

Recruiting and Retaining Disabled Veterans in a Home-Based or Client-Site Setting



A whitepaper from

pearl.
INTERACTIVE NETWORK

The purpose of this white paper is to outline the unique process for successfully recruiting and retaining disabled veterans in a home-based or client-site environment.

Based on Pearl Interactive Network's experience with this niche workforce, there are several advantages for businesses to hire veterans and/or disabled veterans:

- Higher retention rates
- Higher performance levels
- Social responsibility driver for shareholder satisfaction
- Opportunity to position company favorably from a marketing perspective

1.0 How do employers identify skilled and talented disabled veterans?

The process involves using multiple channels to tap a workforce of skilled and talented disabled veterans, such as:

- ◆ Leveraging relationships with nationwide job development specialists located on military bases, veteran hospitals, veteran centers, and [One-Stop Career Centers](#). Job development specialists are designated professionals charged with the mission of assisting disabled or transitional veterans with job placements.



- ◆ Promoting open positions through proprietary databases.
- ◆ Promoting positions on veteran job boards frequented by employers wanting to hire transitioning or disabled veterans.
- ◆ Tapping the social networks – Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter– by the HR team to promote open positions and reach out to candidates.

2.0 How do employers qualify disabled veterans for employment?

The process includes:

- ◆ Accessing a database that sorts resumes based on matching key word searches to job descriptions.
- ◆ Conducting an initial interview to assess the candidate's skills, talents, motivations, past performance, aptitude, interest in the position, and capability for performing work from home or at a client's site.
- ◆ Performing an internet search to identify additional information about the candidate to see if there is a strong match between the candidate and the job requirements. If the candidate continues to demonstrate a strong match with the open position, he/she is scheduled for an online skills test. The skills test is directly linked to the skill requirements outlined in the job description.
- ◆ If the candidate performs well on the skills test, he/she is scheduled for a second interview with the supervisor and/or representative of the staffing company. If the candidate is a fit, the staffing company makes an offer.

3.0 Considerations for the work-at-home option

When a candidate is considered for home-based employment, the candidate needs to meet the following criteria:

- ◆ Demonstrate a close skills match with the job description requirements, and pass the multi-process job qualification process.
- ◆ Have a condition that requires home-based employment.
- ◆ Possess a strong desire to work in a home-based environment.
- ◆ Have the space for a home office that provides proper lighting and a quiet environment.
- ◆ Own a computer, printer, copier, fax machine, and USB headset. The computer needs to be equipped with [VOIP](#) technology to access a virtual contact center system.
- ◆ Have broadband internet access.
- ◆ Have unlimited long-distance telephone access in order to regularly attend scheduled team meetings.
- ◆ Reside in a stable home environment, ensuring rent and utilities will be consistently provided.

4.0 Considerations for the client-site option

When a candidate is considered for client-site employment, the candidate needs to meet the following criteria:

- ◆ Demonstrate a close skills match with the job description requirements and pass the multi-process job qualification process.
- ◆ Have access to reliable transportation to and from work.
- ◆ Possess the desire to work at the client's site.

The employer's work site should be accessible to employees with disabilities. Further, the employer must be willing to provide a welcoming and inclusive work environment for disabled employees.

5.0 Assurance that the work environment is conducive to hiring people with disabilities

Regardless of home- or client-site work locations of employing people with disabilities, there are work-readiness considerations that need to be addressed, including:

Training

Training programs are required to educate employers, co-workers, and employees about disability-related issues, laws, and programs. Employers need to be coached on adopting effective employment strategies and practices in the retention, training, and inclusion of disabled veterans. Training programs can be customized to the work performance requirements of the hiring department.

Job Coaching

The goal of job coaching is to stabilize and improve job performance while enhancing retention rates of disabled employees.

Accessibility Consultation

Consultants provide accessibility analysis and solutions to ensure the client's facility and systems are accessible to people with disabilities. Among the areas of consultation are:

- ◆ Job analysis
- ◆ Assistive technology
- ◆ Ergonomic assessment

Specialists in the above areas can be found through the [Job Accommodation Network](#).

6.0 Assistive technology

Assistive technologies are designed to provide accessibility to individuals who have physical or cognitive difficulties, impairments, and disabilities. The most common types of technologies are those that convert speech to text and text to speech; as well as devices that enable individuals to use their computers through means other than a standard keyboard or pointing device. Examples include [JAWS®](#) and [Dragon](#) technologies.

7.0 Training with home-site disabled veterans

Training programs need be accessed by all employees, regardless of the type of disability or challenge an employee may have. When implementing training programs, take into account the various assistive technologies that will need to be accessed by trainees; and work with rehabilitation engineers to provide scripting for online programs that require assistive technologies. Scripting is a software interface between the assistive technologies and the operating systems employees need to access to become trained.

For example, if an employer wants to train sight-impaired employees, the training program should be formatted using JAWS®, a speech-recognition vehicle. In addition, all training materials should be formatted so they can be accessed by sight-impaired employees.

Initial job-specific training typically occurs within 1-2 weeks of hire, and is conducted through an online platform for home-based employees; and in a traditional classroom setting for client-site employees. Once initial training is completed, home-based employees should meet at regularly-scheduled intervals to compare the previous day's performance results, and to create a sense of community and inclusion.

By accessing various types of assistive technologies, people with disabilities can perform the same work as non-disabled people. [HIPAA](#) laws and regulations disallow employers from questioning prospective candidates on the physical and psychological challenges they possess. However, by conducting multiple interviews and accessing prior job history, you can obtain the most critical information about how the candidate can successfully perform on the job. Further, you can inquire from candidates what their assistive technology or accessibility requirements may be.

8.0 Who the employee works for:

There are three options:

- ◆ The employee works for the staffing firm. The staffing firm obtains a contract from the employer to perform call center, help desk, or administrative services. The staffing firm is responsible for payrolling and managing the employees; and is held accountable for performing to service level agreements. It also provides the knowledge and expertise that will guide the employer to successfully onboard employees.
- ◆ The employee works on the client's site but is placed on the staffing firm's payroll. The client manages and supervises the candidate.
- ◆ The employee works at the client's site and is employed by the client. The staffing firm only performs the search and sourcing for the client.

About Pearl Interactive Network, Inc.

Pearl Interactive Network, Inc. (Pearl) provides client-site and virtual contact center staffing. While we focus on the quality of the work we deliver, we are a

social enterprise that recruits and hires a skilled and talented workforce with various challenges -- such as veterans, disabled veterans, military spouses, people with disabilities, and people living in geographically challenged areas.

Our efforts are focused on linking skilled people with challenges to work to sustainable and long-term career pathways.

Pearl Interactive Network's emphasis on social responsibility is driven by a desire to create best practice workforce solutions that are long-term and socially inclusive.

Based on our solid track record of past performance with hiring disabled veterans and people with disabilities, we continue to find that our niche workforce in a home-based setting has strong retention rates (less than 6% turnover), high performance, and high motivation.

Our certifications include:

- ◆ [Woman-owned](#) (WOSB)
- ◆ [HUBZone](#) pending
- ◆ Small Business - [SAM](#)
- ◆ [GSA 541A](#) schedule holder

For more information on Pearl Interactive Network's services, please contact:

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Pearl Interactive Network (Pearl), a woman-owned, small business social enterprise, is a GSA AIMS schedule holder #GS-07F-0176X. Its mission is to create jobs for a workforce of skilled and talented disabled veterans, veterans, military spouses, and people living in geographically challenged areas. In operation since 2004, one of Pearl's core capabilities is delivering a scope of Section 508 services including 508 document tagging, captioning, transcription, and website auditing.

