropriate ways to communicate and support visually impaired colleagues. To me, once someone becomes a member of the company, it doesn't matter whether they have a

disability or not; they have the right to enjoy the company's policies. The company is also flexible in considering reasonable accommodations to create an inclusive environment.

Overall, our visually impaired employees consistently impress management with their strong performance. They follow company regulations, meet job expectations, and produce remarkable results. Moreover, they add to the diversity of our company's culture.

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