

Multi-Sector Strategy Forum

**Increasing the Employment of Persons
With Disabilities**

**March 22, 2005
Canad Inns - Fort Garry**

Final Report

MULTI-SECTOR STRATEGY FORUM

INCREASING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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Executive Summary

On March 22, 2005, sixty-three people from across Manitoba participated in a Multi-Sector Strategy Forum on “Increasing the Employment of Persons with Disabilities.” Participants represented business, persons with disabilities, government, and agencies working with persons with disabilities. The objectives of the Forum were:

- To create a greater public awareness of the abilities of persons with disabilities,
- To discuss barriers to employment, and
- To identify potential solutions to enable a greater number of persons with disabilities to actively participate in the labour force.

During this Forum, participants were asked to create a shared vision of the future, identify barriers to the realization of this vision, and to propose strategies and action plans that would overcome the identified barriers and move towards the goal of increasing the employment of persons with disabilities in Manitoba. In brief, the Forum participants generated the following results (re: ranked in order by number of responses per category):

A Shared Vision of the Future

- 1) A One Stop Resource Centre,
- 2) A Shared Commitment by Management and Employees,
- 3) Innovative Job Designs,
- 4) Increased Opportunities for Career Advancement,
- 5) Increased Funding,
- 6) Greater Public Awareness of Abilities,
- 7) Inclusive Workplace Culture,
- 8) Appropriate Accommodations,
- 9) Increased Awareness and Sharing of Accommodation Needs,
- 10) Legislated Equity Goals,
- 11) Disability Supports,
- 12) Communication by Persons with Disabilities, and
- 13) Research.

Barriers to a Shared Vision of the Future

- 1) The misguided perceptions, myths, stereotypes, and stigma associated with persons with disabilities,

- 2) Lack of accessible buildings and transportation,
- 3) Inadequate multi-year funding,
- 4) Fear of failure and of the unknown,
- 5) Job design issues,
- 6) Employers' priorities and time pressures,
- 7) Program and jurisdictional “silos”,
- 8) Financial risks for employers and for persons with disabilities,
- 9) Need for more information and resources,
- 10) Some union environments,
- 11) Short term nature of programs and other program-related issues,
- 12) Getting the stakeholders to the table, and
- 13) Lack of commitment.

Strategies to Make the Vision a Reality:

- 1) Develop and promote a comprehensive awareness campaign,
- 2) Promote multi-sector communication,
- 3) Support transition and create innovative change,
- 4) Engage stakeholders,
- 5) Establish a common resource database,
- 6) Achieve equality of education through appropriate job readiness training and disability supports,
- 7) Create a cross-sector network and working groups,
- 8) Sustain integration through accommodation, and
- 9) Establish, promote, and monitor workplace accessibility, guidelines, and legislation.

The images of a shared vision of the future, the barriers identified, and the proposed strategies are outlined in more detail in the report which follows. Action plans for each of the nine strategies are included in the report as well.

The Multi-Sector Strategy Forum was well received by participants, however, participants noted the importance of sustaining the momentum created by the Forum. They recommended that follow-up include the mobilization of action planning groups and the reconvening of the Forum within a year to discuss progress. Many participants expressed their interest in being a part of follow-up working groups assigned with further development of action plans.

Introduction

On March 22, 2005, the Manitoba Department of Family Services and Housing, the Manitoba Business Leadership Network, and the Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Training sponsored a Multi-Sector Strategy Forum on “Increasing the Employment of Persons With Disabilities.” Sixty-three individuals representing four sectors of the Province attended. The sectors represented were agencies working with persons with disabilities (17), Government (16), business (20), and persons with disabilities (10). A participant list is attached as Appendix 1.

The Strategy Forum was opened with remarks from the Honourable Christine Melnick, Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities, Wes Henderson, Director, Strategic Initiatives and Program Support, and Dave Scott, Board Secretary, Manitoba Business Leadership Network.

Forum Objectives

The objectives of the multi-sector forum were:

- To create a greater public awareness of the abilities of persons with disabilities,
- To discuss barriers to employment, and
- To identify potential solutions to enable a greater number of persons with disabilities to actively participate in the labour force.

Methodology

The Agenda of The Multi-Sector Strategy Forum on “Increasing the Employment of Persons With Disabilities” was made up of three focus questions and an action planning activity. Each of the focus questions allowed for individual reflection, sharing of responses within table groups, and selection by the table groups of responses to be shared with the whole group. Responses put forward were either sorted into columns by theme and named or listed on flip charts. Participant responses to the focus questions are listed verbatim in Appendix 2.

1. A Shared Vision of the Future

Thirteen images emerged in response to the question: “What do we want to see going on in two or three years through our collective efforts to increase the employment of persons with disabilities?” Participants most often identified a **One Stop Resource Shop for Employers and Employees** and the **Shared Commitment of Management and Employees** as the pillars of a newly constructed vision of the future.

Note: The following themes are listed in the order in which they were identified or mentioned most frequently.

A One Stop Resource Centre⁽¹⁾ would connect employees, employers, persons with disabilities and disability/employment agencies with access to information, support for accommodations, technology, and knowledge regarding hiring options for persons with disabilities. This centre would also facilitate the coordinated, cohesive approach of agencies and organizations serving persons with disabilities by maintaining a central job-opening database. This concept may need to be adapted to serve rural and northern Manitoba and smaller urban centres where services are not as specialized as in Winnipeg. However, one website, available to and for everyone, could provide Manitoba-wide information and could serve as a link to other disability-related sites.

A Shared Commitment by Management and Employees⁽²⁾ would be reflected by leaders or “champions” in both business and the union movement, who would promote understanding and awareness of the abilities of persons with disabilities. Visionary managers would champion success stories and set an example for staff. Companies would promote themselves as equal opportunity employers and develop disability specialists in their human resource departments. Business and employment agencies would work together to ensure that persons with disabilities have a full understanding of the work culture, including such topics as behavioural interviews and “emotional I.Q.’s”.

Our shared vision of the future also includes **Innovative Job Designs**⁽³⁾ and **Increased Opportunities for Career Advancement for Persons with Disabilities**⁽⁴⁾. Innovations would include job carving, summer placements, and internship programs. Employment would be designed with a view to providing experience for persons with disabilities leading to permanent placements and

would encompass not simply entry level or minimum wage jobs, but highly skilled positions as well. Job designs would factor in a “quality of life” component that allows for flexibility of hours per day and days per week. Technical training programs, tied to labour market needs, would also be available. Taken together, these approaches would contribute to a future that includes “true career paths” for persons with disabilities.

Increased Funding⁽⁵⁾ and an on-going commitment from government and from community agencies are part of the Forum's shared vision as well. System changes, such as the removal of disincentives to become employed, for example the termination of health benefits, would exist alongside tax credits for employers who invest in accommodations for workers and the expansion of the criteria and funding of the Opportunities Fund.

Participants also identified images of **Greater Public Awareness of Abilities**⁽⁶⁾ and an **Inclusive Workplace Culture**⁽⁷⁾ as part of a shared future. Public awareness would focus on “people first” and the abilities and skills of persons with visible and invisible disabilities. An inclusive workplace culture would embrace opportunities and accommodations for people with disabilities as part of an organization's day to day operations. Employers' requests for referrals from placement agencies would abound until they are “out of control!” This culture change would be reflected in a shift towards thinking of agency/service providers as valued labour sources. Disability awareness training in workplaces will be a “must” for all levels of staff.

Appropriate Accommodations⁽⁸⁾ and an **Increased Awareness and Sharing of Accommodations Needs**⁽⁹⁾ were also noted by participants as a part of a shared vision of the future. This future includes fully accessible buildings and partnerships of employers, employees, and government working to solve the existing deficiencies in accommodations. The transportation needs of persons with disabilities living in rural Manitoba could be met by the utilization of the school bus system.

Forum members also identified images of **Legislated Equity Goals**⁽¹⁰⁾, **Disability Supports**⁽¹¹⁾ and open, comfortable **Communication by Persons with Disabilities**⁽¹²⁾ regarding their accommodation needs as components of a shared future. Disability supports would be viewed as “citizenship rights.” **Research**⁽¹³⁾ into the sustainability and success rates of placements was identified as well.

2. Identifying Barriers to Our Shared Vision

Forum participants created a list of barriers and obstacles in response to the question: “What barriers must we address to move towards our shared vision of the future?”

Forum participants noted that Attitudes and Perceptions were the most significant barriers to moving towards the forum's shared vision of the future. About one-fifth of the barriers identified by participants referred to misguided perceptions, myths, stereotypes, and the stigma associated with persons with disabilities. Barriers in this category include:

- the stigma associated with mental health disabilities,
- misconceptions about the qualifications of persons with disabilities,
- negative stereotypes,
- lack of understanding of disabilities and of persons with disabilities,
- no true belief in the skill sets of persons with disabilities,
- the perception that different rules apply to persons with disabilities,
- the perception that persons with disabilities require more attention,
- tunnel vision,
- discrimination and community values that limit individuals and underlie the stigma associated with persons with disabilities, and
- the misperception that persons with disabilities miss more time at work.

The next most frequently cited barriers were:

- lack of affordable, reliable, and accessible transportation,
- building accessibility and the associated costs,

- inadequate multi-year funding, and
- fear of failure and of the unknown.

Other barriers or obstacles identified more than once by forum members were:

- inflexible hours and duties,
- no attendant care services on site,
- priority not given by employers to the hiring of persons with disabilities, and
- program and jurisdictional “silos”.

Barriers and obstacles identified once by participants can be divided into three categories - employer/employee related, program/agency related, and general.

Employer/employee related:

- employer time pressures,
- hiring is just one of many issues employers must deal with,
- financial risk for employer,
- poorly formed job descriptions,
- fear of change,
- improperly designed human resource screening processes,
- need for more information, resources, and education, and
- some union environments.

Program/agency related:

- short term solutions,
- too many agencies/disability groups with whom the employer and the person with the disability must work,
- different eligibility criteria for programs,
- figuring out how to address multiple and complex needs,
- inadequate assessment tools for individuals and job tasks,
- managing services and clients within privacy legislation,
- loss of safety net and financial support for client, and
- need for qualified staff to “sell” employers on the employability of persons with disabilities.

General Barriers:

- commitment levels,
- lifelong support,
- getting stakeholders to the table,
- lack of commitment,
- finger pointing, and
- inadequate housing.

3. & 4. Strategies and Action Plans to Make our Vision a Reality

Forum participants were asked to respond to the question: “What can we do to overcome these barriers and move towards our vision?” This exercise produced nine strategies. Each table group then developed an action plan for one of the nine strategies. Action plans were to include a measurable accomplishment that would represent progress in one of the strategic areas, the contributions of employers, agencies, government, and organizations representing persons with disabilities and practical steps that could lead to substantive results.

Strategy #1: Develop and Promote a Comprehensive Awareness Campaign -

Participants recommended a multi-media disability awareness campaign that would include the marketing of success stories and diversity training workshops.

Action Plan:

- Obtain qualified marketing staff from the Asper School of Business to promote supported employment.
- Government, at all levels, to set an example of inclusion and to “set the bar high”.
- Fully exploit employment fairs for promotion.
- Fund marketing and promotion.
- Identify, publish, and celebrate Manitoba's Top Ten Progressive Employers promoting the abilities of persons with disabilities.
- Corporate sponsorships to be identified to promote success stories.

Strategy #2: Promote Multi-Sector Communication - Forums, meetings, and working groups would form the basis of sector-wide communication.

Action Plan:

- Stage annual forums to measure accomplishments within one year.
- Planning committees and working groups organizing forums would include persons with disabilities and representatives of unions, employers, employees, agencies, and government.
- Build on successful strategies by learning from others, such as Workers' Compensation Board, Canada Pension Plan, and Aboriginal employment strategies.
- Concentrate on a small number of high priority projects.

Strategy #3: Support Transition and Create Innovative Change - Forum participants established two goals to measure the progress made as a result of

innovations in employment flexibility and “thinking outside the box.” The goals are a ten percent increase in the employment of persons with disabilities and an eight percent increase in the job satisfaction of those presently employed.

Action plan:

- Increase flexibility of financial supports and Employment Income Assistance.
- Change staff rules for persons with disabilities to speed up hiring by Civil Service.
- Government and agencies to work as a team to reduce reliance on social assistance and to promote diversity.
- Improve screening procedures by agencies to ensure proper placements.
- Employers to work with agencies and persons with disabilities to increase flexibility of job descriptions and improve work experiences for persons with disabilities.
- Improve relationships with unions with a view to creating policies and collective agreements that work for persons with disabilities.

Strategy #4: Engage Stakeholders - Participants recommended that a plan be devised to engage employers, agencies, and persons with disabilities.

Action plan:

- Create a functioning working group with a mandate to engage stakeholders and with succinct, stated goals.
- Develop “Best Practices” and “How To” resources for employers.
- Create a “Champions Support Group”.
- Create a buddy/mentoring system for employers and employees.
- Encourage employers to become advocates for disability awareness and employment.

Strategy #5: Establish a Common Resource Database - One Stop Shop

Strategy - A user-friendly centralized database of resources would eliminate duplication and should include a resume database as well.

Action Plan:

- Allocate funding from Department of Family Services and Department of Advanced Education and Training to establish, market, and maintain a common, user-friendly database, within one year.
- An Advisory Committee would provide the governance for the One Stop Resource Shop and would consist of representatives from employer groups, agencies, government, and organizations representing persons with disabilities.
- The committee's main responsibilities would be promoting and maintaining the database.

Strategy #6: Achieve Equality of Education Through Appropriate Job Readiness Training and Disability Supports - Forum members identified the development of disability supports and quality job readiness training as strategies to overcome the inequalities in education for persons with disabilities.

Action Plan:

- Compile up to date information on the skills employers require for job readiness so that “real” training for “real” jobs can be made available to persons with disabilities.
- Develop a job readiness “lens” for educators and program planners.
- Establish internships in government for persons with disabilities.
- Redirect school educators to focus on high level job skills (reading, writing, computer).
- Provide disability supports to ensure equality of education and equality of opportunity.

Strategy #7: Create a Cross Sector Network and Working Groups - Participants agreed that a cross-sector network and working groups would nurture communication and create a shared understanding of disability issues among all the stakeholders.

Action Plan:

- Bring agencies, employers, and community organizations together to create awareness, share information, and build on success stories.
- Encourage agencies to “think outside the box” when working with employers.
- Establish and nurture productive contacts across sectors.
- Promote “champion” activities.

Strategy #8: Sustain Integration Through Accommodation - On-going accommodations by employers, agencies, and persons with disabilities was identified by forum members as a strategy to increase the employment of persons with disabilities.

Action Plan:

- Promote self-advocacy among persons with disabilities in the areas of transportation, building accessibility, and job flexibility.
- Adjust the hiring and interview processes to accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Establish benchmarks within employment sectors in order to measure length and success of employment placements of persons with disabilities placed by agencies within the various sectors.
- Promote progressive, on site, flexible job integration within the workplace.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities are told the reasons for not being hired so that they do not assume it is because of the disability.

Strategy #9: Establish, Promote, and Monitor Workplace Accessibility, Guidelines, and Legislation - Participants recommended a strategy to establish accessibility standards within building codes and to legislate same.

Action Plan:

- Educate employers regarding legislation and assist them to communicate guidelines to staff.
- Conduct an “accessible workplace” survey.
- Encourage employers to be open about concerns and to utilize accessibility services.
- Educate agencies about legislation and encourage them to advocate for change.
- Government to keep legislation up to date, reward accessible workplaces, and increase funding for transportation.
- All stakeholders to meet regularly to assess needs, discuss concerns, and answer questions.
- Increase knowledge of organizations representing persons with disabilities regarding resources.
- Post legislation in visible locations, such as waiting rooms, and advocate for accessible washrooms and ramps in all public places, with the imposition of fines for the failure to meet accessibility standards.

Conclusion

The Multi-Sector Strategy Forum was well received by participants. The session was rated as “extremely valuable,” “very enlightening” and-as “one of the best forums on disabilities in years.” However, participants noted the importance of sustaining the momentum created by the Forum. They recommended that follow up include the mobilization of action plan groups and the reconvening of the Forum, within a year, to discuss progress. Many of the participants' recommendations are in line with the research of the Canadian Abilities Foundation, as described in the Forum Background Information. The Forum members' enthusiasm, hard work, and wealth of insight combined to create a wide range of strategies and action plans to increase the employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Many participants expressed their interest in being a part of follow up working groups and action plans.

Multi-Sector Strategy Forum

Participants

Agency

Ms.	Anita	Rempel	Canadian Mental Health Association
Ms.	Darlene	Cooper	Canadian Paraplegic Association
Ms.	Susan	Dewalt	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
Ms.	Sharon	McIllraith	Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)
Ms.	Marsha	Goforth	Interlake Employment Services (Stonewall)
Mr.	Scott	Byiers	Sair Centre of Learning
Ms.	Helen	MacKenzie	Sara Riel
Mr.	Oly	Backstrom	SCE Life Works
Ms.	Erika	Bewski	Society for Manitobans with Disabilities - Winnipeg
Ms.	Willemien	Van Lankvelt	Westman Coalition (Brandon)
Mr.	Brian	Stewart	StewartReach
Mr.	Ernie	Thiessen	Premier Personnel
Ms.	Tammy	Woodhouse	First Nations disABILITY Association of MB. Inc.
Ms.	Jeanne	Mulvenna	St. James Assiniboia-Industries Inc.
Ms.	Crystal	Woligroski	Hope Centre Inc.

APPENDIX 1

Business

Mr.	Larry	Brown	Hi-Way Esso (Brandon)
Ms.	Michelle	Norris	Manitoba Lotteries Corporation
Mr.	John	Shields	Manitoba Public Insurance
Mr.	Bob	Kris	Simplot Canada Limited (Portage La Prairie)
Ms.	Colleen	Thompson	The Canadian Wheat Board
Ms.	Cynthia	Selley	The Faneuil Group
Ms.	Maggie	Duncan	University of Manitoba Equity Services
Ms.	Mary	Galloway	University of Manitoba Equity Services
Ms.	Sue	Surcon	Winnipeg Convention Centre
Ms.	Dianna	Richardson	Winpak Ltd.
Mr.	Jim	Kilmister	TD Canada Trust
Mr.	Bill	Neill	Manitoba Hydro
Mr.	Mark	Harrison	Royal Bank
Mr.	Rob	Panontin	Maple Leaf Meats
Ms.	Karen	West	Royal Canadian Mint
Ms.	Cheryl	Wightman	Manitoba Telecom Services Inc.
Mr.	Scott	Drach	Boeing Canada
Mr.	John	Wallus	Kitchen Craft Cabinetry

Individuals

Ms.	Carol	Morrison
Ms.	Ruth	Gumprich-Hogue
Ms.	Emily	Ternette
Mr	David	Yarish
Ms.	Christine	Bonnet
Ms.	Judy	Livingstone
Ms.	Yvette	Cenerini
Mr	Terry	Pratt
Mr.	James	Kraynyk
Mr.	Dan	Joanisse

Government Representatives

Ms.	Gisela	Rempel	Family Services and Housing
Ms.	Nancy	Murray	Family Services and Housing
Mr.	Bob	Knight	Advanced Education and Training
Mr.	Bob	Pollock	Civil Service Commission
Ms.	Cateland	Penner	Civil Service Commission
Mr.	Jason	Lacasse	Industry, Economic Development and Mines
Mr.	David	Martin	Disabilities Issues Office
Mr.	Ken	Burfoot	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Ms.	Julie	Platt	Family Services and Housing
Ms.	Wendy	Wolfreys	Employability Support Unit - FSH
Ms.	Cindy	Brookfield	Employability Support Unit - FSH
Ms.	Rhonda	Haight	Employability Support Unit - FSH

Organizing Committee

Mr.	Wes	Henderson	Family Services and Housing
Mr.	Greg	Findlay	MB Business Leadership Network
Ms.	Joanne	Hunt	Advanced Education and Training
Ms.	Lynda	Wawryk	Social Development Canada
Mr.	Dave	Fisher	Family Services and Housing
Mr.	George	McLeod	Career Connections Inc. (Brandon)
Ms.	Teresa	Andreychuk	Reaching E-Quality Employment Services
Mr.	Dave	Scott	Workers Compensation Board

NOTE: Organizing Committee Members served a dual purpose as forum participants representing their respective agencies/departments.

APPENDIX 2

Manitoba Multi-Sector Strategy Forum

Increasing the Employment of Persons With Disabilities

RESPONSE DATA

**MARCH 22, 2005
Canad Inns - Fort Garry**

The Agenda of The Manitoba Multi-Sector Strategy Forum was made up of three “focus questions” and an action planning activity. Each of the “focus questions” allowed for individual reflection, sharing of responses within the table groups, and selection by the table groups of responses to be presented to the whole group. Responses for questions number one and three were put forward to the whole group, sorted into columns by theme, and the columns were named. Responses for question number two were listed by the groups on flip charts and presented to the whole group.

The following is a list of the table groups' responses to the “focus questions” as classified and labeled by the whole group. The numbers in brackets refer to the number of table groups with the same or very similar response.

1. Constructing Our Shared Vision of the Future

Focus Question: “What do we want to see going on in two to three years through our collective efforts to increase the employment of persons with disabilities?”

One Stop Resource Shop for Employers and Employees:

- One stop shop for employers to access information, resources, support for accommodations, technology, and knowledge about hiring options. (7)
- A coordinated, cohesive approach by disability/employment agencies and a central job opening data base, by classification. (5)
- Manitoba Business Leadership Network included in charter of Chambers of Commerce in all rural areas. (1)

Shared Commitment by Management and Employees:

- Champions at the top of organizations to promote awareness and understanding.(3)
- Union support, cooperation, and champions. (2)
- Companies to promote that they are equal opportunity employers. (1)
- Disability specialists for hiring and interviewing. (1)

Employers have responsibility to collaborate with respect to work culture, emotional I.Q., expectations of behavioural interviews. (1)

Awareness of change from “Community Service” to “Business Benefit”. (1)

Make a non-economic decision to hire a person with a disability. (1)

An Inclusive Workplace Culture:

- Enhanced awareness in workplaces and by line management regarding opportunities and accommodations for people with disabilities until requests for referrals from employers are “out of control”. (3)
- Culture change by employers and friendly workplaces for people with disabilities. (2)
- Public education and multi-faceted media campaign to promote awareness, p.s.a.'s, etc. (2)
- See agency/service provider as labour source, not just as quota- filling. (1)

Greater Awareness of Abilities:

- Awareness of abilities and skills; see people first, not just the disabilities. (4)
- Increased awareness of invisible disabilities. (2)
- Employment Equity guidelines to include full spectrum of disability groups, not just physical disabilities. (1)
- Employers have disability awareness training. (1)

Innovative Job Designs:

- Job carving. (2)
- Summer employment and internship opportunities to gain experience that will lead to permanent jobs. (2)
- Innovative ideas regarding job design and creation at all levels, not just entry level. (1)
- Change from experience to skill set. (1)
- Quality of life as a factor in employment - not just full-time work, flexibility as to work week. (1)

Funding to Make It All Happen:

- Increased funding and ongoing commitment for vocational rehabilitation and training programs for people with disabilities. (2)
- Adequate funding for community agencies and small/medium employers. (1)
- Remove disincentives ie. termination of health benefits. (1)
- Expanded criteria, conditions, and funding for Opportunities Fund. (1)
- Tax credit for employers who purchase accommodations for workers with disabilities. (1)

Increased Opportunities for Career Advancement:

- A move beyond minimum wage jobs to highly skilled positions and “true career paths”. (3)
- Technical training (trades) for people with disabilities. (1)
- Training programs linked to labour market. (1)

Accommodations:

- Real partnerships between employers, employees, and government to work on solving existing deficiencies in accommodations (ramps, etc). (1)
- Fully accessible buildings. (1)
- Using school bus transportation, post high school, for employment (rural initiative). (1)

Research and Legislation:

- Legislated equity goals. (1)
- Sustainability of disability employment and follow up of placements. (1)
- Disability supports are a citizenship right, not an employer responsibility. (1)

Increased Awareness and sharing of Accommodation Needs:

- Increased comfort level of persons with disabilities to share accommodation needs with employers. (1)
- Individuals' knowledge of their condition. (1)

2. Identifying Barriers to Our Shared Vision

Focus Question: “What barriers must we address to move towards our shared vision of the future?”

- Affordable, reliable, accessible transportation. (3)
- Building accessibility (ramps, washrooms, etc.) and costs thereof. (3)
- Financial risk and loss of safety net for the client.
- Financial risk for employer.

- Attitudinal and perception barriers. (7) See additional examples of misguided perceptions below.
- Thirst for more information, resources, education, and awareness.
- No flexible hours and duties.(2)
- No attendant care services on site. (2)
- Program and jurisdictional silos.(2)
- Getting stakeholders to act in a reasonable amount of time.
- Short-term solutions.
- Hiring persons with disabilities not a priority.(2)
- Stigma associated with persons with mental health disabilities.
- Different eligibility criteria for programs.
- Figuring out how to address multiple and complex needs.
- Poorly formed job descriptions.
- Inflexible rules and policies.
- Myths and misconceptions regarding a person's qualifications.
- Fear of change at all levels.
- Improperly designed human resource screening processes.
- No assessment tools for individuals and job tasks.
- Tunnel vision.
- Job training.
- Lifelong support.
- Funding. (3)
- Unions.
- Managing services and clients within privacy legislation.
- Fear of failure and the unknown.(3)
- No incentive to make change.
- No true belief in the skills sets of persons with disabilities. (2)
- Need for communication.
- Finger pointing.
- Social stigma of people with disabilities due to lack of public education, fears, racism, and community values that limit individuals.
- Family support.
- Job training.
- Housing.
- Commitment levels, ownership of position.
- Employers' time pressures; hiring persons with disabilities is just one issue on one's desk.
- Getting back to person-to-person.
- Business training partnerships.

- Too many organizations and groups for employers and persons with disabilities to deal with.

3. Strategies to Make Our Vision a Reality

Focus Question: “What can we do to overcome these barriers and move towards our vision of the future”

Develop and Promote a Comprehensive Awareness Campaign:

- Multi-media disability awareness campaign. (4)
- Market success stories. (2)
- Fund marketing and promotion.
- Obtain qualified staff by having government, MBLN, and MSEN contract with Asper School of Business for marketing supported employment.
- Diversity training workshops.
- All levels of government set the example and “set the bar high”.

Focused Organizations Communicating Universally and Successfully:

- More multi-sector meetings and working groups. (4)
- Learn from others (WCB, CPP) and build on successful strategies (Aboriginal employment strategies). (2)
- Include people with disabilities on planning committees.
- Invite unions to participate in discussions.
- Concentrate on a small number of high priorities.

Creating Innovative Change:

- Increase flexibility of financial supports and E.I.A. Policies. (4)
- Flexibility in job descriptions.
- Change staffing rules for persons with disabilities for quick hiring in the civil service.
- Work on relationships with unions (policies and collective agreements).
- Ask for a leg up, not a hand out.

Engaging Stakeholders by Sharing Knowledge:

- Organizations to model best practices and supported employment, educate employers. (2)
- Create a buddy/mentoring system for employers and employees. (2)
- Employer advocates, peer to peer.
- Create a strong Champion Support Group.
- Develop “How To’s” for employers.

Implement a Centralized Resource Database - One Stop Shop:

- User-friendly centralized database of resources to eliminate duplication. (4)
- Resume database.

Disability Supports and Job Readiness Training for Equal Education:

- “Real” training for real jobs.
- Appropriate disability supports to ensure equal education opportunities.
- More internships for persons with disabilities in government.
- School educators to maintain excellence to encourage workability skills (reading, writing, computer).

Create Cross-Sector Working Groups and Network:

- Agencies, employers, and community organizations create partnerships and a shared understanding. (3)
- Agencies get outside the box when working with employers.

Sustaining Integration through Accommodation:

- Self-advocacy, take responsibility for transit, accessibility, etc.
- Job integration should be progressive, on-site, and flexible.
- Accommodations for persons with disabilities in the hiring and the interview process.

Promote, Establish, and Monitor Workplace Accessibility Guidelines and Legislation:

- Increase funding for accessible transportation.

- Legislate and establish standards within building codes to meet accessibility.

4. Action Planning

Each table group chose one of the strategies outlined above and developed the following action plans.

1. Develop and Promote a Comprehensive Awareness Campaign:

- An action plan is in the process of being executed to identify, celebrate and publish Manitoba's Top 10 Progressive employers.
- Corporate sponsors have been identified to celebrate success stories.
- Fully exploit employment fairs.

2. Focused Organizations Communicating Universally and Successfully:

- Annual forum to measure accomplishment within one year.
- Forum would include employees and unions, agencies, government, and organizations representing people with disabilities.
- Each group would commit to having a representative on a working group.

3. Creating Innovative Change:

- Goal would be a 10% increase in employment for people living with a disability and an 8% increase in job satisfaction for those presently employed.
- Employers to seek out agencies and ask employees what can be done to improve their work experience.
- Agencies to thoroughly screen clients to ensure proper placement.
- Government to provide more funding, promote diversification and think of agencies and employees as a team working to get a sector off social assistance.
- Promote success stories.
- Think outside the box in terms of job expectations, job carving, and minimum educational standards for employment.

4. Engaging Stakeholders by Sharing Knowledge:

- A functioning working group with succinct goals needs to be created before stakeholders can be engaged.
- Group has to contain employers (10), agencies (4), and persons with disabilities (2).
- Goals are to develop best practices, champions, and a database (peer to peer resource).

5. Implement a Centralized Resource Database - One Stop Shop:

- Family Services and Housing and MAET should fund a common database within one year.
- Advisory group should include representatives from employers, agencies, government, and organizations representing persons with disabilities.
- Lead responsibility would be marketing and maintenance.

6. Disability Supports and Job Readiness Training for Equal Education:

- Compile current information available on skills employers require for job readiness.
- Develop a job readiness lens for educators and program planners.

7. Creating Cross-Sector Working Groups and Network:

- Open lines of communication.
- “Champion” activities.
- Share information to create awareness and share success stories.
- Maintain contacts.

8. Sustaining Integration Through Accommodation:

- Identify a benchmark regarding the length of employment within employment sectors.
- Identify a data collection methodology.
- Measure length of employment of applicants placed by various agencies as compared to the benchmark of the employment sector.

9. Promote, Establish, and Monitor Workplace Accessibility Guidelines and Legislation:

Employers:

- Know legislation.
- Communicate with staff.
- Survey to gauge accessible workplaces.
- Be open to talk about concerns to person in charge.
- Include policy and procedures for accessibility.
- Access services to ensure accessibility.
- Committee to regularly assess needs with people with disabilities.

Agencies:

- Same as above.
- Advocate for change, make arrangements.
- Initiate accessibility.

Government:

- Keep legislation up to date.
- Reward agencies for accessibility.
- Give money for accessibility.
- Meet with stakeholders regarding concerns and questions.

Organizations representing persons with disabilities:

- Be in the know and know what people with disabilities need for accessibility.
- Know where to access information and resources regarding accessibility.
- Post legislation regarding accessibility where it can be seen (waiting rooms).
- Advocate with the City for accessible washrooms, ramps, in all public places.
- A fine if they are not accessible.
- Meet back with Multi-Sector to discuss progress.