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Report

An Analysis of the Disability IS Diversity Training Sessions

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Section A. Program Description

“Disability IS Diversity: Tapping into the Talents of New Yorkers with Disabilities” is an interactive forum designed for business leaders, employers, human resource professionals, disability service providers, educators and people with disabilities. This training program aims to enhance disability inclusiveness in the workplace with strategies that bring about competitive advantage, organizational effectiveness and opportunities to access an untapped talent pool. The half day session offers: an overview of workforce and demographic trends; video clip analysis; a look at disability in the workplace, a simulation activity examining real-life dilemmas; an exploration of real strategies for disability inclusive workplaces; an opportunity to re-invigorate diversity efforts; and a networking luncheon. Employer participants receive 3.75 Strategic Continuing Education Credits through SHRM while disability service providers are awarded 4.0 Certified Rehabilitation Counseling Continuing Education Credits. Two additional credits are awarded to both employer and provider participants who complete the on-line tutorials available on www.NYMakesWorkPay.org.

Summary of Training Sessions

- Rochester - October 23, 2009: 5 employers; 28 providers
- New York City - December 14, 2009: 14 employers; 23 providers
- Albany - December 16, 2009: 18 employers; 11 providers
- Albany - December 17, 2009: 17 employers; 19 providers
- Owego - April 14, 2010: 23 employers; 16 providers
- Ithaca - April 15, 2010: 24 employers; 11 providers
- Buffalo - June 24, 2010: 10 employers; 39 providers
- Mid-Hudson – November 4, 2010

Section B. Description of the Analysis of Pre-Post Data

A total of 94 participants who attended the four workshops conducted between October 09 and December 09 completed pre/post surveys. The composition of the respondents varied based on their roles within their organizations. Approximately 41% of the participants were Human Resource Professionals (HRP) and 20% were Disability Service Providers. About 4% were ADA or Diversity Coordinators, 4% Business Owners, 10% were Managers/Supervisors, 2% or less were Administrative/Clerical or Instructors/Teachers, and one fifth identified as others. Twenty percent of participants were working in non-profit industry, 15% each were working in human services and state/local government, 3% each were working in retail, transportation, customer service, 6% were working in medical/health industry and 4% each were working in finance/banking/insurance and manufacturing. About 14% of participants were working in small size industries with less than or equal to 25 employees, the rest were working in medium or large size industries with more than 25 employees.

Table 1. Distribution of Workshop Participant Characteristics

Participant Characteristics	%	N
Role within Organization		
Human Resources Professional	42	39
Disability Service Provider	19	18
Business Owner	4	4
Manager/supervisor	10	9
ADA or Diversity Coordinator	4	4
Instructor/Teacher	1	1
Administrative/Clerical	2	2
Other	18	17
Industry Type		
Retail	3	3
Medical/Health	7	6
State/Local Government	15	14
Transportation	3	3
Customer Service	3	3
Information Technology	1	1
Telecommunication	1	1
Finance/Banking/Insurance	4	4
Manufacturing	4	4
Non-profit	21	19
Human Services	14	13
Other	23	21
Industry Size		
0 - 25 employees	14	13
26 - 100 employees	11	10
101 - 300 employees	18	17
301 - 1000 employees	19	18
1001 - 3000 employees	14	13
> 3001 employees	24	22

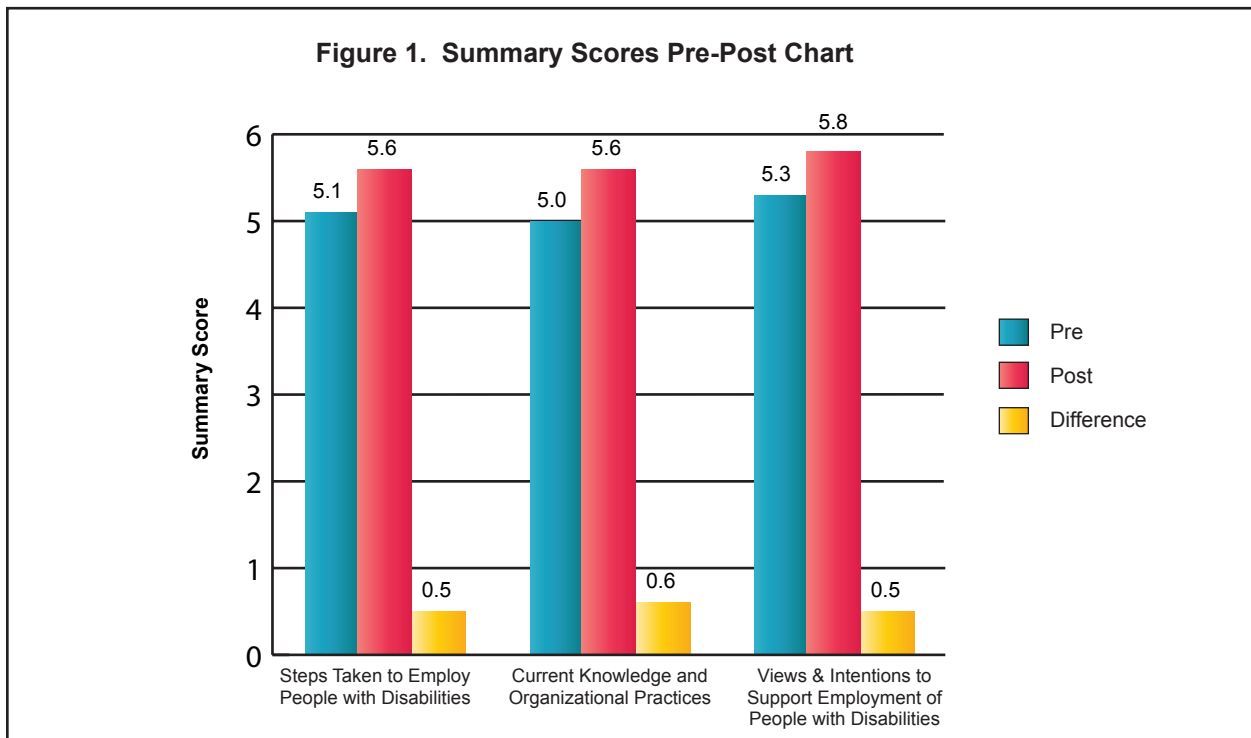
Pre-Post Test Instrument

The pre-post test instrument was developed to capture knowledge, practices, and intention/attitudes of participants regarding disability as workplace diversity. The items can be classified broadly into three areas – (a) steps and actions taken by the participant to help employ individuals with disabilities within the organization, (b) current knowledge and organizational practices with

respect to employing individuals with disabilities, and (c) participants' intentions and views to supports employment of individuals with disabilities within the organization (see appendix 1 for the full pre-post questionnaire). Each of the sub-items across these three areas measured the participant responses on a likert-scale ranging from 1 to 6, where 1 is strongly disagree and 6 is strongly agree. The participant ratings from pre-and post test instrument were averaged across the three areas to understand changes in the average scores pre and post-workshop participation. Simple statistical tests were employed to understand if differences were statistically significant and ANOVA tests were carried out to understand mean differences across different participant groups (based on participant categories in Table 1). In addition to examining the aggregate scores across the three areas, the difference in pre-post scores for each item within the instrument was also computed to understand if participating in the workshop impact specific sub-item.

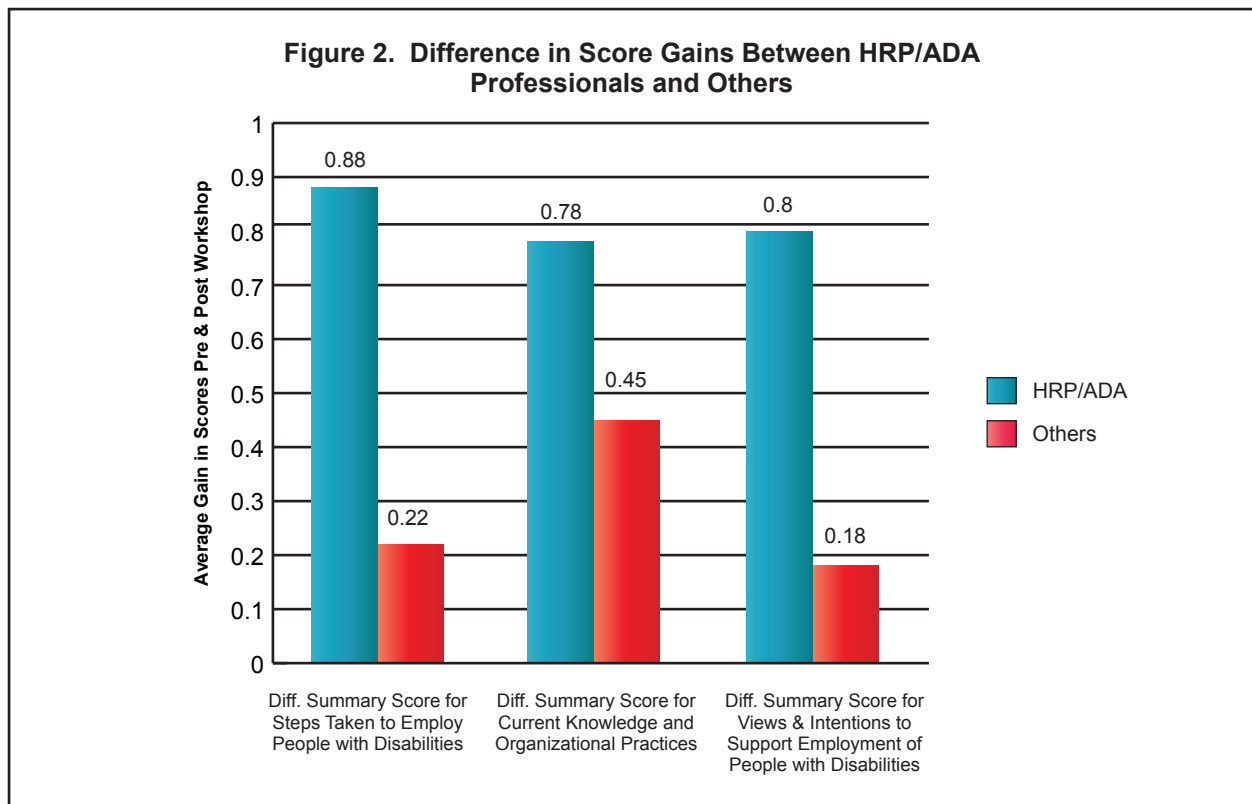
Aggregate Analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the aggregated scores pre-post and difference between them for all the participant responses across the three areas: (a) steps and actions taken by the participant to help employ individuals with disabilities within the organization, (b) current knowledge and organizational practices with respect to employing individuals with disabilities, and (c) participants' intentions and views to supports employment of individuals with disabilities within the organization. Note that on average the score improved by 0.5 – 0.6 across all the participants and these improvements were statistically significant, with p-value < 0.05. This improvement is substantial in that most participants indicated 5 or above in their pre-workshop responses to the sub-items. From a practical perspective, if one were to round the 0.5 or 0.6 values, the analysis indicates that on average the ratings of participant moved by one point – e.g., agree to strongly agree –post-workshop for all three areas.



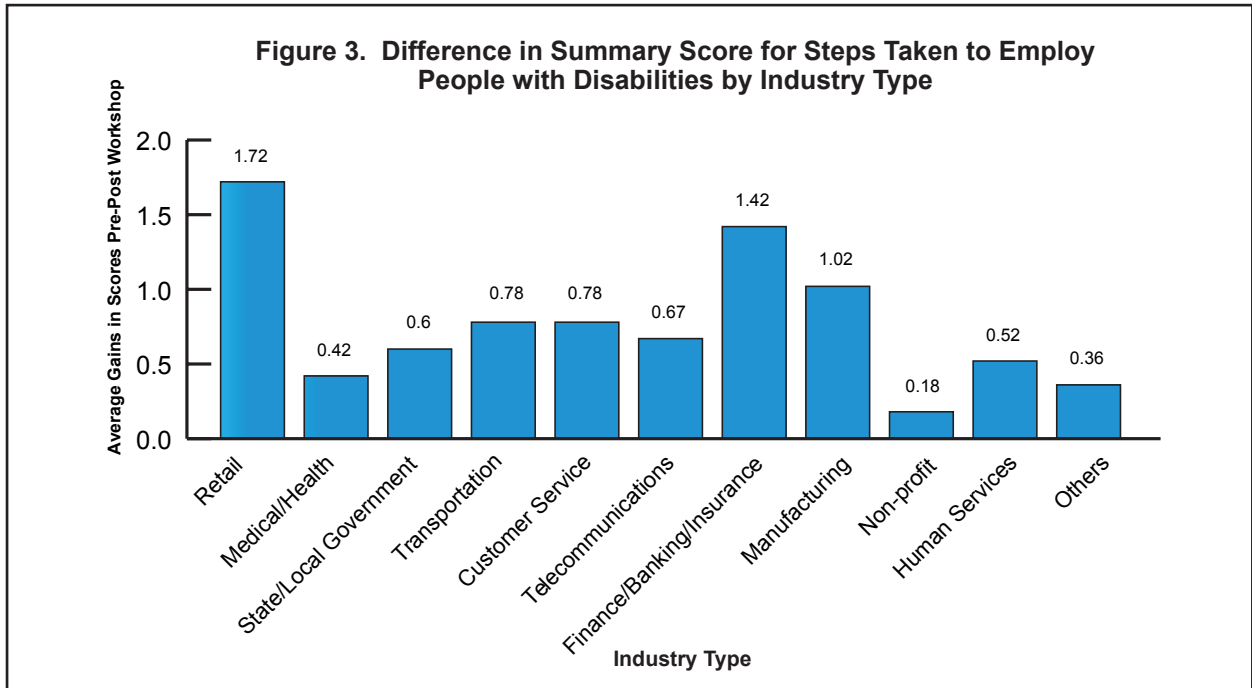
Analyses were conducted to identify if the gains in score varied across participant characteristics. Based on exploratory examination it was reasonable to group responses for HR professionals and ADA/Diversity Coordinators (HR/ADA) into one group and group the rest into another (Others). Figure 2 illustrates the differences in the post-workshop gain in scores between HR/ADA professionals and others across the three areas. Note that on average the score gains ranged from 0.78 to 0.88 for the HR/ADA professionals, compared with 0.18 to 0.45 for rest of the participants across the three areas.

More importantly, the differences in the average gain scores were statistically significant between the groups for all the three areas, with $p < 0.05$ as indicated by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. This means that the gain score for the HR/ADA professionals in the area of “steps taken to employ people with disabilities” was statistically larger than the other professionals who attended the workshop. Similarly, the gain scores for the HR/ADA professionals was statistically higher in the areas of “current knowledge and organizational practices” and ‘views & intention to support employment for people with disabilities’ compared to the gains for other professionals attending the workshop. These findings indicate that overall the knowledge of HR/ADA professionals greatly improved in comparison to the other professionals who attended the workshop.

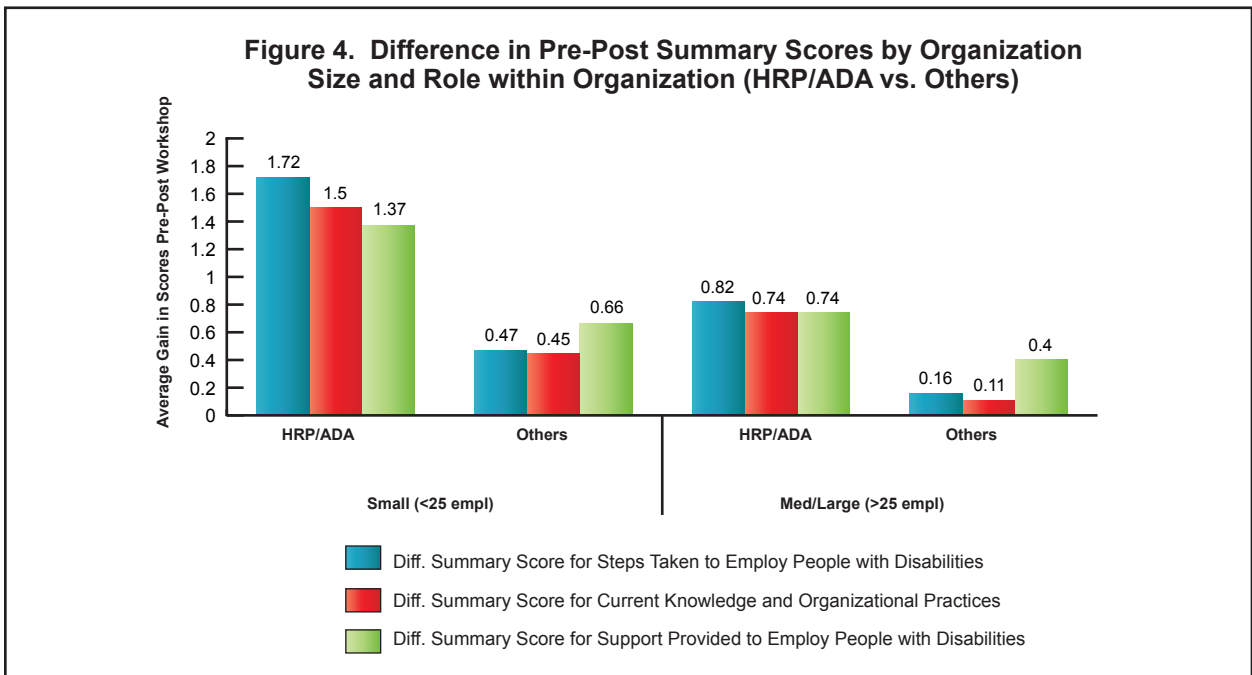


Similar tests were conducted to see if other participant characteristics such as industry type and industry size were related to the score gains.

It is interesting to note that industry type was significantly related to the score gains in the area of “steps taken to employ people with disabilities” (see figure 3). This indicates that the gain scores were statistically different for ‘steps taken to employ people with disabilities’ by the industry type of the workshop participant



Organization size was re-classified as 0 – 25 employees vs. others. While this was not statistically related to the gain scores, their interaction effect with the participant role (i.e., HR/ADA vs. other) was statistically significant for all the three areas in the ANOVA tests. Figure 4 further illustrates differences in the average gain scores for HR/ADA professionals vs. others across the two broad industry size classifications – i.e., small (0–25 employees) vs. medium & large (> 25 employees). This indicates that the gains across all the three areas were larger for HR/ADA professionals in the small industries compared to the other professionals in small industries. The differences were also statistically significant but not as large between these two groups for the professionals in medium/ large industries.



Discussion & Conclusion

Despite a simplistic treatment of the data analysis, and ignoring the statistical issues related to normal distribution of the Likert-scale responses, our analysis yields some important findings regarding the impact on knowledge, practices, attitudes and intentions for participants in the “Disability is Diversity” half-day workshops.

First, the participants had statistically significant and practically relevant gains across the three areas in their intentions: (a) for taking steps and actions to help employ individuals with disabilities within the organization, (b) to further knowledge and organizational practices with respect to employing individuals with disabilities, and (c) to support employment for individuals with disabilities within their organization.

Second, the impact of training was higher among the HR professionals and ADA/Diversity Coordinators compared to the rest of the participants. This indicates the training has influenced key organizational policy personnel in a substantial fashion.

Third, the higher impact of training in participants belonging to small size industries (here 0 – 25 employees) indicates that training improved knowledge and intentions among this group of participants, which could increase the likelihood of these small industries employing individuals with disabilities – leading to greater community integration of people with disabilities through employment in small businesses in their communities. This is an important finding, since in a recent survey of employers most professionals in small industries were found to have difficulty with and lack knowledge about strategies for enhancing the employment for people with disabilities (Domzal, Houtenville, & Sharma, 2008).

Finally, the training specifically improved participant knowledge in the areas of providing workplace accommodations for individuals with disabilities, potential community-based partners who can help secure accommodations for employees with special needs, and developing disability-inclusive workplace strategies to enhance recruitment, hiring, and retaining individuals with disabilities.

Several potential conclusions can be drawn from these results. The contents of the training can be adjusted based on the industry size and role played by the participants. Additionally, the follow-up technical assistance can also focus on customizing the information for increased adoption of leading practices to enhance recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement of employees with disabilities based on industry size and type.

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References

Domzal, C., Houtenville, A., and Sharma, R. (2008). Survey of Employer Perspectives on the Employment of People with Disabilities: Technical Report. (Prepared under contract to the Office of Disability and Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor). McLean, VA: CESSI.

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Partnering Organizations

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Burton Blatt Institute (Syracuse University)

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