**Dispelling myths[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Balancing workplace accommodations with health and safety standards emerged as another perceived barrier. It was generally thought preferable for companies to provide accommodations in administrative and customer service positions than in physically demanding jobs. Also mentioned was the belief that hiring people with disabilities could bring with it legal obligations related to human rights, performance monitoring and discipline. These perceptions are among most common myths about people with disabilities:

Myth: ***Workers with disabilities should be placed in roles where safety is less of an issue because they are more likely to have accidents.***

Reality: Walgreens has two distribution centers with large disability workforces (+40 percent of employees) in Connecticut and South Carolina. In comparison to all other distribution centres in the company, these two had a 40 percent lower safety incident rate, 67 percent lower medical treatment costs, 63 percent lower employee time away from work due to accidents, and 78 percent lower overall costs associated with accidents.[[2]](#footnote-2) Tim Hortons franchisee Megleen Inc. has never made an insurance claim for a work-related injury to an employee with a disability despite employing 85 people with disabilities in 18 years.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Myth: ***Workers with disabilities do not perform well and require extra supervision.***

Reality: A DuPont study[[4]](#footnote-4) showed that 90 percent of people with disabilities rated average or better on job performance. More recently, another study[[5]](#footnote-5) compared workers with and without disabilities in the hospitality, health care and retail sectors, and found that job performance and supervision were similar for both groups.

Myth: ***The cost of accommodating a person with disabilities is prohibitive.***

Reality: In a widely accepted study conducted by the U.S. Job Accommodation Network (JAN)[[6]](#footnote-6), workplace accommodations are shown to be low cost, with 57 percent of participants spending nothing at all. Of those accommodations that did have a cost, the typical one-time expenditure by employers was $500.

**Myth: *Most people with disabilities use wheelchairs.***

**Reality:** According to 2010 U.S. census information[[7]](#footnote-7), the wheelchair usage rate among people with disabilities is actually 6 percent – that’s about 1 percent of the general population. It is a strong indicator of the power of public communication that the wheelchair icon used on signage has prompted a general belief that most people with disabilities use wheelchairs.

1. From Dr. Gary Birch, Kenneth Fredeen, Kathy Martin, and Mark Wafer, “Rethinking Disability in the Private Sector: Report from the Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities,” (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. James P. Kaletta, Douglas J. Binks & Richard Robinson, ”Creating and Inclusive Workplace: Integrating Employees with Disabilities into a Distribution Centre Environment,” Professional Safety, June 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Information provided by franchise owner. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. DuPont/Australian Public Service Commission [APSC] “Ability at work: Tapping the talent of people with disability,” Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Brigida Hernandez and Katherine MacDonald. “Disability Employment Research, Employer Focus Group Reports,” (accessed 13 Nov 2012) available from www.disabilityworks.org/default.asp?contentID=94. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Beth Loy, “Accommodation and Compliance Series Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost, High Impact,” (accessed 24 October 2012); available from http://askjan.org/media/lowcosthighimpact.html [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. United States Census Bureau (accessed 07 Nov 2012); available from www.census.gov/newsroom/ releases/archives/facts\_for\_features\_special\_editions/cb10-ff13.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-7)