HIRING PEOPLE FOR THEIR ABILITIES AND NOT THEIR DISABILITIES

A QUALITATIVE STUDY AIMED AT IDENTIFYING THE BARRIERS FACED BY ORGANISATIONS IN GAUTENG WHEN EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

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INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, the composition of the national workforce in all sectors of the economy has changed considerably. This is largely due to legislation such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, No. 4 of 2000 and the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 (EEA). These acts have done much to transform the South African workforce, previously dominated by white males, into one that can be considered more representative of the South African population, both on a race and gender level. However, one area in which the South African workforce can still be considered not representative of the population is in terms of people with disabilities.

According to Thomas & Hlahla (2002:4) the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is in excess of 88 percent. They go on to state that employers who recognise the importance of hiring employees with disabilities – who become the employer of choice for people with disabilities – also create the potential to become the employer of choice for all employees, a feat that is highly sought after by organisations in South Africa.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to the 2001 National Census it is estimated that there are 2,25 million South Africans with disabilities. This figure represents 5,03 percent of the total South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2003:38). Many of these citizens are unemployed or significantly underemployed when compared with able-bodied persons (Commission for Employment Equity, 2002:21).

The official unemployment rate of 30,5 percent for all people in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2002:8) may be considered high when compared to countries such as the United States and Britain, which have unemployment rates of 5,48 percent (United States, 2003:1) and 5,1 percent (National Statistics, 2003:1) respectively.

At present, neither the South African government nor Statistics South Africa has an official unemployment rate for people with disabilities in South Africa. The Commission for Employment Equity reports, however, that people with disabilities represented less than one percent of employees for the 8250 organisations that submitted their employment equity reports in accordance with the EEA (Commission for Employment Equity, 2002:29). A study conducted by Botha (2002:1) showed that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities on the open labour market in South Africa was estimated at 98 percent.

The above figures illustrate the fact that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities in South Africa is significantly higher than that of the able-bodied population. Although to a lesser extent, this discrepancy between people with disabilities and the able-bodied population also exists in the United States and Britain (Stoddard, Jans, Ripple & Kraus, 1998:21; Bromage, 1999:69).

According to Bruyere (2000:26), this disparity is a function of the inequity that has permeated social policy, access to education, training and employment, as well as society's attitudes towards people with disabilities. To address this disparity the South African government has published legislation such as the White Paper on the Integrated National Disability Strategy (Republic of South Africa, 1997b) and the Code of Good Practice on Aspects of Disability in the Workplace, hereafter referred to as the Code of Good Practice (Republic of South Africa, 2002). These documents have as part of their aim to decrease the number of physical and social barriers to employment experienced by people with disabilities, thereby enhancing employment opportunities. While the government has a clear role to play in addressing the high unemployment

rate of people with disabilities, so too do South African organisations. According to Bruyere (2000:27), it is the responsibility of managers, more particularly human resource managers, to identify barriers to the employment of people with disabilities and provide structures to accommodate or overcome them.

Bunch & Crawford (1998:31) highlight the relationship between the unemployment of people with disabilities and the barriers they experience when seeking employment. According to Hamilton, Theron & du Toit Olivier (1989:7), the employability of an individual with a disability is based on three components namely, motivation, ability and accommodation. While responsibility for the first two components (motivation and ability) very often rests with the individual with a disability, the organisation and the individual share responsibility for the third component, accommodation. It is during the accommodation process that organisations experience barriers in terms of the employment of people with disabilities. An example of such a barrier could be the high costs of workplace adjustments (physical barrier) or the stigmatisation of people with disabilities by able-bodied staff (social barrier).

In order for meaningful employment to take place, employers must remove, as far as possible, all barriers to employment. In layman's terms they must make the organisation "disability friendly". In this regard employers must identify barriers unique to their situation, as well as have a sound knowledge of the various barriers that might be generic to specific disabilities.

The legislation mentioned above is primarily focused on eliminating barriers which people with disabilities experience in terms of obtaining employment. These documents also make suggestions in terms of how organisations can accommodate these barriers.

From an organisational perspective little mention is made, however, of the barriers that employers experience when employing and accommodating people with disabilities and how these barriers can be overcome.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

A large amount of research has been conducted on the barriers to employment experienced by people with disabilities. Included in this research are the studies of Butler, Crudden, Sansing & LeJeune (2002:664); Crudden, Williams, Moore & McBroom (2002); Rothenberg & Barrett (1998:16) and the SHRM/Cornell study (1999), to mention but a few. In terms of the South African context, Thomas & Hlahla (2002:7) also highlight a number of barriers to employment experienced by people with disabilities. A survey of the available literature reveals, however, that very little research has been conducted on the barriers that organisations face when employing people with disabilities. Many of these barriers therefore remain unidentified, with the implication that the structures for overcoming them have yet to be created.

This study focuses on barriers which employers on the open labour market face in terms of employing people with disabilities and on how these barriers can be accommodated or overcome. The researcher is guided by the following questions:

- Are people with disabilities in South Africa underrepresented on the open labour market?

- What are the barriers experienced by organisations on the open labour market when employing people with disabilities?

- Are there generic barriers which organisations on the open labour market face when employing people with disabilities?

1.4 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

Against the background of the preceding statement of the problem, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the barriers which

organisations experience when employing people with disabilities on the open labour market in South Africa. The objectives for this study are therefore:

- To determine whether people with disabilities, in terms of the EEA, are underrepresented in sample organisations when compared to other designated groups

- To identify the barriers faced by sample organisations when employing people with disabilities.

- By way of a theoretical analysis, to explore the available literature on barriers to the employment of people with disabilities, both at an organisational and individual level

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Justification for this research is found in the high rate of unemployment of people with disabilities, as identified by the Commission for Employment Equity (2002:21). These high unemployment rates are a function of the barriers which people with disabilities and organisations face. As mentioned above, from an organisational perspective, it is the role of the manager, more specifically the human resource manager, to accommodate and overcome these barriers. The logical assumption is, however, made that barriers cannot be overcome until they have been identified.

This study provides insight into the barriers which organisations face when employing people with disabilities. The assumption is also made that insight into these barriers will translate into an enhanced ability to accommodate and overcome them.

The results of this study, as well as the literature survey, will assist managers in identifying, proactively, certain barriers to the employment of people with

disabilities, thereby better equipping them to deal with the said barriers should they be encountered.

Finally, it is also envisaged that this research should stimulate academics and managers to think about issues pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

1.6.1 Literature study

Against the background of the problem stated in Section 1.3, a theoretical analysis of the available theory pertaining to the research is conducted in order to come to a proper understanding of the phenomena under study. The literature study focuses on the person with a disability as an employee as well as the barriers which organisations face when employing people with disabilities.

1.6.2 Empirical study

Against the background of the problem stated in Section 1.3, a qualitative approach is used to identify the barriers experienced by organisations when employing people with disabilities. A questionnaire was developed that was administered during structured interviews with human resource managers. The data obtained during these interviews are analysed using the qualitative technique of content analysis.

1.6.3 Scope of the study

The study is limited to organisations within the business and financial services sector of the South African economy, as it is virtually impossible to include all of the sectors in a study of this nature. Qualitative interviews were held with human resource managers from ten organisations in this sector.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

A brief outline of the study is provided below:

Chapter 1:   Introduction and orientation to the research

Chapter 2:   The South African population and employment situation

Chapter 3:   The individual with a disability as an employee

Chapter 4:   Barriers to the employment of people with disabilities

Chapter 5:   Research methodology

Chapter 6:   Discussion of the data

Chapter 7:   Summary and recommendations

1.8 DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTION OF TERMINOLOGY

Society tends to view people with disabilities as a homogenous group of people, all with the same needs and difficulties. Even the South African government in its employment legislation views "the disabled" as a homogenous group, with persons in the group being one and the same. In the same breath, however, people are quick to point out that this so-called group is very distinct from the rest of the population.

In so doing one overlooks the wide range of types and degrees of disability and the uniqueness of the individual. As a result people with disabilities are stereotyped and judged according to the abilities of a homogenous group of people, which in reality does not actually exist (Republic of South Africa, 1997b:8).

Section 1.2 of this chapter alluded to the fact that in South Africa there is a lack of reliable information in terms of the employment rates for people with disabilities. There is also a lack of reliable information in terms of the nature and prevalence of disability in South Africa. According to the government's Integrated National Disability Strategy, the primary reason for this is that use is made of limited and differing definitions of what a disability is, and who people with disabilities are (Republic of South Africa, 1997b: 7). It is therefore essential that at the onset of this study a clear definition be provided for what is meant by a person with a disability.

A person with a disability is often referred to as a "disabled person" or viewed as someone who is in a wheelchair or suffers from severe mental retardation. This results in employers who, when faced with the question of recruiting "a disabled person", picture the worst-case scenario first. More often than not, however, the disability is of a less severe nature and might only slightly limit the individual's ability.

It is for the above reason that it is important to clearly define whom is to be included in the definition of a person with a disability. It is also important to distinguish different disabilities from one another and not to classify all disabilities as having the same degree of limitation on the individual as, according to Bunch & Crawford (1998:33), the nature and severity of a disability has a direct bearing on the labour force participation of that individual.

1.8.1   Medical model versus the social model of disability

When determining a definition for a person with a disability, it is important to note that a disability has both medical and social implications for the person living with the disability. According to Thomas & Hlahla (2002:7) society still largely perceives disability as a medical problem. Russel (2003:13) notes that, in terms of the medical model, society associates disability with physiological, anatomical or mental defects and holds these conditions responsible for the disabled person's lack of full participation in the economy.

The social model of disability suggests, however, that the collective disadvantage of people with disabilities is due to a complex form of institutional discrimination (Republic of South Africa, 1997b: 19). The social model also purports that modern day discrimination is a socially created phenomenon, which in reality has little to do with the actual physical or mental impairments of disabled people. Thus the cure lies in the restructuring of society and not in the curing of disabilities (Republic of South Africa, 1997b: 19).

According to Thomas & Hlahla (2002:7), there has been a shift in paradigm from the medical model to the social model of disability. This paradigm shift affects how people with disabilities are viewed by society and more importantly how they are defined. It is therefore important to take note of this shift before discussing the definition for a person with a disability.

1.8.2 Sources of a definition for a person with a disability

An array of sources exists from which one could extract a definition for a person with a disability. In South Africa these sources include the Employment Equity Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998), the Integrated National Disability Strategy (Republic of South Africa, 1997b), the Code of Good Practice (Republic of South Africa, 2002) and the many non-governmental organisations dealing with people with disabilities such as the Association for People with Disabilities (APD) and the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB). International definitions one can draw from include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (United States of America, 1990) and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 (United Kingdom, 1995).

The Employment Equity Act (EEA): The EEA defines people with disabilities as those who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment that substantially limits their prospect of entry into, or advancement in, employment (Republic of South Africa, 1998:10).

The Code of Good Practice: The Code of Good Practice (Republic of South Africa, 2002:1) borrows its definition from the EEA and merely expands on the terminology used by providing an explanation for what is meant by the following:

- Long-term or recurring
- Impairment
- Substantially limiting

These terms are discussed in more detail later in this section.

The Integrated National Disability Strategy: The Integrated National Disability Strategy does not provide a definition for what is meant by a person with a disability. What the document does do, however, is to highlight the paradigm shift that is taking place from the medical model towards the social model, as identified by Thomas & Hlahla (2002:7).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): In the United States of America under the ADA a person with a disability is defined in a three-pronged manner. A person with a disability is defined as a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits him or her from performing a major life activity; a person with a record of such an impairment; or a person who is regarded as having such an impairment (Miller, 2000:5; United States of America, 1990:5; Frierson, 1992:6). According to Friedland (1999:272), employment is viewed as a major life activity and is therefore included under the definition.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA): In the United Kingdom, according to the DDA, a person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (United Kingdom, 1995:1).

From the above definitions it is possible to identify certain related concepts across them; which are discussed below.

- An impairment

  The Code of Good Practice classifies impairments as either physical or mental. The term "physical impairment" implies a partial or total loss of a bodily function or part of the body and includes sensory impairments such as being deaf or being hearing or visually impaired. The term "mental impairment" implies a clinically recognised condition or illness that affects a person's thought processes, judgement or emotions (Republic of South Africa, 2002:9). The presence of the term "physical or mental impairment" is found in the definitions of the EEA, ADA and DDA and the Code of Good Practice.

- Substantially limiting

  In terms of the Code of Good Practice an impairment is substantially limiting if, in the absence of reasonable accommodation provided by an employer, a person would be either totally unable to do a job or would be significantly limited in doing it (Republic of South Africa, 2002:9). In terms of the ADA, the inability to perform a single, particular job is not a significant enough limitation in the activity of working to constitute a disability and that the effect of mitigating measures, such as corrective lenses or medication, must be considered when determining whether an individual is substantially limited in a major life function (McNamee, 2001:15). The presence of the term "substantially limiting" is found in the definitions of the EEA, ADA, DDA and the Code of Good Practice.

- Long-term or recurring

  The concept of time is present in all of the above definitions for a person with a disability, besides the one provided by the ADA. According to the Code of Good Practice "long-term" means that an impairment has lasted or is likely to persist for at least twelve months. A "recurring" impairment is one that is likely to happen again and therefore become substantially

limiting. The DDA and EEA do not expand on what is meant by "long-term".

1.8.3   The chosen definition for a person with a disability

For purposes of this study the chosen definition for a person with a disability is the one provided by the EEA, which reads as follows:

A person who has a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits his/her entry into, or advancement in, employment (Republic of South Africa, 1998:10).

The rationale for choosing this definition is twofold. Firstly, the definition provided by the EEA is provided for the South African context, the same context in which this study is conducted. Secondly, from the discussion above it can be seen that the definition provided by the EEA is similar in content to those provided by the ADA and DDA.

While the above definition will form the basis for discussions to follow in this study, reference will also be made to the definitions provided by the ADA and DDA.

1.8.4   A disability versus a handicap

Before concluding this section on defining people with disabilities it is important to highlight the distinction between a disability and a handicap. The term "handicap" implies a loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others (United Nations, 2001:12). A handicap is a function of the interaction between the person with a disability and his environment and should not be confused with a disability, as the term "handicap" refers more to a loss of opportunity than it does to a loss of ability. The purpose of identifying the term "handicap" is to emphasise shortcomings in the environment and in the various organised activities in society, for

example, information, communication and education, which prevent persons with disabilities from participating on equal terms.

In the employment context a disability only becomes a handicap if an employer is unable to accommodate the needs of the individual with the disability by making adjustments either to the physical or social work environment, thus preventing the individual from entering employment or completing the tasks assigned to him.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Society's way of thinking about and defining disability has a major influence on the social and economic participation of people with disabilities, including their employment.

In this chapter, an introduction and orientation to the research was provided in which the background to the research, the problem statement, the aims of the research and the significance of the research were explained. It also gave a brief introduction to the research design and method, and provided an outline of the study.

Finally, definitions of the terms "people with disabilities" and "handicap" were given.

Chapter 2 provides a brief discussion of the South African population and employment situation with the purpose of illustrating that people with disabilities are significantly unemployed or underemployed when compared with the general able-bodied South African population.

CHAPTER 2

THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter briefly introduced the research problem and stated that, according to the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) (2002:21), people with disabilities are significantly unemployed or underemployed when compared with able-bodied persons. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate this disparity by reviewing the employment situation of people with disabilities in South Africa. The main literature focused on in this chapter is the South African National Census of 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2003b) and the National Labour Force Survey (LFS) of 2003 (Statistics South Africa, 2003a).

In this chapter an indication is given of the number of people with disabilities living in South Africa, the employment and more importantly unemployment figures for this group of people, and how these figures compare with the able-bodied section of the population. The employment situation of people with disabilities in the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK) and Africa is also examined briefly with the purpose of illustrating that the phenomenon of high unemployment rates for people with disabilities is not unique to South Africa, but experienced in many other countries as well, as suggested by Stoddard *et al,* (1998:21) and Bromage (1999:69).

2.2   A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION

The South African population can be considered diverse, with eleven official languages and four distinct ethnic groups, these being Black African, White, Coloured and Indian (Statistics South Africa, 2003b:10). Added to this are a number of migrant workers that enter the South African labour force every year, both legally and illegally, from countries such as Mozambique,

Swaziland, Lesotho and Nigeria, which increases the diversity and size of the population in South Africa even further.

The 2001 national census indicates that at the time of the census approximately 44,8 million people were living in South Africa. Table 2.1 provides a clearer picture as to the representation of the various ethnic groups within the South African population, and also provides a relatively accurate estimate of the total number of people living in South Africa in terms of the 2001 national census (Statistics South Africa, 2003b:10).

Table 2.1: Breakdown of the South African population according to race

Ethnic grouping	No. of people	Percentage
Black African	35 416 166	79,02%
White	4 293 640	9,58%
Coloured	3 994 505	8,91%
Indian/Asian	1 115 467	2,49%
Total	**44 819 778**	**100%**

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003b:10)

A comparison of the 2001 census figures with those of the 1996 census reveals a substantial growth in the South African population from 40 583 573 people (Statistics South Africa, 1996:1) to 44 819 778 people. This represents growth of nearly 9,5 percent over a six-year period, with the largest growing population group being Black African people (Statistics South Africa, 2003:6). This rapid population growth, coupled with an average annual growth rate of the gross domestic product (GDP) that falls below the population growth rate, has resulted in increasing poverty in the country, with approximately 35 percent of all South African households living in poverty (Republic of South Africa, 1997:2).

The income distribution among South African households is also extremely uneven, where the poorest 40 percent of households in South Africa earn less

than six percent of total national income, whilst the richest 10 percent earn more than half of the national income (Republic of South Africa, 1997a:2).

2.3 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Before an indication of the number of people with disabilities can be provided, a thorough understanding of what constitutes a disability and how people with disabilities are classified is required. A definition for a person with a disability has already been provided in Chapter 1. In terms of classifying types of disability, Statistics South Africa (2003b:38) classifies people with disabilities into seven mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive categories. The seven categories used for the 2001 national census were the following:

- Visual impairments;
- Hearing impairments;
- Communication impairments;
- Physical impairments;
- Intellectual impairments;
- Emotional impairments; and
- Multiple impairments.

The classification used for the 2001 national census differs from the classification used in the 1996 census (Statistics South Africa, 1996:43), in the sense that two categories, namely communication and emotional impairments, were included in the latter census. Based on the definition provided in Chapter 1, as well as the classification of types of disability provided above it is possible to determine what percentage of the South African population is represented by people with disabilities.

The 2001 national census shows that there are approximately 2,25 million people with disabilities living in South Africa. This figure represents 5,03 percent of the total South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2003b:38). This information is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: People with disabilities as a percentage of the South African population

Classification	No. of people	Percentage
Able-bodied people	42 563 797	94,97%
People with disabilities	2 255 981	5,03%
Total	**44 819 778**	**100%**

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003b:38)

The 1996 national census results showed that at the time of the census there were approximately 2,67 million people with disabilities living in South Africa, which represented 6,6 percent of the South African population (Statistics South Africa, 1996:43). According to Statistics South Africa (2003b:38) the disparity in the two sets of results was due to a change in the way people with disabilities were defined, however, no further information pertaining to the change in definition is provided by Statistics South Africa. The definition used for the 2001 national census is congruent with the one highlighted in Chapter 1.

In terms of the types of disability, Statistics South Africa (2003b:39) provides seven mutually exclusive categories of disability, however, within each category a number of different disabilities exist. For example, a physical disability could mean total paraplegia or it could be something as minor as chronic arthritis. The classification provided by Statistics South Africa is, however, sufficient in terms of providing a broad perspective of the various categories of impairments. Table 2.3 presents a breakdown of people with disabilities in South Africa in terms of the seven categories of disability.

Table 2.3 indicates that the most frequently occurring disability is that of a visual impairment, with the second most frequent disability being physical impairments. What is promising is that serious disabilities such as intellectual impairments and multiple disabilities are in the minority.

Table 2.3: Types of disability in the South African population

Type of disability	No. of people	Percentage
Visual impairment	577 096	25,58%
Physical impairment	557 512	24,71%
Hearing impairment	313 585	13,90%
Emotional impairment	268 713	11,91%
Multiple impairment	257 170	11,40%
Intellectual impairment	206 451	9,15%
Communication impairment	75 454	3,35%
Total	**2 255 981**	**100%**

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003b:38)

2.4   THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Makgetla (2001:25), South Africa ranks among the countries with the worst unemployment and poverty and the greatest income inequalities in the world. Employment in the formal sector has shrunk by one million jobs since 1990, with one in ten workers losing their jobs between 1997 and 2000 alone. The biggest job losses were recorded in the mining, construction and transport industries. In the public sector, job losses between 1995 and 2000 accounted for 170 000 jobs, largely due to pressure to downsize in order to permit cuts in state subsidies (Makgetla, 2001:26).

For the purposes of understanding the South African labour market as well as the employment situation in South Africa it is necessary to define the concept of an economically active individual and the concept of unemployment.

An economically active individual is one who is between the age of sixteen and sixty five and who is not a full-time student, full-time homemaker or disabled to the extent that he/she is not able to work (Statistics South Africa, 2003b:8). This definition includes people who are employed or unemployed in terms of the official definition of unemployment.

An unemployed individual is defined by Statistics South Africa (2003b:17) as someone who is:

- Currently unemployed;
- Does want to work;
- Has the ability to work and is available to begin work; and
- Has tried to secure employment or begin self-employment initiatives.

2.4.1   The employment situation of able-bodied people

According to the National Labour Force Survey (2003a:8), 16,4 million people between the age of sixteen and sixty-five were classified as being economically active in South Africa, while 12,3 million people were classified as being not economically active.

Unemployment figures for the South African population are not good, with the number of unemployed people estimated at just over five million people or 30,5 percent of the economically active population (Statistics South Africa, 2003a:8). This information is presented in Table 2.4.

The official unemployment rate in South Africa of 30,5 percent may be considered high when compared to countries such as the US and Britain, which have unemployment rates of 5,48 percent (United States, 2003) and 5,1 percent (National Statistics, 2003) respectively.

Table 2.4: Employment and unemployment figures in South Africa

	No. of people
Employed individuals	11 298 000
Unemployed individuals	5 026 000
Economically active individuals	16 442 000
Not economically active individuals	12 372 000

Table 2.4   (Continued)

Number of people aged 16–65 years	28 964 000
Official unemployment rate	30,5%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003:8)

A further cause for concern is that unemployment in South Africa in increasing and not decreasing. The 2001 National Labour Force Survey showed an unemployment rate of 29,5 percent. This means an increase of one percent in the unemployment rate, or in real terms, that approximately 164 420 people lost their jobs in the past two years.

2.4.2 The employment situation of people with disabilities

Currently neither the South African government nor Statistics South Africa has an official unemployment rate for people with disabilities in South Africa, as the 2001 national census and 2003 National Labour Force Survey do not report specifically on the employment levels of people with disabilities. The South African Department of Labour (2001:4) does, however, provide a measure of the employment of people with disabilities in terms of the labour force supply figures for 2001. This information is contained in Table 2.5.

It is evident from Table 2.5 that the more severe the disability, for example mental impairments, the higher the unemployment rate. This is to be expected, as capabilities to perform duties often decrease with the increasing severity of a disability (Bunch & Crawford, 1998:32). According to Table 2.5, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is set at 47 percent. This is considerably higher than the 30,5 percent of the rest of the able-bodied population.

Some might argue that the employment rate among people with disabilities is actually quite reasonable, however, it must be emphasised that the above statistics include employment in sheltered workshops. This form of

employment, although often enriching, seldom produces significant economic benefits for the employee or for the economy as a whole, and should therefore not be considered in the same light as employment on the open labour market.

Table 2.5: Employment and unemployment figures for people with disabilities

	Employed	**%**	**Unemployed**	**%**	**Total**
Visual impairment	247 264	57%	189 948	43%	437212
Hearing impairment	61 571	53%	55 447	47%	117 018
Physical impairment	64 781	42%	89 781	58%	154 562
Mental impairment	9 765	30%	23 246	70%	33 011
Multiple impairment	19 980	50%	20 177	50%	40 157
Non-specified	69 093	65%	37 330	35%	106 423
Total	**472 454**	**53%**	**415 929**	**47%**	**888 383**

Source: Department of Labour (2001:4)

A more accurate reflection of the employment situation of people with disabilities on the open labour market is provided by the Commission for Employment Equity (2002:29). The Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) is a statutory body in South Africa established in terms of Section 28 of the Employment Equity Act (EEA), to advise the Minister of Labour on the implementation of the EEA. Part of the mandate of the CEE is to report on the level of implementation of the EEA within firms that fall under the Act. The CEE reported that people with disabilities represented less than one percent of employees for the 8250 organisations that submitted their employment equity reports in accordance with the EEA (CEE, 2002:29). This implies an unemployment rate, although not official, of 99 percent on the open labour market.

Thomas & Hlahla (2002:4) state that 88 percent of people with disabilities in South Africa are unemployed and seeking employment. While the above

figures seem inconsistent in terms of the different sources of data, one fact that remains congruent across all findings is that people with disabilities are significantly underemployed when compared with the able-bodied section of the population.

2.5 THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN AFRICA, THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

The United Nations (2001:1) states that more than half a billion people worldwide are disabled as a result of a mental, physical or sensory impairment and regardless of which part of the world they come from their lives are often limited by physical or social barriers. According to the United Nations (2001:1), approximately 80 percent of the world's disabled population lives in developing countries.

The rest of Africa: Many Africans, whether from the north, south or central regions, have been affected in some way by war, be it tribal or national. According to a report by the Omega Initiative (2002:2), this has left over 30 million landmines scattered over 18 sub-Saharan countries. These wars and the harsh rural conditions in which the people live have resulted in a high incidence of disability on the African continent.

It is estimated that of the 800 million people living in Africa, 50 million are people with disabilities (The Africa Society, 1998:16). Of these it is estimated that half are women and that as many as 10 million are mobility impaired. The reasons for this high rate of disability are varied, but unique to Africa. They include war, civil strife, hunger, epidemics, poor environmental health and the limited provision of social services. This coupled with the fact that many Africans live in rural communities increases the severity of the situation (Omega Initiative, 2002:1).

While an official unemployment rate does not exist for people with disabilities in Africa it cannot be good with an estimated 80 percent of Africa's youth being unemployed and a mere two percent of people with disabilities having

access to adequate rehabilitation services. It is reported that as many as 70 percent of all Africans with a disability are excluded from any form of employment and live under conditions of poverty (The Africa Society, 1998:16).

It is promising to see that, while conditions in South Africa are not ideal for the employment of people with disabilities, they are far better than those of people living in the rest of Africa.

The United States (US): In the US approximately 54 million people (22 percent of the total population) have some form of a disability in terms of the definition provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Of these disabilities 12,4 million are reported to be severe disabilities and 41,6 million as non-severe disabilities (Blank, 2000:7). This is a much higher proportion of the population than in South Africa. The most obvious reason for the difference is in the actual definitions used to define who is disabled and who is not. The definition provided by the ADA is more expansive in defining people with disabilities (See Appendix A) than that provided by the CEE in South Africa.

What is most interesting though are the unemployment figures for people with disabilities. Where, in the South African context, the employment rate for people with disabilities is significantly low, in the US the employment figures for people with non-severe disabilities are not as different for those without disabilities. For people aged 21 to 64 with no disability the likelihood of having a job or business is 82,1 percent. For people with a non-severe disability, the rate is 76,9 percent; however, the rate drops to 26,1 percent for those with a severe disability (Stoddard *et al*, 1998:4).

United Kingdom (UK): According to Bromage (1999:69), nearly 8,3 million people (10 percent of the population) are affected by disability. This figure is less than in the US, but considerably more than in South Africa. Again, the discrepancy is most likely due to the fact that different definitions are used to

classify who is considered a person with a disability and who is not (see Appendix A).

Seventy percent of the 8,3 million people with disabilities in the UK fall within the economically active population. According to Gooding (1996:4), however, despite this the employment opportunities are very limited for people with disabilities in the UK. Although exact figures of unemployment for this group are not provided, the literature suggests that opportunities for employment are greatly reduced for the disabled. Gooding (1996:4) suggests that people with disabilities are two and a half times more likely to be unemployed as able-bodied people. Bromage (1999:69) suggests that this is largely due to the attitude held by organisations and especially small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) that disability equals expense. Bromage (1999:69) suggests that employers in the UK are also reluctant to take on candidates with disabilities for fear of falling into the legal minefields that are presumed to exist.

Although the employment situations in the US and the UK are not ideal, it would appear from the above unemployment figures that these economies still provide more opportunity for a person with a disability than does the South African economy.

2.6   CONCLUSION

Johnson (1992:2) states that people with disabilities, internationally, are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed than the general population. This chapter has illustrated that in South Africa and internationally people with disabilities are significantly underemployed when compared to the able-bodied population.

The chapters that follow examine the person with a disability as an employee and also the reasons for their high rate of unemployment in terms of the barriers which people with disabilities and organisations face during the employment of this group of the population.

CHAPTER 3

THE INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY AS AN EMPLOYEE

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter illustrated that in South Africa and internationally people with disabilities are significantly underemployed when compared with the general able-bodied population. The reasons for this disparity must therefore be examined. Harper & Momm (1989:3) suggest that the attitudes of people with disabilities are more important than those of the general public or employers in terms of determining whether or not they obtain and maintain meaningful employment.

According to Hamilton *et al* (1989:5), the successful employment of people with disabilities is a function of two factors, namely work potential (ability) and accommodation. Klimoski & Donahue (1997:127) state that work performance is largely a function of job knowledge and skills (ability) and motivation. Based on these views it is implied that the individual with a disability has a major role to play in obtaining employment. This chapter therefore focuses on the person with a disability as an employee in terms of their motivation for employment, their abilities and the accommodation process.

The chapter begins by examining whether motivation exists for people with disabilities to seek open labour market employment or whether they are content with the benefits offered by social grants and those offered by family members and other societal support systems. This section of the chapter focuses on the reasons why people with disabilities choose to work and the motivational factors at play when seeking employment.

The discussion then shifts to the nature of disability as a determining factor of work potential. This section of the chapter focuses on the abilities of individuals in terms of different classifications of disabilities and also highlights

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certain disability-related barriers that people with disabilities face when seeking employment. Finally, the chapter focuses on the role of the employer in accommodating the person with a disability.

3.2   THE DECISION TO WORK

A definition of a person with a disability is provided in Chapter 1, with a classification of different categories of disabilities provided in Chapter 2. One aspect that has not yet been mentioned is that of the time of onset of disability and it is worth mentioning at this point. In this sense people with disabilities can be divided into two groups, that is, those who were born with a disability and those who became disabled later in life either due to illness or an accident. Klimoski & Donahue (1997:130) state that although the expectations of employment and the means to obtaining employment might differ for these two groups, the motivation for seeking employment generally is quite congruent across them. The discussion in terms of the decision to work will therefore not make a distinction between these two groups.

As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the decision to work is the choice of the individual with a disability. This choice is twofold in the sense that the individual can either choose to work or choose to rely on the mechanisms instituted by government such as social welfare grants. To this end society provides for those people who are either too severely disabled to work or choose not to work. Social welfare schemes are therefore essential for those individuals who are not able work.

Turton (2001:1) warns that welfare benefit systems are one of the main elements keeping people with disabilities from entering open labour market employment. This view is supported by Gooding (1996:12). Fries (2000:32) also states that social welfare systems in the US provide harsh disincentives for people with disabilities to enter the workforce. Krueger (1990:85) states that an attitude of "because I am disabled, society owes me help, as I am unable to work", is not only expensive to society, but keeps people with

disabilities behind closed doors with caretakers and technology taking care of their needs.

In South Africa, according to Section 2 of the government White Paper on Social Welfare (Republic of South Africa, 1997a:6), 1,6 percent of the South African population receives a disability grant. This is much less than the 5,03 percent of the population that suffers from disabilities, but still translates into approximately 717 000 people. In 1995 disability grants in Gauteng province alone cost the South African government R223 million. Disability grants for South Africa in 1997 cost government an estimated R3 billion (Fraser-Moloketi, 1997:1). During the same period disability grants to 4,9 million people in the US cost the US government $16 billion (Weaver, 1995:61). The expense to governments, as well as private insurance and medical aid companies, is enormous and can often create substantial burdens if not well managed. Wheman & West (1997:23) suggest that one way of reducing this burden is for governments and insurance companies to emphasise open labour market employment initiatives and encourage employment rather than dependence on social welfare.

For governments, the creation of employment opportunities for people with disabilities is therefore no longer merely of social importance but of economic importance as well, as the financial burdens of supporting these people escalate.

As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the decision to work is the choice of the individual with a disability. It is therefore necessary to examine the factors that motivate people with disabilities to seek employment and those factors that deter them from seeking employment. This can best be achieved by comparing the benefits of remaining on government welfare funds with those associated with open labour market employment.

A three-year study conducted by the Disability Policy Panel of the United States Congress examined whether social welfare benefits provide an incentive for people with disabilities to emphasise their impairments in order to

avoid work. The results of the study showed that those people with disabilities who had the ability to work preferred to work rather than be dependent on government funds (Anonymous, 1996:5). This desire is even greater in cases where people became disabled later in life after having experienced employment on the open labour market. The study also showed that people who remained on social benefits were those who suffered from severe impairments and life-threatening illnesses and were therefore precluded from employment due to the nature of their disability.

A study conducted in the US among disability insurance beneficiaries and reported in the *Journal of Accountancy* showed the three main motivating factors for people with disabilities seeking employment to be the following (Anonymous, 1998:25):

- Financial need

  Seventy-eight percent of the respondents included in the study stated that their main motivation for seeking employment rather than remaining on social benefits was a need for greater financial independence. In developing countries such as South Africa the benefits provided by social welfare schemes, in financial terms, are not always sufficient to maintain a healthy lifestyle, let alone a comfortable lifestyle. In 2002 the government grant allocated to people with disabilities in South Africa was R620 per month (Department of Social Development, 2002:1). For this reason many disability grant beneficiaries turn to open labour market employment as a source of alternative income, even in cases where this results in a forfeiture of benefits.

- Wanting to work

  As is the case with any able-bodied person, people with disabilities are not content with making a living from begging or charity handouts (Harper & Momm, 1989:4). Stopford (1987:7) dispels the myth that people with disabilities do not have the same emotional and self-actualising needs as those of able-bodied individuals. Therefore, just as able-bodied individuals

are driven to achieve success through a normal career, so too are people with disabilities.

- To improve the current level of lifestyle
  The life of a person with a disability can become a very lonely one. Also, if society does not adequately provide for the needs of those individuals who are unable to provide for themselves, their lifestyle can become unstimulating and unhealthy. According to Thompson (1986:41), the sheltered lifestyle that people with disabilities are often subjected too can result in boredom, a loss of status, lack of money and the feeling of being treated like a child. Employment on the open labour market offers the person with a disability the opportunity to overcome all of these.

Other reasons for seeking employment reported in the study include the fact that the individual's health improved; social welfare benefits had ceased; rehabilitation services made work possible; and the need to finance a specific purchase (Anonymous, 1998:25).

As was previously mentioned, the best possible way to identify whether there truly is a need to create employment opportunities for the person with a disability on the open labour market is to compare the benefits of open labour market employment with those provided by government social funds. Table 3.1 provides a summarised comparison of the benefits provided by open labour market employment versus reliance on government social welfare benefits.

Implied in Table 3.1 is the notion that open labour market employment offers greater benefits to the individual with a disability than does reliance on social welfare grants.

Table 3.1: Open labour market employment versus dependency on social welfare

	OPEN LABOUR MARKET EMPLOYMENT	GOVERNMENT SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS
INCOME	Greater financial independence. More often than not, salaries paid on the open labour market are far greater than any benefits provided by government funds. Although private disability funds and funds initiated by employers (employee benefit schemes) often provide the beneficiary with substantial payments, these still do not compare with the benefits of remaining employed.	A degree of financial security is offered to the individual in the sense that they know they will receive a predetermined sum of money on a monthly basis.
SOCIAL EXPOSURE	Interaction with other members of society, thereby facilitating the learning process. This does, however, expose the individual to stigmatisation by society.	People with disabilities who remain on government funds or those in a sheltered employment environment are not subjected to stigmatisation by modern society. They are also placed among individuals who reserve their judgement, unlike modern society.

Table 3.1: (Continued)

	OPEN LABOUR MARKET EMPLOYMENT	GOVERNMENT SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS
DEPENDENCY	Employment on the open labour market allows the person with a disability to lead, to a certain degree, an independent lifestyle. Contrary to this, Noel (1990:28) states that the income gained from social welfare very often only allows for subsistence living. This results in a lifestyle that is based on dependency.	Much of the day-to-day activities of people who remain on government funds are supported either by family members or by trained social workers or nurses. This perspective, however, goes against the modern idea of integration and independence.
QUALITY OF LIFE	For people with disabilities, employment on the open labour market enhances quality of life and makes possible the self-respect that comes with independence.	The competitive nature of the modern business environment is often the result of stress-related psychiatric disabilities. By not entering the open labour market, people with disabilities avoid the competition and stressful lifestyle attached to this kind of employment.
GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES	Open labour market employment provides people with disabilities with an opportunity to realise their true potential and test their abilities. In the competitive market the nature of work can change quite rapidly, forcing growth of skills.	In a sheltered employment environment tasks are generally routine and of a simple nature, this limits opportunities for growth.

Source: Compiled by researcher

It is evident from the above table that the main reason for seeking open labour market employment is the financial incentives attached to this form of employment. Fries (2000:33), who became disabled later in life, sums it up best with the following quote: "If we were able to work as much as we could when we could, to save and invest the money we earn without risking our disability status, health insurance, and other benefits, not only would we be better off, but so would the rest of society."

There are, however, factors other than financial need that influence the individual's decision to enter open labour market employment. In addition to the financial benefits of working, Thompson (1986:11) cites the following criteria that people with disabilities consider when making the choice as to whether or not to work:

- General health at the time of the decision
  Although many disabilities are permanent in nature, their effect on a person's health can vary from time to time. For example, people living with spinal cord injuries regularly suffer from urinary tract infections and other infections owing to their inability to control certain bodily functions. During these periods their ability and job performance might be affected negatively.

- Bodily strength and energy levels at the time of the decision
  As is the case with general health, bodily strength, which most people take for granted, varies from disability to disability and from time to time. Chronic fatigue and muscular weakness are common to disabilities such as multiple sclerosis (MS) and Friedreich's ataxia.

- Degree of mobility
  Disabilities of a physical nature often create mobility problems for the person living with the disability. People living with spinal injuries or cerebral palsy often spend much of their lives confined to a wheelchair. Without the support of society and accommodations made by businesses,

organisations and government, this loss of mobility can become very handicapping.

- Urgency of the need to earn

  The final criterion considered to be of importance is that of the urgency to earn. As was mentioned earlier financial independence is the main motivation for employment. However, as the urgency of financial need increases so too does the motivation for employment.

Although it has not been conclusively proven in the above discussion that all people with disabilities that can work want to work, it has been shown in the majority of studies conducted that the benefits of employment on the open labour market far outweigh the benefits provided by government social funds and even private disability and employee benefit programmes, and therefore there is a degree of motivation for employment. The reasons why some individuals work and others with the same medical condition do not have yet to be adequately researched.

According to Berkowitz & Hill (1986:7), however, the crux of the matter is that disability is not simply a medically defined condition, but depends rather on an array of psychological, sociological and economic factors. Therefore, a person who finds greater economic returns from social grants than employment may not strive so hard to become employed. This behaviour is not viewed as fraud, but merely a case of adapting to the given incentives. In the South African situation, however, the incentives are very often not worth adapting to, and for this reason people with disabilities are compelled to seek employment on the open labour market.

3.3   ABILITY AND WORK POTENTIAL

As stated in the introduction to this chapter the successful employment of people with disabilities is a function of motivation and ability. The above discussion indicated that there exists significant motivation for people with disabilities to seek employment on the open labour market. The discussion

now shifts toward the ability of people with disabilities to participate in open labour market employment. Campaigners for the rights of people with disabilities, such as Kregel (1999:133), Williams (2000:22), Stone & Colella (1996:353) and Lee (1997:240), state that the capabilities of people with disabilities in the workplace often far surpass all expectations, with disabled employees performing as well as, if not better than, able-bodied employees.

This unfortunately is not always the case; some individuals outperform expectations while others simply do not perform at the desired or expected levels. The inability of certain individuals to complete the tasks expected of them is often the result of two factors:

- The nature of the disability and;
- The degree to which the person is handicapped by his or her environment.

The first factor, the nature of the disability, cannot be changed by the person with the disability, the employer or any organisation. A disability in terms of the definition provided in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.8 cannot be altered or changed, but merely accommodated. The second factor, however, the degree to which the person is handicapped by his environment, can be influenced by both the individual with the disability as well as the employer. The aspect of reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities is discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

3.3.1 The nature of disability

Disabilities range in terms of type, severity, age of onset and obviousness (Jones, 1997:4). It is often realistically possible to reduce the degree to which people are handicapped by a specific disability by making changes to the environment in which they operate. In some cases it is even possible to completely eliminate the handicap. One of the greatest examples of the elimination of a handicap is that of former South African cricketer, Jonty

Rhodes. Although he suffers from epilepsy, he is able to maintain a normal, active lifestyle. This is due to the fact that epilepsy is controllable with the aid of medication.

Unfortunately not all disabilities are controllable, with the handicapping nature of the disability not reducible. Certain disabilities are of such a nature that the impairments prohibit the person with the disability from taking part in normal day-to-day activities, such as employment. Therefore when assessing whether people with disabilities have the ability to perform the tasks presented to them the nature of the disability must be considered. According to Klimoski & Donahue (1997:115), the nature of a disability has a significant impact on the employability of the person who suffers from it. They cite past empirical research that suggests that because of a specific disability it is not unreasonable to assume that under certain circumstances a person may not be able to perform the job, even with accommodation. The nature of the disability also affects the type of accommodations made, how performance is appraised and what training interventions should be implemented (Klimoski & Donahue, 1997:116).

In Chapter 2 types of disability were classified into seven mutually exclusive categories as used in the 2001 national census; however, for the purposes of this discussion only four broad categories of disability will be discussed, these being:

- Visual impairments;
- Hearing impairments;
- Physical impairments; and
- Mental impairments.

To fully understand the nature of the various disabilities, a brief insight into each classification is provided below. An important aspect to emphasise is that when considering different disabilities, the degree of disability often varies across impairments as well as between individuals with the same impairment.

- **Visual disabilities**

According to Stopford (1987:145), a person suffering from a visual impairment experiences a great reduction in the ability to gather information about the external environment through the sense of sight. In order for a person to be certified as having a visual impairment, an ophthalmologist must provide confirmation of the impairment. The degree to which a person has lost his or her sight is very important when assessing potential for employment. There are two main categories of blindness, namely technically blind and partially sighted. The limitations on ability are far greater when a person is certified technically blind than when they are certified partially sighted. This places emphasis once again on the varying degrees of disability.

- **Hearing disabilities**

According to Stopford (1987:137), hearing impairments refer to the loss of the ability to gather information through the sense of hearing. Deafness, as with blindness, can be partial or total. Deafness is often referred to as a hidden disability as there are no obvious external indications that the individual is deaf or partially deaf. As is the case with visual impairments, deafness can be either congenital (acquired prior to birth) or acquired later in life. Deafness acquired later in life is often caused by meningitis, traumatic injury or toxic poisoning from certain drugs. Perceived ability is often greater when deafness is acquired later in life once the individual has learnt to appreciate sound (Stopford, 1987:142).

- **Physical disabilities**

It is in the category of physical disabilities that the multitude of impairments starts to become obvious. The general tendency is to view physical impairments as a spinal injury that has resulted in paraplegia and left the individual in the confines of a wheelchair. This is largely a symptom of stereotypical behaviour as alluded to by Klimoski & Donahue (1997:112). In

reality, however, this is not the case. Physical impairments can range from neuro-muscular disorders to spinal cord injuries. These disabilities can be hereditary or acquired, and range in severity from very severe to not severe. The main result of physical impairments is a loss, to a lesser or greater degree, of mobility. Some physical impairments are of such a severe nature that the individual's mobility and communication ability are restricted. The greatest example of such a disability is muscular dystrophy, where the individual, according to Stopford (1987:65), loses the functionality of his legs, arms, hands and face, and in extreme cases respiratory muscles, at which stage the disability can become fatal. People with such severe disabilities are often precluded from employment (Stopford, 1987:72). Examples of less severe physical disabilities are multiple sclerosis and arthritis, which with the aid of medication can often be controlled to such a degree that they become negligible.

- **Mental disabilities**

Non-severe mental disabilities include impairments such as learning disorders and dyslexia. Disabilities such as these are often overcome; the greatest example in South Africa being Tony Factor, the multi-millionaire businessman, who never even completed high school; who suffered from dyslexia yet owned various successful businesses. The various forms of manias and psychological disorders are also categorised as mental disabilities. Severe mental disabilities are unfortunately also common. Disabilities such as Down's syndrome and Alzheimer's disease decrease the individual's ability to work to a great degree, sometimes to the extent that they need 24-hour care and support (Stopford, 1987:13).

According to Rothenberg & Barret (1998:17), people with mental disabilities are the most stigmatised of all people with disabilities, and are viewed as a homogenous group. The abilities of these individuals are also perceived as being very low (Lee, 1996:247). Rothenberg & Barret (1998:18) state that one in three individuals with severe mental illness has been turned down for a job for which he or she was qualified because of a psychiatric label. These

stereotypes are based on assumptions made from interactions with people with extremely severe forms of mental retardation. The grounds for these stereotypes are, however, unfounded as the variety of mental disabilities is far greater than that of all the other classifications.

The above discussion of the broad types of disability provides a brief overview of what each classification entails. More importantly, however, is the relationship between the nature of a specific disability and the ability or perceived ability to perform the essential tasks of a job. Jones (1997:59) states that the nature of disability affects the actual range of an individual's abilities, implying that an individual with a spinal injury, for example, would not be suited to employment that requires an employee to move heavy items.

Lee (1996:27) states that employers have a "hierarchy" of disabilities that they prefer to employ. Based on this hierarchy employers prefer to hire individuals with disabilities they can see or understand, such as sensory impairments (hearing, sight) and physical or mobility impairments. According to Lee (1996:27), people with mental impairments are at the bottom of the hierarchy and are the least likely to be employed. This view is supported by the research of Wilkinson & Frieden (2000:74), who indicated that employers expressed considerably more doubt about the productivity of people with mental disabilities than they did about people with other disabilities. Jones (1997:59) states that research conducted in the US showed that people with mental disabilities earned significantly lower salaries than people with physical disabilities.

The ability of a person with a disability is not only affected by the nature of a specific disability, but also by the degree of severity of that disability. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Degree of disability as a determinant of potential

Source: Compiled by researcher

Figure 3.1 emphasises the relationship between the severity of a disability and the ability to work. This relationship helps clarify the necessity of a fit between inherent abilities and job description, as certain jobs require candidates with a high work potential whereas individuals with a lower work potential can complete simpler jobs. Stone & Colella (1996:367) emphasise the importance of having a fit between the nature and severity of a disability and the type of job allocated to the said individual with a disability, which they state is essential to the selection and placement process.

The relationship between the severity of disability and employment is also illustrated in research conducted in Canada by Fawcett (1996:20), which showed that people with more severe disabilities had lower labour force participation rates than those with less severe disabilities. These findings are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Effect of the severity of disability on employment levels

SEVERITY	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	PARTICIPATION RATE	NOT IN LABOUR FORCE
Mild	62.1%	8.8%	70.9%	29.1%
Moderate	37.4%	7.4%	44.8%	55.2%
Severe	18.5%	7.2%	25.6%	74.4%

Source: Fawcett (1996:20)

The abilities of people with disabilities are often assessed purely in terms of the nature and severity of their disability. However, Hamilton *et al* (1989:10) emphasise that the individual's personality traits, such as a sense of responsibility, perseverance, loyalty, punctuality and commitment, are all important in assessing work potential.

Another factor that is crucial to the development of ability is the provision of specialised training as well as basic education. Bunch & Crawford (1998:43) state that, as with the general population, the higher the educational attainment for people with disabilities the more likely they are to be employed. In South Africa this is one aspect where people with disabilities have been neglected for many years. It is only very recently that the government has released a white paper dealing with special needs education (Republic of South Africa, 2001a). Colleges such as Access College in South Africa specialise in the training and placement of people with disabilities; however, some universities and technikons in South Africa have yet to introduce further education and training programmes aimed specifically at people with disabilities.

Stopford (1987:22) explains that the greater the severity of a disability, especially in the case of mental disabilities, the lesser is the ability to acquire and process information and therefore become educated. In severe cases of disability children are not able to go to mainstream schools and must receive

specialised teaching and coaching. In terms of very severe disabilities, tasks such as learning to dress and feed oneself take years to learn, and cognitive learning does not take place at all. Fortunately, such degrees of disability are the exception rather than the norm.

Meager, Bates, Dench, Honey & Williams (1998:3) state that there is a strong link between education and qualification level, and whether a disabled person is economically active. Figure 3.2 depicts the relationship between the level of education and training and work potential.

Figure 3.2: Level of education as a determinant of ability

Source: Compiled by researcher

It is clear that the abilities of people with disabilities to perform in the employment situation differ and are affected by the nature and severity of disability as well as the level of formal education and training. Research (Stone & Colella, 1996:353; Lee, 1996:237) has, however, shown that when an appropriate job/ability fit is achieved, people with disabilities perform as well if not better than able-bodied individuals, do not have higher absenteeism or turnover rates than those without disabilities, and have impeccable work safety records.

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3.3.2 Disability-related difficulties that influence ability

Apart from the nature and severity of disability and education levels, people with disabilities experience an array of difficulties in everyday life and in terms of obtaining employment on the open labour market. Stopford (1987:7) provides insight into some of the difficulties that people with disabilities experience. These difficulties impact both on the individual's motivation and ability in terms of employment and include the following:

- Denial

  In individuals where the onset of disability occurs later in life, denial and non-acceptance of their impairment may be experienced (Elliot & Richard, 1999:364). One of the most well-known cases of denial of a disability is that of former US president Franklin D Roosevelt. With over 35000 photos being taken of the man, only two ever depicted him in a wheelchair (Krauthammer, 1997:42).

- Education

  According to the National Institute for Literacy (2000:11), learning disabilities may manifest themselves as difficulties in spoken or written language, arithmetic, reasoning and organisational skills, and will affect adults in adult basic education, literacy, post-secondary and vocational training settings. It has been shown that many adults with learning disabilities have achieved academic and vocational success when appropriate accommodations have been provided. Unfortunately in South Africa the situation is far from perfect. Currently more that 280 000 South African children with disabilities under the age of 18 are not in school or college (Republic of South Africa, 2001a:9). With very few special schools in South Africa, children with disabilities experience great difficulty in gaining access to education. This has resulted in a mere 20 percent (64200) of learners with disabilities being accommodated in 380 special schools (Republic of South Africa, 2001a:9).

Fortunately this situation seems to be improving with the government of South Africa implementing the Special Needs Education White Paper in 2001, which aims to address many of the problems of segregated education and strives to build an inclusive education and training system (Republic of South Africa, 2001a:2).

- Family and marital problems

Very often the words for better or worse are merely uttered in a chapel and then forgotten; however, with the sudden onset of disability in a marriage or relationship the true meaning of these words is realised. Marriage in general is difficult and requires patience, compromise and devotion. However, when one partner becomes or is disabled as a result of an accident or illness, the difficulty increases exponentially (Ivie, 1992:2). Because of this added stress marital breakdown is very high in cases where the onset of disability occurs in youth or middle age (Thompson, 1986:7). This stress can often become a barrier to employment not only for the individual with the disability but also for the caregiver in the relationship.

- Anger and frustration

Anger and frustration are very often the result of limitations which people with disabilities experience specific to the impairment that they have. For example, a quadriplegic person could soon become frustrated with the fact that he/she has to rely on another individual to drive him/her to work and back. The stress of looking for a job can sometimes lead to flare-ups or worsening of a condition. This can in turn lead to ambivalent feelings towards job seeking (Stopford, 1987:8).

- Low self-esteem

According to the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (2000:18), people with disabilities frequently experience low self-esteem and lack self-confidence. This makes it difficult for the individuals as job seekers to sell their skills to potential employers, and to be persistent in

seeking employment. Adults with learning disabilities may be criticised, put down, teased or rejected because of failures in academic, vocational or social endeavours over a lifetime, which may also contribute to low self-esteem and depression. Despite this, however, most adults with learning disabilities show a tremendous ability to overcome problems of low self-esteem and achieve great success. Jones (1996:61) also alludes to the fact that being limited to jobs of relatively low status, with little or no potential for upward mobility, can contribute to a low self-esteem.

- Lack of assertiveness

  Often coupled with the barriers of low self-esteem is a lack of assertiveness on the part of people with disabilities. Very often people with disabilities possess the skills needed to complete a task, but lack the assertiveness needed to apply their skills. Jones (1996:60) states that people with disabilities occasionally choose not to take advantage of employment opportunities. Jones refers to these actions as self-limiting behaviours and states that self-limiting behaviours impact both on motivation and ability.

- Lack of opportunity and information

  In the open labour market it is a fact that many jobs are found through networking. For the person with a disability, however, it is difficult to be part of a network without first being employed (Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, 2000:16). People with disabilities need more opportunities to network with employers and potential co-workers. This is often not possible as many people with disabilities maintain a sheltered lifestyle; this is especially true in the case of severe mental disabilities.

- Alcohol and drug abuse

  A disability does not necessarily always result in substance misuse, however, Stopford (1987:7) states that alcohol and drug abuse among people with disabilities is not uncommon. According to Tillson & Zbogar (2002:2), whatever the cause, substance misuse among individuals with

disabilities appears to be at least as high as the general "able-bodied" population (some estimates are as high as 20 percent). These addictions often lead to a decrease in the employability of the individual with the disability and also often increase the likelihood of other related barriers.

The above points describe in broad terms some of the more common difficulties that people with disabilities encounter in seeking employment. These factors affect both the motivation and ability of people with disabilities in terms of the employment situation. It must be emphasised, however, that not all people with disabilities experience the difficulties discussed above. The purpose of the above discussion is rather to identify the common disability-related obstacles that influence the ability of the individual and therefore make entering the open labour market more difficult.

3.4   ADAPTABILITY AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The third factor mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, which is critical to the successful employment of people with disabilities, is that of reasonable accommodation. Very often this factor is viewed as the responsibility of the employer only, however, as Thompson (1986:11) points out the person with a disability must also be willing to adapt to the given circumstances. Klimoski & Donahue (1997:127) state that the individual with a disability him- or herself has a major role to play in insuring fair access to and treatment in the workplace. Accommodations made by employees with disabilities are referred to as adaptations rather than accommodations (Thompson, 1986:11). The discussion to follow is viewed firstly from the perspective of the individual (adaptability) and then from the perspective of the organisation (accommodations).

3.4.1 Individual perspective: Adaptability

Throughout history it has been man's ability to adapt to his surroundings and circumstances that has ensured the survival and growth of the human race. The same is true for organisations. In competitive business environments,

organisations that do not adapt to change in the external environment falter and begin to lag behind the competition. So it is the case in the employment of people and especially in the case of people with disabilities. Although reasonable accommodations can be expected from the organisation, people with disabilities also have a duty to ensure their employability. This is only possible when the individuals are able and willing to adapt to certain circumstances in the organisation and in their everyday lives.

The adaptations that need to be made by people with disabilities differ from those of able-bodied people. Thompson (1986:16) provides some examples of simple adaptations that are common for people with disabilities who enter the open labour market. These include:

- Moving to housing that is in closer proximity to the workplace or public transport facilities.

  People with both physical and mental disabilities are often unable to, or have difficulty, driving. In a competitive business environment punctuality and reliability are essential; it is therefore important that people with disabilities make adequate arrangements for transport or locate themselves closer to the workplace. In practice, however, this is not as simple as it sounds, as a move in location often entails a move of the individual's entire support structure, as many people with disabilities are dependent on family members and friends.

- Retraining or the acquisition of new skills

  Employment in South Africa, as was shown in Chapter 2, is scarce even for able-bodied individuals. Therefore, people with disabilities must often be content with jobs that are not based on their training and education. The ability to adjust in terms of training is thus very important. Unfortunately, as has been mentioned, the one aspect that remains even scarcer than jobs in South Africa is adequate special needs education

facilities. This makes the acquisition of skills and knowledge very difficult for individuals with disabilities in South Africa.

- Adaptability to new technology

Many people with disabilities have been out of the open labour market for lengthy periods or have never been employed. With the rapid changes occurring in the technological environment, it will require a certain degree of adaptability to master the technology used by modern organisations.

- Adaptation to the limitation of the disability

This point generally refers to individuals who have acquired a disability later in life, although it is applicable to all people with disabilities. People with disabilities must take the necessary steps to minimise the handicapping effect of their disabilities. This might mean acquiring a wheelchair or a hearing aid or even something as simple as a pair of strong spectacles. Other more severe disabilities such as epilepsy require medication to reduce the handicapping nature of the disability.

- Adapting to being with people in normal situations

As is mentioned earlier in this chapter, the life of a person with a disability can become very isolated and lonely. When these individuals enter the workplace they are faced with many situations and interactions that they are not accustomed to and adaptation must take place. A sheltered lifestyle does not imply, however, that people with disabilities do not share the same interests or display the same professional qualities as their colleagues. It is crucial at this point to emphasise the need for integration and not segregation.

Klimoski & Donahue (1997:127) state that applicants or employees with a disability that convey by word or deed such things as a cooperative attitude,

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commitment and a set of values consistent with those of the organisation are more likely to be perceived as employable. In the same sense, Klimoski & Donahue (1997:128) go on to state that bitterness or self-pity, a negative attitude toward work or a sense of entitlement as a result of a disability will decrease the likelihood of access to employment for a person with a disability.

Unlike rules and legislation such as the Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998:11) that compel employers to provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities, the person with a disability is not forced to adapt to circumstances that are either internal or external to the organisation. However, the failure of the candidate to accept certain circumstances and adapt to them will in the majority of cases result in that individual remaining a job applicant and never becoming an employee within an organisation, as highlighted by Klimoski & Donahue (1997:128).

3.4.2 Organisational perspective: Reasonable accommodation

The above discussion briefly highlighted the role of the person with a disability in terms of adaptability. The focus now shifts to the role the organisation has to play in making the workplace "fit for work". The responsibility of designated employers (see Appendix A) in accommodating people with disabilities is compulsory in terms of the stipulations set out in the Employment Equity Act (EEA), No 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998:11). The situation is the same in the US and the UK where the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (United States, 1990:6) and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 (United Kingdom, 1995:7) make similar stipulations for employers to accommodate people with disabilities. The fact that designated employers must accommodate people with disabilities is therefore not debatable.

Cleveland, Barnes-Farrell & Rats (1997:79) assert that accommodations reflect positive, adaptive and responsive organisational human resource practices that sharpen competitive advantage and enhance effectiveness and productivity. According to the Code of Good Practice on Aspects of Disability in the Workplace (Republic of South Africa, 2002:4), the role of a reasonable

accommodation is to reduce the impact of an impairment on the individual's capacity to fulfil the essential functions of a job, that is, the handicapping nature of the disability. Thomas & Hlahla (2002:13) state that, in terms of the Code of Good Practice, it is recommended that an employer provide reasonable accommodation (temporary or permanent) if a job applicant or employee with a disability voluntarily discloses a disability-related need or if such a need is reasonably self-evident. Although the provision of reasonable accommodations is mandatory for designated employers under the EEA, neither the EEA nor the Code of Good Practice provides a clear definition of what constitutes a reasonable accommodation. This is most likely due to the fact that the type of accommodation and the accommodation process differ from case to case depending on the nature of disability. The Code of Good Practice does, however, provide certain examples of what can be considered reasonable accommodations (Republic of South Africa, 2002:4). These include:

- Adapting existing facilities to make them accessible;
- Adapting existing equipment or acquiring new equipment including computer hardware and software;
- Re-organising work stations;
- Changing training and assessment materials and systems;
- Restructuring jobs so that non-essential functions are re-assigned;
- Adjusting working time and leave;
- Providing readers, sign language interpreters; and
- Providing specialised supervision, training and support.

In the US the ADA also does not offer a strict definition and also provides a number of examples of potential accommodations, which include the following:

- Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities;
- Job restructuring;

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- Part-time or modified work schedules;

- Reassignment to a vacant position;

- Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices;

- Appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations;

- Training materials or policies; and

- The provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities (United States, 1990:6; Frierson, 1992: 91; Wilkinson & Frieden 2000: 82).

The Institute for Community Inclusion (2001:147) in the US provides a more conclusive classification of broad job accommodation categories and also defines what each classification entails. These are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Broad categories of reasonable accommodation

ACCOMMODATION TYPE	DEFINITION
Job restructuring	Adjustments to work procedures or to the order in which tasks are usually performed.
Assistive device	Objects or equipment that help an employee do a job or complete tasks with greater ease or independence.
Training	Teaching methods that help employees to learn or relearn job tasks and duties.
Personal assistant	Person who helps an employee with job tasks and duties, work routines or work-related aspects of a job.
Building modification	Alterations to the physical environment that allow safe and equal access to facilities.
Job reassignment	Temporary or permanent task transfers between co-workers or sharing jobs with other employees.

Source: Institute for Community Inclusion (2001:147)

A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the types of reasonable accommodation implemented by employers; these include Cleveland *et al* (1997:84); Mitchell, Alliger & Morfopoulos (1997:10); Lee (1996:11) and Bruyere, Erickson & VanLooy (2000:51). The results of these studies are summarised in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Types of reasonable accommodation implemented

Research study	Type of reasonable accommodations
Cleveland *et al* (1997:84)	• Worksite changes e.g. ramps, elevators, doors, flooring, restrooms, enlarged work areas • Work station changes e.g. adjustable desks, lighting, moving work areas to benefit wheelchairs • Work environment changes e.g. heat/cold/noise/pollution controls, safety from chemicals, rest areas • Job restructuring e.g. task reassignment, re-evaluation of tasks, combining tasks to redesign the total method of accomplishing goal, job sharing • Work activities modification e.g. flexitime, shifts, flexibility of work breaks
Mitchell *et al* (1997:10)	• Special equipment e.g. phone amplifiers, computers, readers for individuals with visual impairments • Scheduling for extra breaks or flexitime • Substituting marginal tasks with other employees to accommodate disability • Office redesign • Increased access

Table 3.4: Continued

Research study	Type of reasonable accommodations
Bruyere *et al* (2000:51)	• Made existing facilities accessible • Restructured jobs/work hours • Reassignment to vacant positions • Modified equipment • Modified training material • Provided readers or interpreters • Flexible human resource policies • Changed supervisory methods • Transportation accommodations • Written job instructions • Modified work environments
Lee (1996:245)	• Modifications to building or work areas • Purchase or adaptation of equipment • Reassignment of tasks to co-workers • Reassignment of person with a disability to a different job • Assistant, interpreter or reader • Part-time, modified work schedule, time off • Additional supervision or training

Source: Compiled by researcher

As is evident from the above table the types of reasonable accommodation that employers implement vary from study to study, and in reality will vary from organisation to organisation and situation to situation depending on the nature and severity of the disability.

Cleveland *et al* (1997:79) suggest that the underlying rationales for employers to make accommodations fall into three categories: legal mandates (i.e. we must accommodate), social/moral mandates (i.e. we should accommodate), and business or economic considerations (i.e. accommodation is an

investment with an economic payoff). In South Africa, designated employers are legally mandated by the EEA to provide reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability and failure to do so will result in the organisation being penalised by government (Republic of South Africa, 1998:11). Cleveland *et al* (1997:79) suggest that failure to provide reasonable accommodation under the social or moral mandate will result in the organisation being sanctioned by society or branded in a negative light.

It is important to note the fact that no employer is obligated to make accommodations that place unjustifiable hardship on the business of the employer. In terms of the Code of Good Practice (Republic of South Africa, 2002:4), an unjustifiable hardship is action that requires significant or considerable difficulty or expense and that would substantially harm the viability of the organisation. Therefore, in deciding what is reasonable the employer must consider the effectiveness of the accommodation and the extent to which it would seriously disrupt the operation of the organisation while at the same time taking into account the cost-effectiveness of the accommodation. As with reasonable accommodation, undue hardship is determined on a case-by-case basis; an example of this point cited by Miller (2000:6) being that of a small auto parts shop versus General Motors. A reasonable accommodation might create undue hardship and a financial burden for the auto parts shop, whereas the same accommodation would have an insignificant effect on General Motors. Implied in this notion, and set out in the Code of Good Practice and the ADA, is the consideration of the nature, size and financial resources of the organisation when determining undue hardship (Republic of South Africa, 2002:4; United States, 1990:7). Klimoski & Donahue (1997:120) state that requests for accommodations that enable only marginal levels of work, that are not seen as particularly functional, that involve adjustments that go beyond what is truly needed or that violate important norms or expectations are not likely to be seen as appropriate. Consequently, they may be denied or resisted.

Embedded in the notion of unjustifiable hardship on the part of the employer is the cost of implementing reasonable accommodations for people with

disabilities. Blanck (2000:214) reports that employers perceive the cost of accommodating a person with a disability to be a barrier to their employment. For this reason the cost of accommodating people with disabilities is discussed in detail in the next chapter, which deals with specific barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

In determining what a reasonable accommodation would entail and whether or not it would create unjustifiable hardship for an employer, it is essential that the employer or human resource manager possesses a certain degree of knowledge of what a disability is and also knowledge regarding the nature and severity of different disabilities. This is important as the type of reasonable accommodation is directly related to the nature and severity of a specific disability. The simplistic view is to assume that employers and human resource managers possess the required knowledge regarding disabilities; however, more often than not this is not the case as an array of types and severities of disability exist. Therefore, there is a need to increase the awareness of disability and the nature of disabilities among employers and other able-bodied workers.

The awareness of people with disabilities in South Africa has increased in recent years. This is largely due to the efforts of government and non-governmental organisations. To this end an article on the front cover of one of South Africa's foremost newspapers highlighted the needs of people with disabilities in the workplace (Ka'nkosi, 2002:1). Publications in the human resource profession have also recently begun to focus on disability in the workforce (HR Focus, 2001:70; Chawirah, 2001:38). This anecdotal evidence suggests that responsibility for increasing the understanding of disability in the workplace rests not just with the employer and employee, but also with government, non-governmental organisations and industry boards.

Smith, Poval & Floyd (1991:106) offer some guidelines for employers to increase an understanding of disability in the workplace. It is recommended that special disability training be provided to the following people:

- All staff who are involved in training;

- Staff formally responsible for disability issues in the organisation, whether personnel, welfare or medical roles;

- Anyone selecting staff or involved in recruiting;

- A manager or supervisor before they become responsible for supervising an employee with a disability; and

- All staff with disabilities.

Smith *et al* (1991:107) also recommend that:

- All management, supervisory, customer care and interpersonal courses should contain elements on disability management;

- All other staff should be given the opportunity and be encouraged to attend short sessions on disability; and

- All training should contain an interactive element and, where possible, specialist trainers and people with disabilities should be involved.

These recommendations help reduce the stigma and stereotypes attached to people with disabilities. These barriers are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

To summarise, employers who are involved in the reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities should, according to Cleveland *et al* (1997:78), keep the following in mind:

- The type and timing of accommodation;

- Cost of the accommodation;

- Significance of the accommodation;

- The duration of the accommodation; and

- Who initiates the request for accommodation.

According to Cleveland *et al* (1997:78), these factors will impact on the individual's and co-worker's reactions to the accommodation and ultimately on the effectiveness of the accommodation.

3.5   CONCLUSION

In this chapter the employment of people with disabilities was examined in terms of the person with a disability as an employee. More specifically the chapter focused on the employment of an individual with a disability as a function of three factors, namely, motivation to work, ability to work and reasonable accommodation.

The first section of this chapter emphasised that, in the majority of studies conducted, it was shown that people with disabilities who could work wanted to work. Financial incentives attached to open labour market employment were shown to be the main motivating factor for people with disabilities to enter the workforce. This, however, is not the only motivating factor. Meaningful employment on the open labour market was also shown to enhance quality of life, and make possible the self-respect that comes with independence and personal autonomy.

The level of employment and ability of people with disabilities was shown to be a function of the nature and severity of the disability, as well as the level of education and training of the individual.

Lastly it was shown that both the individual with a disability and the employer or organisation have a role to play in ensuring the effective employment of people with disabilities.

The next chapter will highlight the barriers that employers face in terms of the employment of people with disabilities. Factors such as physical and social barriers and employer attitudes, the cost of accommodating people with disabilities and specific legislation concerns will be discussed in detail, shifting the focus from the individual perspective to the organisational perspective.

CHAPTER 4

BARRIERS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it was illustrated that people with disabilities face a number of disability-related barriers that impact on their everyday life, such as low self-esteem, anger and frustration. In many instances societal, material and environmental barriers place limitations on people with disabilities even before they enter the workforce (Arthur & Zarb, 1995b:11). While the impact of these barriers is significant on people with disabilities in terms of their ability to obtain employment, the purpose of this study is to investigate the barriers to the employment of people with disabilities experienced by employers. This chapter thus focuses on these barriers only.

In this chapter a number of organisational barriers to the employment of people with disabilities are discussed, these include the following:

- Physical environmental barriers (access to infrastructure);
- Specific financial concerns;
- Social barriers (employer and co-worker attitudes);
- A lack of fit between job type and applicant ability;
- A lack of suitably qualified and experienced job applicants; and
- Legislation.

Chapter 3 focused on the person with a disability as an employee and concentrated largely on the individual. In this chapter the focus shifts to the organisation and views the above-mentioned barriers to employment from an organisational perspective. A review of the related literature reveals that studies dealing with the barriers to the employment of people with disabilities are quite limited. Such studies have generally tended to focus on the impact of one specific barrier, for example, the effect of employer attitudes on the

employment of people with disabilities (Unger, 2002:2). Only a limited number of studies actually identify a range of the barriers that employers face in terms of the employment of people with disabilities. This chapter brings together the findings of some studies dealing with the barriers to the employment of people with disabilities and provides insight into the nature of these barriers.

4.2   RECENT STUDIES AIMED AT IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In Chapter 2 it was shown that people with disabilities are largely unemployed or underemployed when compared with the general population. Despite the promulgation of legislation to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities and improve their employment situation, Thomas & Hlahla (2002:5) state that employers still appear reluctant to hire people with disabilities. Lee (1996:227) also reports on employer ambivalence towards the employment of people with disabilities. This is largely due to a number of difficulties which employers experience when recruiting and employing people with disabilities. These difficulties are referred to in related literature and in this chapter as employment barriers. Thomas & Hlahla (2002:5) go on to state that legislation in itself is not sufficient to eliminate unfair discrimination against people with disabilities, rather supportive and proactive employment practices from employers are needed. These practices include the identification and elimination of barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. To this end the following studies have been conducted to identify specific barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. The nature of these studies is outlined briefly below and the findings for each study are summarised in Table 4.1.

- The study of Lee (1996)

    The research of Lee (1996:231) focuses on employers' perceptions of barriers to the employment of people with disabilities, more specifically the barriers to accommodation. The study was conducted among 131 organisations in New Jersey in the US. The findings of the study showed considerable barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

- The Eagleton Institute of Politics study (1993)

  The Eagleton (1993:10) study was also conducted in New Jersey and involved a telephone survey of 600 individuals representing New Jersey companies. This study revealed employer ambivalence towards the hiring of people with disabilities and highlighted a number of reasons for this ambivalence.

- The Bruyere, Erickson & VanLooy study (2000)

  Bruyere *et al* (2000:48) present the comparative results of a study based on approximately 800 private sector and 400 public sector employer representatives (mostly human resource representatives) in the US. The findings of this study indicate a number of significant barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

- The Morrell study (1990)

  The research of Morrell (1990) as reported in Barnes (1992:14) was conducted among 1160 open-labour market employers in the UK. This study reported that although the majority of respondents stated that they would not discriminate against a person with a disability, they did experience significant barriers in employing people with disabilities.

- The Honey, Meager & Williams study (1993)

  The study conducted by Honey *et al* (1993:1) aimed to increase the understanding of what employers are doing, and are prepared to do, with regard to recruiting and employing people with disabilities in the UK. The sample for the study included 1043 randomly chosen employers and was commissioned by the Institute for Employment Studies in the UK. The study reports on a number of perceived problems (barriers) when employing people with disabilities.

- The Goldstone study (2002)

  The main objective of the study conducted by Goldstone (2002:9) was to identify some of the barriers to employment for people with disabilities in

both obtaining and retaining employment. Telephone interviews were conducted with 2008 respondents for the study, which was commissioned by the British government.

The findings of the above-mentioned studies are summarised in Table 4.1 and are discussed in some detail in the sections that follow.

Table 4.1: Studies aimed at identifying barriers to employment

Researcher	Summarised findings
Lee (1996:248)	• Reasonable accommodation is expensive • Structural modification is excessive • Higher insurance costs • Disabled worker cannot do the job • Disabled worker is a safety risk • Resistance from managers • Resistance from co-workers
Eagleton Institute of Politics (1993:10)	• Lack of applicants • Limited capabilities of the person with a disability • Costs of physical changes to the workplace too high • Health care costs excessive • Safety concerns • Co-worker and customer resistance • Longer training time • Need for additional supervision

Table 4.1: (Continued)

Researcher	Summarised findings
Bruyere *et al* (2000:58)	• Person with a disability lacks related experience • Person with a disability lacks requisite skills and training • Attitudes and stereotypes of co-workers and managers • Supervisors' lack of knowledge of disability-related issues • Cost of accommodation excessive • Cost of supervision excessive • Cost of training excessive
Morrell (1990) in Barnes (1992:14)	• Job type unsuitable for people with disabilities • Lack of applicants • Physical premises not suitable for people with disabilities • Difficult access to buildings • Shift work for people with disabilities is a problem
Honey, Meager & Williams (1993:2)	• Lack of applicants • Jobs that are not suitable for people with disabilities • Specific health and safety concerns • Stereotypical views of managers and co-workers • Cost of employing people with disabilities is high

Table 4.1: (Continued)

Researcher	Summarised findings
Goldstone (2002:55)	• Type of work unsuitable for people with disabilities • Lack of access to physical facilities and equipment • Barriers relating to the nature and severity of disability • Health and safety concerns (people with disabilities are not safe workers) • Lack of applicants • Attitudes and prejudice towards people with disabilities

Source: Compiled by researcher

Table 4.1 presents a number of barriers to the employment of people with disabilities from the perspective of the organisation. These barriers can be broadly divided into the following five categories:

• Physical environmental barriers (access to infrastructure);
• Specific financial concerns;
• Social barriers (employer and co-worker attitudes);
• A lack of suitably qualified and experienced job applicants; and
• Job type not suitable for people with disabilities.

Thomas & Hlahla (2002:13) state that employment legislation, such as the EEA although not a direct barrier, has done little to promote the employment of people with disabilities in South Africa. For this reason employment legislation is also discussed as being a sixth barrier to the employment of people with disabilities.

4.3   PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

The physical environment refers to all infrastructures such as roads, public transport systems, buildings and man-made structures, signage and more. In terms of this study the physical environment is limited to the place of work and the immediate surrounding areas, such as parking bays, ramps and entrances. It is necessary to make this limitation as the study deals only with the person with a disability in the employment situation. Therefore, in the employment situation, the physical environment includes all offices, furniture and equipment that form part of the individual's workstation, as well as canteens, bathrooms and lifts and other physical infrastructures with which a person with a disability interacts in performing his or her job.

The range of disabilities identified in Chapter 2 makes the elimination of physical environmental barriers very difficult for employers. According to Arthur & Zarb (1995a:3), "the heterogeneity of the disabled population bedevils architectural answers. What may be convenient for one set of disabled people can be the anathema for another, and what for the majority is execrable, can be indispensable for a few". Arthur & Zarb (1995a:3) illustrate this difficulty with the example that dropped kerbs are essential for people in wheelchairs, but are a hazard for people with visual impairments. To this end the degree to which a person is handicapped by his or her environment is largely influenced by the nature of the disability, making the elimination of these barriers a difficult task for employers.

The elimination of physical environmental barriers by employers takes place through adjustments or modifications to physical infrastructure, and the provision of specialised equipment and support. The degree to which an environment has to be altered and also the cost of the adjustment determine the extent to which employers view the physical environment as a barrier to the employment of people with disabilities, in the sense that a modification of their physical environment may be excessive. An example to illustrate this is that of a person who is partially sighted and may only require an enlarged computer monitor to effectively perform his or her job, whereas someone with

a mobility impairment who is confined to a wheelchair might require modifications to his or her work station, office, general bathrooms and parking areas. These modifications might appear to be excessive in terms of disruption and cost to the employer and thereby act as a barrier to employing the individual. The cost of accommodating people with disabilities and making adjustments to the workplace is discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow.

As stated in Chapter 3, employers are mandated by the EEA (Republic of South Africa, 1998:11) and the Code of Good Practice (Republic of South Africa, 2002:4) to eliminate physical environmental barriers to employment through the provision of reasonable accommodations. According to the Code of Good Practice, modifications to the physical environment are included under the definition of a reasonable accommodation. Goldstein (1995:56) provides a list of examples of possible physical environmental barriers as well as possible solutions/accommodations for overcoming these barriers. This information is contained in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Types of barrier and possible accommodations for different disabilities

Disability	Possible problems	Possible solutions
Visual impairment	• Path of travel • Displays of information • Controls with written directions • Elevator operating buttons • Completion of written forms	• Talking computers • Labelling in Braille • Respond to questions orally • Intercom announcements • Avoid clutter in passageways • Use writing, drawing and optical aids, e.g. magnifiers

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Table 4.2: (Continued)

Disability	Possible problems	Possible solutions
Cognitive impairment	Difficulty in understanding: • signs • controls • instructions • directions	• Willingness of someone to assist and/or answer questions and provide directions
Hearing impairment	Difficulty in obtaining information through: • telephones • warning devices, e.g. fire alarms, public address systems • equipment operating noises	• Use of amplification devices • Publication of written announcements • Allow mail-in procedures to be used • Policy accommodating lip readers • Use of visual cues for signage
Difficulty with upper body movement	Difficulty in operating, locating or reaching certain equipment such as: • hand controls on doors • toilet room fixtures • water fountains • telephones • vending machines	• Relocating a programme or service to an accessible area • Use of adaptive equipment or modification of present equipment

Table 4.2: (Continued)

Disability	Possible problems	Possible solutions

Mobility impairments	• No grasp bars, handrails, or other supports
	
	• No designated parking spaces for people with disabilities
	
	• Distance from parking or public transportation stops
	
	• Route of travel:
	   - Curbs, walks, unlevelled surfaces
	   - Carpeting
	
	• Entrances and doors
	
	• Restrooms, phones, water fountains
	
	• Location of controls and general hardware
		• Replace existing hardware, equipment
		
		• Make necessary structural changes to eliminate barriers
		
		• Install ramps
		
		• Widen doorways
		
		• Move work area

Source: Goldstein (1995:56)

As can be seen from Table 4.2 the types of physical barriers that people with disabilities face vary depending on the nature of disability. In some instances this can prove to be difficult for organisations that employ people with different kinds of disabilities, for example, in the case of a person with a hearing disability it is recommended that correspondence be placed in written form, this would not, however, be ideal for someone with a visual disability.

Ramage (1999:32) states that the elimination of physical environmental barriers is being made easier with the advent of new technologies and information technology, and cites three examples of such technologies. The first example is a pair of "high-tech" eyeglasses that has built-in electronic, optical and voice-recognition technology that allows people with hearing loss

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to view real-time, captioned text that is transmitted wirelessly to a monitor built into the frames. The second example is talking automated teller machines (ATMs) and the third is a motorised all-terrain wheelchair, which allows users to go up and down stairs and over kerbs. Technology of this nature is expensive and not always a viable option for all employers.

These examples illustrate that the elimination of physical environmental barriers, such as structural modifications, results in expenditures of both time and money on the part of the employer. These expenditures are very often the factors that deter organisations from employing people with disabilities and therefore act as barriers to employment (Unger, 1999:170).

4.4   SPECIFIC FINANCIAL CONCERNS

The cost to employers of providing reasonable accommodations is invariably raised as an argument against employing people with disabilities. According to Thomas & Hlahla (2002:16), a major concern expressed by employers, especially those with small businesses, is the cost of modifying work areas for employees with disabilities. Prior research, as stated by Lee (1996:237), has shown that employers fear that the accommodation of people with disabilities will be a costly exercise. These views are echoed by Cleveland *et al* (1997:85) who state that employers often fail to hire workers with disabilities because of the widespread belief that the cost of accommodation would be a major financial burden. Blanck (2000:215) argues that for reasonable accommodation costs to be justified, the benefits and value to the employer should exceed the cost of the accommodation. Blanck (2000:216) further concurs with Lee that employers fear that the cost of accommodating people with disabilities will be excessive; however, he states that these fears are often unfounded and are assumptions made in the absence of reliable data. It is, therefore, according to Blanck (2000:216), not surprising that the attitudes and behaviour of many employers reflect the view that the costs of accommodations outweigh the benefits. These attitudes are also reflected in the studies presented in Table 4.1. Evidence contrary to this view is offered by numerous authors such as Arthur & Zarb (1995b:17), Blanck (2000:217), Noel

(1990:3), Goldstone (2002:46) and Lee (1996:237). Arthur & Zarb (1995b:17) suggest that the benefits for employers who hire people with disabilities far outweigh the costs of accommodation. Studies conducted to determine the cost of accommodating an employee with a disability show that while the employment of people with disabilities does involve additional expenditure (Arthur & Zarb, 1995:17b), these costs tend not to be excessive. Evidence to support this argument is provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: The cost of accommodating an employee with a disability

Researcher	Cost of accommodation	Percentage
Goldstein (1995:55)	• No cost	31%
	• $1–$50	19%
	• $51–$500	19%
	• $501–$1000	19%
	• $1000–$5001	11%
	• More than $5000	1%
Blanck (2000:217)	• No cost	72%
	• Less than $100	17%
	• Less than $500	10%
	• More than $1000	1%
Lee (1996:246)	• No cost	38%
	• Less than $500	24%
	• $500–$1000	6%
	• $1001–$5000	21%
	• More than $5000	11%
Noel (1990:3)	• No cost	51%
	• Less than $500	30%
	• More than $500	19%

Table 4.3: (Continued)

Researcher	Cost of accommodation	Percentage
Goldstone (2002:46)	• No cost	70%
	• Less than £50	4%
	• £50–£99	3%
	• £100–£249	5%
	• £250–£499	7%
	• £500–£999	4%
	• More than £1000	7%

Source: Compiled by researcher

From Table 4.3 it can be seen that on average the cost of accommodating a person with a disability is less than $500. Unfortunately, information pertaining to the cost of accommodation in South African organisations is very limited. This is most probably due to the fact that employment legislation pertaining to people with disabilities has only recently been promulgated and studies investigating the implementation of the legislation have not yet been conducted.

As stated earlier in this discussion, the cost of accommodating an employee with a disability must be weighed against the benefits that the organisation gains. This brings into question the overall productivity of the employee with a disability versus the cost of accommodating the employee. Cleveland *et al* (1997:82) state that the purpose of a reasonable accommodation is not only a means to eliminate barriers but should also be used as a vehicle for enhancing and maintaining employee productivity. In this regard, Arthur & Zarb (1995:17b) report that a study conducted in the US showed that for every dollar spent on accommodating a person with a disability, companies calculated returns to the value of about $30 in terms of increased productivity, reduced training or reduced compensation and insurance costs. Supporting this argument Chirikos (2000:238) states that the productivity and job tenure of workers with disabilities are directly related to the provision of effective accommodations.

In spite of the above arguments Stone & Colella (1996:353) allude to the fact that employers often cling to unfounded concerns about workers with disabilities including false assumptions about their performance levels, absenteeism, high cost of accommodation and turnover rates. Research has shown that employees with disabilities perform as well if not better than non-disabled employees and do not have higher absenteeism or turnover rates (Stone & Colella, 1996:353). One of the most conclusive studies dealing with the productivity of employees with disabilities is that of the American company Dupont (Loy & Gebremedhin, 2001:8). The Dupont study, which was reported in 1990, was a 20-year tracking study that involved 811 employees with disabilities. The study showed that over 90 percent of employees with disabilities rated average or better in performance appraisals. The study also showed that the performance of people with disabilities equalled or exceeded that of their able-bodied co-workers. The above findings are supported by those of Lee (1996:247) and Arthur & Zarb (1995b:17), which showed that employees with disabilities are viewed as productive by their employers and managers. A study conducted by the University of Michigan (HR Focus, 1997:6) found that of the 408 human resource and general managers surveyed nearly half stated that hiring people with disabilities increased productivity and that people with disabilities should not be viewed as liabilities. A further study conducted in New Zealand and Australia showed that 86 percent of people with disabilities employed in surveyed organisations had an above-average attendance and performance record (State Services Commission, 2002:6).

Cleveland *et al* (1997:85) state that in many instances accommodations made for individuals with disabilities are also ones valued by their able-bodied co-workers, such as flexible working hours, minor modifications to the functions of a job or more frequent work breaks, and therefore also boost the productivity of these workers.

Despite all of the evidence to the contrary, employers still report the cost of employing and accommodating an employee with a disability to be a significant barrier (see Table 4.1). The above discussion suggests that it is not

the actual cost of accommodating a person with a disability that acts as a barrier, but rather the perceived cost. Lee (1996:237) supports this suggestion by stating that despite data to the contrary, employers tend to believe that the general cost of accommodating people with disabilities is prohibitive, demonstrating that employers, either through inexperience with or bias against people with disabilities, have exaggerated fears about their cost and work performance. This brings into focus a further barrier to the employment of people with disabilities, namely that of employer and co-worker attitudes.

4.5 SOCIAL BARRIERS

Most people work in a social context and must therefore interact with and relate to other people in order to get their work done. It is during this interaction that people with disabilities face the greatest barriers to employment. Whether they spring from ignorance, fear, misunderstanding or hate, negative and stereotypical attitudes are often the deciding factor as to whether or not people with disabilities enter open labour market employment. These attitudes are broadly referred to as social barriers. Thomas & Hlahla (2002:14) state that employer and co-worker attitudes towards people with disabilities are a primary factor contributing to the unemployment of this group as well as their underutilisation at work.

Almost all of the studies presented in Table 4.1 show that the attitudes of employers and co-workers were perceived as barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. Numerous authors such as Klimoski & Donahue (1997:113), Jones (1997:55), Stone & Colella (1996:352) and Bruyere *et al* (2000:58) have also alluded to the impact of negative attitudes and stereotyped thinking on the employment of people with disabilities. The research conducted by Bruyere *et al* (2000:49) showed that the most difficult barrier to overcome was changing the attitudes of fellow employees and supervisors towards people with disabilities.

The Office of Disability Employment Policy in the US provides a summary of the major attitudinal barriers affecting the employment of people with disabilities (Minton, 1999:2). These barriers are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Attitudinal barriers to the employment of people with disabilities

Barrier	Description
Inferiority	This refers to society's tendency to see people with disabilities as inferior to able-bodied people as they are impaired in one of life's major functions.
Pity	Feelings of pity and charity often result in patronising attitudes of employers and co-workers. A study conducted in the US showed that 77 percent of the participants reported feeling sorry for people with disabilities (National Organization on Disability, 1991:81).
Hero worship	This refers to people who consider someone with a disability who lives independently or pursues a career to be brave or special for overcoming a disability. A study conducted in the US showed that 92 percent of the participants reported feelings of admiration for people with disabilities (National Organization on Disability, 1991:81).
Ignorance	Employers and co-workers often do not have adequate information regarding the nature and characteristics of a specific disability. This often results in the underestimation of abilities and skills.
The spread effect	The spread effect occurs when employers and co-workers assume that an individual's disability negatively affects other senses, abilities or personality traits, or that the total person is impaired. For example, many people speak louder to visually impaired people.

Table 4.4: (Continued)

Barrier	Description
Stigma	Stigma is the disrespect, condescension or discounting of people out of ignorance and/or faulty information. Stigma causes people with disabilities to be treated poorly and in a discriminatory manner. This results in low self-esteem and may keep people from seeking employment. A study conducted in the US showed that most participants reported feeling awkward in the presence of people with disabilities (National Organization on Disability, 1991:81). The study also reported that mental illness causes the greatest unease, followed by facial disfigurement, senility and mental retardation.
Stereotypes	Stereotypes refer to the generalisations, be they positive or negative, that employers and co-workers form about people with disabilities. Stereotypes are often based on personal beliefs and not factual information.
Backlash	This occurs when co-workers believe that individuals with disabilities are given unfair advantages, such as easier work requirements.
Fear	This occurs when employers and co-workers fear that they will say or do "the wrong thing" around people with disabilities. They therefore avert their own discomfort by avoiding the individual with a disability.

Source: Minton (1999:2)

A review of the literature dealing with barriers of a social nature reveals that stereotypes and stigmatisation are the most commonly cited social barriers and are therefore discussed in more detail.

Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities can manifest themselves in a number of ways with employers. Thomas & Hlahla (2002:14) state that employers may subscribe to unfounded myths about people with disabilities and their work capabilities, and as such hinder their employment. The State Services Commission (2002:6) in New Zealand highlights some of the myths that employers subscribe to, these include:

- People with disabilities are less reliable and are absent more often;
- People with disabilities cost more to employ;
- People with disabilities are less productive; and
- People with disabilities are a safety risk to themselves and co-workers.

Subscription to the above myths by employers is often a result of inexperience or ignorance regarding the employment of people with disabilities. In a study conducted by Boyle (1997:262) one of the respondents in the study stated that the cause of social barriers could be summed up in one word: ignorance. According to the respondent, "able-bodied people are uncomfortable being around a person with a disability because they are unsure of how to interact with them and have no earthly idea of what they can really do".

This ignorance results in employers basing many of their decisions regarding the employment and expectations of people with disabilities on stereotypes. In addition to the definition of a stereotype provide in Table 4.4, Jones (1997:59) defines a stereotype as a set of attributes ascribed to a group and imputed to its individual members simply because they belong to the group. Stereotypes are typically false negative generalisations of the identified group of which the individual is a member. Stone & Colella (1996:357) provide a number of examples of such stereotypes. They state that empirical research has shown that people with physical disabilities are more likely to be stereotyped as quiet, honest, gentle-hearted, non-egotistical, helpless, inferior and unappealing. Other stereotypes of people with disabilities suggested by Stone & Colella (1996:357) are that they are viewed as saintlike, courageous, deserving of a break and less capable of competing with able-bodied

individuals. Stone & Colella (1996:358) suggest that the stereotypes ascribed to people with disabilities can be categorised into the following six categories:

- Social or interpersonal competence: shy, aloof, quiet, distant;
- Task competence: helpless, dependent, non-competitive;
- Concern for others: non-egotistical, benevolent;
- Integrity: saintlike, honest;
- Emotional adjustment: bitter, unhappy, nervous, hypersensitive; and
- Potency or strength: unaggressive, submissive.

The result of employers basing recruitment and selection decisions on such stereotypes, according to Jones (1997:60), is that people with disabilities are often passed over for employment. Klimoski & Donohue (1997:28) refer to this as the "social trap" phenomenon. According to this perspective, based on the high degree of interdependence in a working relationship, supervisors and co-workers may be reluctant to select or seek out individuals with a disability as they would not want to "take a chance" on someone whose work performance is perceived to be deficient. This results in people with disabilities being precluded from recruitment and selection initiatives.

People with disabilities are also not given the opportunity to perform on visible or important projects and are therefore often passed over for promotions because of a lack of demonstrated competence (Jones, 1997:60). Klimoski & Donahue (1997:124) state that the negative stereotypes of people with disabilities result in lower expectations, and less trust and responsibility being assigned to disabled people.

A further negative impact of supervisors' stereotypical behaviour, according to Boyle (1997:262), is that employees with disabilities develop a negative social image, which results in disabled individuals avoiding contact with able-bodied co-workers. This avoidance of interaction with able-bodied co-workers can also be the result of stigmatisation by co-workers.

Consequently, another social barrier that impacts on the employment of people with disabilities is that of stigmatisation. According to Minton (1999:2), stigma is defined as the disrespect, condescension or discounting of people out of ignorance and/or faulty information (See Table 4.4). Stone & Colella (1996:360) suggest that the level of stigmatisation from co-workers is dependent on the following factors:

- Nature of the disability

  The nature of a disability is one of the most important determinants of the way people with disabilities are perceived and treated in organisational settings. Stone & Colella (1996:360) support this view and state that individuals with mental impairments are viewed more negatively than those with physical impairments. As stated in the previous chapter, a study of 1300 individuals with mental or psychiatric disabilities revealed that one in three of the respondents had been turned down for a job because a psychiatric label or other such attitudinal barriers (Rothenberg & Barret, 1998:17). The following authors, Murphy (1998:186); Hayes (2000:5); Heinen (2000:14); Harper (1994:1) and Britt (2000:1599) support the view that individuals with learning, psychological or mental disabilities are stigmatised and discriminated against more than people with other disabilities.

- Aesthetic qualities

  Aesthetic qualities refer to the extent to which a disability makes a person ugly, repulsive or upsetting to others. Stone & Colella (1996:360) suggest that the more unattractive or repulsive the disability, the more negative will be the attitudes and reactions of co-workers.

- Course of the disability

  Stone & Colella (1996:361) suggest that the more progressive and irreversible or incurable a disability is, the more the person with the disability will be viewed in a negative way.

- Disruptiveness

  Disruptiveness refers to the extent to which a disability interferes with the flow of communication or causes strain and uncertainty in social interaction. The more disruptive the disability, the more likely it is that the disability will elicit a negative affect.

- Danger or peril

  This refers to the level of threat, danger or contagion a disability poses to other people. Stone & Colella (1996:360) suggest that individuals who have dangerous or contagious conditions such as Aids or leprosy are more likely to be stigmatised than those that have less threatening conditions.

Stigma can result in people with disabilities being excluded from employment, but is more likely to result in their being discriminated against by co-workers once employed. Klimoski & Donahue (1997:123) state that stereotypes and stigmatisation by co-workers results in a limited amount of interaction with people with disabilities, which in turn results in social isolation. The effect of this social isolation is poor or strained interpersonal relationships which limit opportunities for social learning and mentoring.

Blanck (1997:65) points out that while negative attitudes regarding the employment of people with disabilities still exist, in recent years there has been a dramatic shift in attitudes towards people with disabilities. Lee (1996:243) also states that attitudes towards people with disabilities are becoming more positive but goes on to say that despite this shift in attitudes, research shows that there is continued hesitation by many employers to hire, and a disinclination to seek out, workers with disabilities. Therefore, the social barriers highlighted in the above discussion remain a significant barrier to the employment of people with disabilities. In fact, Stone & Colella (1996:352) and Thomas & Hlahla (2002:14) perceive employer attitudes to be the main contributing factor to the unemployment of people with disabilities.

4.6   A LACK OF SUITABLY QUALIFIED JOB APPLICANTS

Barnes (1992:14) also reports that employer attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities are not always negative, and states that in one study in the UK it was found that 75 percent of the respondents were willing to hire a person with a disability. In the same study, however, 61 percent of the respondents stated that a lack of suitably qualified job applicants was a major barrier to their efforts to employ people with disabilities. Similarly, Bruyere *et al* (2000:58), Honey *et al* (1993:2), Goldstone (2002:55) and the Eagleton Institute of Politics (1993:10) report a lack of suitably qualified job applicants to be a major barrier experienced by employers when attempting to employ people with disabilities.

Barnes (1992:16) suggests that one of the reasons for the lack of applications from suitably qualified people with disabilities is their poor educational background. This barrier was also alluded to in the previous chapter. According to Barnes, the type of education that disabled children and young adults receive does not provide them with the confidence, skills and qualifications needed to find work, and hence they are reluctant to apply for open labour market positions. Barnes (1992:16) also cites several studies that have noted the lack of self-confidence and basic literacy skills and the absence of recognised educational achievement of disabled school leavers looking for work.

Arthur & Zarb (1995b:7) also cite a number of possible reasons for the limited number of job applicants with disabilities, which include:

- People with disabilities are more likely to seek jobs through job centres and recruitment agencies and in some instances are screened out of the application process at this stage or referred to sheltered employment opportunities;

- Employers may deter applications if the wording of a job advertisement or job description is highly discouraging;

- Job descriptions sometimes include requirements, for example the ability to drive, that may not be an essential aspect of the job, but that have the effect of excluding some people with disabilities;

- The requirement of a medical examination as part of the selection process is also likely to discourage or exclude some disabled people.

The duty to ensure that people with disabilities apply for jobs rests not only with the individual with a disability but also with the employer. According to the study conducted by Honey *et al* (1993:2), fewer than half of the 1043 organisations surveyed had explicit policies in place relating to the employment of people with disabilities and only a quarter of the respondents had a clear written policy. Furthermore, only 20 percent of the respondents said that they were actively seeking to recruit people with disabilities. Barnes (1992:14) supports these findings, stating that government research showed that of 1160 respondent organisations surveyed, 75 percent said they did not discriminate against people with disabilities; however, only four percent said they positively encouraged job applications from people with disabilities. Barnes (1992:14) goes on to state that there is a world of difference between what employers say and what they actually do. One way in which employers justify not encouraging applicants with disabilities is by stating that the jobs in their organisations are not suitable for people with disabilities. This barrier is discussed below.

4.7   TYPE OF JOB NOT SUITABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The previous chapter illustrated that the nature of certain disabilities precludes individuals from doing certain types of jobs. Klimoski & Donahue (1997:116) state that past empirical evidence and experience with individuals with a specific disability may reveal that its nature precludes effective job

performance. In many instances this is a legitimate argument for employers who do not actively recruit people with disabilities. Klimoski & Donahue (1997:113) argue, however, that it is often the general tendency of employers to use stereotypes initially when determining whether a particular job would be suitable for a person with a disability. Based on such stereotypes, employers tend to conclude that there is a lack of fit between the capabilities of such individuals and the essential functions of jobs, and thereby falsely conclude that their jobs are not suitable for people with disabilities. Barnes (1992:15) supports this argument and states that the fact that employers view most of their job types as unsuitable for people with disabilities can be seen as a further illustration of the extent of employers' biased and discriminatory assumptions. Mitchell *et al* (1997:7) state that employers tend to focus not on the outcomes of a particular job but on the methods or means that workers use to accomplish outcomes. A focus on the outcomes of a specific job rather than the methods used might reduce unfair treatment of individuals with disabilities who can perform the job by doing things in ways that might differ from the typical case (Klimoski & Donahue, 1997:118).

4.8   LEGISLATION AS A BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT

Legislation is an important mechanism available to government to increase the representation of people with disabilities in the workplace. While legislation was not cited as a specific barrier to the employment of people with disabilities in the studies reported in Table 4.1, Thomas & Hlahla (2002:21) state that employment legislation enacted in South Africa to achieve equitable opportunities for people with disabilities has not brought about the major changes anticipated. Similarly, in the US employment among people with disabilities has only increased marginally since the passage of the ADA in 1990 (Stein, 2000:52). For this reason employment legislation is not seen as a barrier to the employment of people with disabilities, but rather a factor that impacts on the decision of organisations to employ people with disabilities.

Thomas & Hlahla (2002:13) note that the overall willingness of employers to comply with legislation is likely to be a function of both their knowledge of the

law and their attitudes towards people with disabilities. Failure to comply with the law may also be the result of inadequacies in the law. In this regard Thomas & Hlahla (2002:17) have the following criticisms of the EEA and the Code of Good Practice:

- Unlike the ADA and DDA, which can be considered "disability legislation", the EEA is in essence "employment equity legislation" in that it focuses primarily on the elimination of unfair discrimination against members of all designated groups. Therefore, the overall focus of the EEA is not specific to people with disabilities. The South African government has attempted to rectify this by introducing the Code of Good Practice, which deals specifically with the employment of people with disabilities.

- The primary emphasis of the EEA, according to Thomas & Hlahla (2002:18), is on the implementation of affirmative action measures and the enforcement of target setting. This results in employers merely focusing on satisfying numerical targets, instead of identifying talented people with disabilities, integrating them into the organisation and advancing them through the organisation in accordance with their capabilities. In this way legislation acts as a barrier to "effective" employment of people with disabilities.

- The EEA and the Code of Good Practice provide employers with virtually no technical or financial support to meet the requirements of the Act. In the US and Britain financial and technical support is available to employers who hire people with disabilities (Thomas & Hlahla, 2002:20; Cook, Judice & Lofton, 1996:40). According to Aloise (2001:25), organisations that comply with the ADA can receive a tax rebate of up to $15,000 on accommodations implemented in compliance with the Act. Employers hiring people with disabilities are also entitled to tax rebates on salaries and wages paid to these individuals, which is a further incentive in terms of compliance with the Act (Cook *et al*, 1996:40). In the UK employers are entitled to technical and financial support under the Access to Work

Scheme run by the Employment Service (Thomas & Hlahla, 2002:21). The situation in South Africa is, however, not as supportive, with very little assistance for employers. According to Thomas & Hlahla (2002:20), the South African Department of Labour provides limited financial assistance for a fixed number of months to subsidise the salaries of employees with disabilities while they learn the work requirements. The lack of assistance in terms of complying with the EEA may therefore also act as a barrier to the employment of people with disabilities.

- Lastly, Thomas & Hlahla (2002:22) state that invoking monetary fines directed at employers who fail to meet the requirements of the EEA with respect to people with disabilities is likely to prove ineffective in the sense that, if the fines are less costly than the cost of accommodating a person with a disability, employers may to choose to pay the fine rather than comply with the Act.

It must be emphasised that it is not the existence of "disability legislation" that acts as a barrier to the employment of people with disabilities, but rather loopholes in the legislation as identified above and the intricacies and support surrounding the implementation of the legislation that deter employers from actively seeking out and employing people with disabilities. Thomas & Hlahla (2002:26) summate their argument by stating that in South Africa legislation has not in itself helped to increase the representation of people with disabilities, mainly because legislation cannot change the attitudes of employers. This brings to the fore the point that has been made throughout the above discussion of barriers, namely that many of the barriers that employers face in terms of employing people with disabilities are based on their perceptions of and attitudes to reality, rather than on reality itself.

4.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter illustrated that it is not only people with disabilities that experience difficulties when seeking employment; organisations also face significant barriers when attempting to employ this group of people. To this

end a number of barriers experienced by employers were highlighted, the most commonly cited and also the most difficult to overcome being the negative attitudes of employers and able-bodied co-workers.

This chapter and the previous chapter illustrated that the type of barriers that employers face will differ from organisation to organisation, and will be dependent largely on the nature of the disability of the individuals employed. The way in which employers deal with and overcome these barriers are therefore also determined by the type of disability.

In summation it can be stated that many of the barriers that employers experience are based on their perceptions or beliefs about people with disabilities rather than the actual abilities or expectations. This implies that a lack of experience in terms of employing people with disabilities could be one of the main reasons why employers report the existence of barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

The next chapter introduces the research methodology and sample used for the study.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLGY

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed from a theoretical perspective some of the barriers that organisations face in the employment of people with disabilities. As stated in Chapter 1, the overall objective of this study is to identify the barriers that sample organisations face in terms of employing people with disabilities. To achieve this goal a specific research design is required.

A qualitative research design was used to identify the barriers that employers face. The purpose of this chapter is to justify the use of the specific research design, as well as to discuss the methodology used to apply the design. The chapter also provides an indication of how sample organisations were selected, how data were collected and what data collection instruments were used.

5.2   RESEARCHING SENSITIVE TOPICS

One aspect of the research methodology that must be discussed at the onset of this chapter is that of conducting "sensitive research". The topic of people with disabilities is a sensitive topic, as are topics such as Aids or child abuse. According to Renzeti & Lee (1993:4), research on these topics often poses technical problems and issues that have to do with the ethics and politics of the research.

Renzeti & Lee (1993:3) define sensitive research as: "Studies in which there are potential consequences or implications, either directly for the participants in the research or for the class of individuals represented in the research."

Sensitivity is often seen as being synonymous with controversial. It is the opinion of the researcher, however, that although the study may be viewed as

sensitive, it is in no way controversial. Much of the so-called sensitivity abounding in the topic of people with disabilities stems from the stigmatising of this group of individuals that was alluded to in Chapter 4.

Mouton (2003:104) states that research questions of a sensitive nature may lead to non-response or refusal of respondents to participate in the study. The justification of this section lies in the fact that "sensitivity" as it is defined here will affect almost every stage of the research process from formulation through the design to the implementation and application, and it is therefore important to mention it prior to all other discussions.

5.3   EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.3.1 Objectives

The preceding literature study showed that people with disabilities in South Africa and in other countries are significantly unemployed or underemployed when compared with the general population. The literature also showed that one of the main reasons for this disparity are the barriers that organisations face when employing people with disabilities. The empirical research aims to illustrate this disparity in sample organisations as well as identify specific barriers that sample organisations face. Consequently the objectives for this study are twofold:

- To determine whether people with disabilities, in terms of the EEA, are underrepresented in sample organisations when compared with other designated groups.

- To identify the barriers faced by sample organisations when employing people with disabilities.

These two objectives can be translated into the following hypotheses to be tested:

H_O: People with disabilities are not underrepresented in sample organisations when compared to other designated groups.

H_1: People with disabilities are underrepresented in sample organisations when compared to other designated groups.

H_O: Sample organisations do not experience significant barriers in terms of the employment of people with disabilities.

H_1: Sample organisations experience significant barriers in terms of the employment of people with disabilities.

5.3.2 The choice of a research design

The attainment of the first objective relies on a comparison of the number of employees with disabilities with the number of able-bodied employees and it therefore calls for a somewhat quantitative approach. The second research objective is more interpretive in nature and can be achieved using a qualitative approach. The combination of these two objectives creates an opportunity to integrate both quantitative research as well as qualitative research. According to Reichardt & Rallis (1994:54), leading theorists have for many years attempted to integrate these two methodologies in one study, often using the different methodologies for answering different questions, which is precisely what this study aims to do.

Reichardt & Rallis (1994:17) state that quantitative studies are generally more precise and explicit and assume that the relevant variables can be identified in advance and validly measured. Qualitative studies, however, rely more on provisional questions, data collection sites, the people interviewed and things observed. Based on this it would appear that a quantitative approach is more suited for researching the first objective and a qualitative approach for the

second objective. Reichardt & Rallis (1994:17) suggest that although these approaches are distinct from one another, it is possible to blend the results obtained.

There is, however, an ongoing debate as to whether these two methodologies can be effectively integrated. This is largely due to the fact that too much focus is placed on research methods and not on the paradigm from which the methodology originates. In this regard the current study can be placed on a continuum between two commonly accepted research paradigms, namely that of the empirical-analytical paradigm and the interpretive paradigm (Smaling, 1992:315). The application of this lies in the fact that to realise the first research objective an analysis of the employer's current employment records would be necessary (analytical → quantitative), whereas the attainment of the second research objective requires the researcher to ask employers the question "why?" (interpretive → qualitative).

Bearing in mind the fact that a methodology is always selected based on the research question and objectives and not the other way around, it was decided to integrate the two methodologies.

No specific quantitative research technique was used in attaining the first objective as descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means are sufficient for describing the disparity in employment levels between people with disabilities and able-bodied people.

The attainment of the second research objective is more complicated and therefore requires a specific qualitative research methodology. A background to qualitative research as well as the chosen qualitative methodology is described below.

5.3.3 Qualitative research design: Content analysis

The attainment of the second research objective was dependent on a qualitative research design as the opinions and experiences of senior human

resource personnel were being analysed. According to Payze[*] (2002) there are three commonly applied qualitative research methodologies, namely:

- Content analysis
- Grounded theory
- Discourse analysis

Payze[*] (2002) states that studies combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies lend themselves to content analysis as content analysis is to a certain degree quantitative in nature, and therefore falls somewhere between the empirical and interpretive research paradigms. For this reason content analysis was chosen as the preferred qualitative methodology.

Content analysis can best be defined as: "A systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding" (Krippendorff, 1980:8; Weber, 1990:14).

In layman's terms this refers to sifting through a heap of information and extracting meaning by grouping and interpreting texts.

A common notion in qualitative research is that a content analysis simply means doing a word-frequency count. The assumption made is that the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concerns. In this study, for example, one might find that respondents mentioned the concept of physical barriers to employment more frequently than social barriers. A simple deduction would be that physical barriers are more difficult to overcome than social ones. Content analysis extends far beyond simple word counts, however. By reducing texts to categories consisting of a word, set of words or phrases, the researcher can focus on and code for specific words or patterns that are indicative of the research question, in the case of this study, barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

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[*] *Payze (2002): 5 Day Workshop presented on qualitative research techniques, no page no.*

According to Carley (1992:4), content analysis takes place in a sequence of eight steps, which are identified below:

1. **Decide on the level of analysis**

    This implies deciding whether to code for a single word or for sets of words or phrases. In this study it was decided to code for sets of words and phrases (concepts) relating to the research question.

2. **Decide how many concepts to code for**

    In this step the researcher must decide whether a predetermined number of concepts will be coded for or whether categories can be added during the coding phase. It was decided not to limit the number of categories as the study is exploratory in nature and, although a number of existing concepts are identified in the literature, the researcher was of the opinion that new and unique concepts might be found. If the coding process was limited to a set number of categories the researcher could possibly have missed certain valuable data.

3. **Decide whether to code for existence or frequency of a concept**

    In this step a decision must be made as to whether concepts will be coded on the basis of existence or frequency. It was decided that, owing to the fact that a set of employment barriers were to be identified, it would be of value to code for frequency and in so doing allow for the ranking of barriers. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2001:156), one crucial step in content analysis is to tabulate the frequency of each concept found in the material being studied. A content analysis is thus qualitative as well as quantitative.

4. **Decide on how one will distinguish between concepts**

    A certain level of subjectivity enters this step as the researcher must make a decision as to whether concepts are similar and whether they can be generalised. To reduce this subjectivity a second researcher was

requested to validate the concepts that were coded, as well as the manner in which concepts were condensed into categories.

5. **Develop coding rules**

   In this step the researcher develops a set of rules to ensure that he/she codes for exactly what he/she intends coding for. Again this step was left to the discretion of the researcher.

6. **Decide what to do with irrelevant information**

   At this stage the researcher must choose between ignoring irrelevant information (as Weber [1990:34] suggests) and using it to re-examine the coding scheme. In the initial coding process it was decided to keep irrelevant information. This information was later used to re-examine the coding scheme and was also used in the results analysis phase.

7. **Code texts**

   Texts were manually coded, that is, by reading through the text and writing down the concept occurrences. These frequencies were then entered into spreadsheets making use of Microsoft Excel. It was felt that the level of analysis and the degree of data manipulation did not warrant the use of qualitative computer programs such as ATLAS.ti and NUD*IST.

8. **Analyse the results**

   Data were analysed to identify the following aspects:

   - Concepts and categories relating to the research questions
   - Groupings of concepts and categories
   - Meanings of concepts and categories
   - Context of concepts and categories

5.4 THE SAMPLE

Owing to the fact that the majority of the research was of a qualitative nature it was decided to limit the sample for the study to 10 organisations from the Gauteng area. It was not necessary to divide the sample organisations into any specific subgroups or strata; however, in order to be included in the study the organisations had to meet certain selection criteria. Only organisations meeting all of the criteria listed below were considered for inclusion in the study:

- **A minimum of 100 employees**

  The EEA holds that any organisation employing 50 or more employees must comply with the statutes set out in the Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998:5). It was, however, felt that owing to the fact that there are numerous organisations in the Gauteng area that employ more than 50 people, the study should focus on organisations employing 100 or more. Justification for this is found in the research of Honey *et al* (1993:2) and Goldstone (2002:8), which shows that active encouragement of the employment of people with disabilities is more common in large organisations.

- **Must be in the business and financial services sector of the economy**

  It was necessary to limit the study to a certain sector of the economy. The business and financial services sector was ultimately decided on. The justification for selecting this sector lies in the fact that although not accommodating to people with severe mental disabilities, this sector appeared to be the most accommodating in terms of all other classifications of disability. Arthur & Zarb (1995b:7) support this view and state that organisations from the business and financial services sector are less likely to view the type of jobs they offer as unsuitable for people with disabilities. They cite the wider range of office-based activities and greater flexibility in hours and work locations as reasons for organisations in this sector to be seen as "disability friendly".

The different industrial classifications were obtained from Schedule 4 of the EEA (Republic of South Africa, 1998:57) and are depicted in Table 5.1. The first column indicates the different sectors in accordance with the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). The second column indicates the turnover threshold used to determine EEA compliance for companies employing less than 50 employees.

Table 5.1: Sectors of the economy according to the EEA

Sector or subsectors in accordance with the Standard Industrial Classification	Total annual turnover
Agriculture	R2 million
Mining	R 7,5 million
Manufacturing	R10 million
Electricity, Gas and Water	R10 million
Construction	R 5 million
Retail and Motor Trade and Repair Services	R15 million
Wholesale Trade, Commercial Agents and Allied Services	R25 million
Catering, Accommodation and other Trade	R5 million
Transport, Storage and Communications	R 10 million
Finance and Business Services	**R 10 million**
Community, Social and Personal Services	R 5 million

Source: Republic of South Africa (1998:57)

- **Must, at the time of the study, be busy implementing their employment equity plans**

  The study aimed to show that not only were people with disabilities excluded from the employment practices, but that people of colour and women were preferred as designated employees over people with disabilities, even though the EEA makes no distinction between these

groupings. It was therefore essential to select organisations that were busy with the implementation of their employment equity plans.

- **Must have a human resource manager/director**

  Although this may seem elementary it was vital that interviews be conducted with high profile managers, as the goal of the research is to assess the difficulties organisations face, that is, human resource managers when employing people with disabilities. Owing to the fact that the study was qualitative in nature it was also important for the respondents to be experienced in the human resource field.

The first few questions included in the research questionnaire pertained to the above criteria and were used to verify that all sample organisations complied with them. These results are not, however, reported as part of the results in Chapter 6. Only companies that met all four of these criteria were considered for inclusion in the study.

To arrive at the 10 organisations in Gauteng province included in the final sample, the following steps were taken:

1. It was decided to make use of the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) registers as a source of information on organisations in the Gauteng area. The BMR registers are a computer list of names, addresses and other particulars (such as number of employees) of organisations in the various sectors of the economy. The registers, which are maintained and updated on an ongoing basis, were to be used for selecting the organisations to be included in the study. As is evident from Table 5.2, it was possible to select organisations from the specific sectors identified above.

Table 5.2: Registers of the Bureau of Market Research

Register	Approximate number of organisations
Mines	1 100
Industrial	18 000
Construction	11 500
Trade	45 500
Hotel and Off-sales	2 000
Financial and Insurance Institutions	500
Business Services	8 500
Public Sector	1 100
Importers	8 600
Exporters	4 400
Associations and Trade Unions	2 600
Commercial Farmers	10 000

Source: Bureau for Market Research (2002:1)

It was, however, necessary to select only organisations that employ 100 or more employees. To achieve this a meeting was held with a representative of the BMR to establish which companies in the business services sector employ a minimum of 100 employees. This proved fruitless, however, as the registers do not indicate the number of employees per organisation for the business services sector. Information on the number of employees is available for sectors such as the mining, industrial and construction sectors, but not on the business and financial services sector. This made selecting a sample from the registers very difficult. At this stage it was decided that the BMR registers would not be suitable for identifying sample organisations.

2. As a second option it was decided to make use of the business service organisations identified by Paul (2001:5) in the index of top companies to

work for in South Africa. Companies included in the index were evaluated on both macro criteria and micro criteria, which included the following:

Macro-criteria for selection included the following:

- The company must be financially stable
- The company must enjoy success in its markets
- The company is likely to enjoy status and a good reputation

Micro-criteria for selection included the following:

- Salary, benefits and working environment
- Recruitment
- Career opportunities and development
- Job security and the handling of corporate change
- The human face of the company

Only companies that did exceptionally well on all criteria were included in the list of 45 companies. Based on this a list of 45 companies was compiled, 25 of which were from the business and financial services sector. Of these 25 companies, 21 were situated in the Gauteng area. All of the 21 companies employed more than 100 employees. This made their inclusion in the sample a formality.

All 21 organisations were approached for their participation in the study. This was done by contacting the human resource managers or directors of the organisations telephonically. Of the original 21 organisations, seven indicated their willingness to participate in the study, while the other 14 declined. After numerous consultations with the various human resource managers it was decided to recruit three more organisations outside of the original 21, that still met the original selection criteria.

The Human Capital Corporation, Best Companies to Work for 2001, is a ranking of organisations similar to that of Paul (2001:5) and was used as the source of the three remaining organisations (Deloitte & Touche, 2001:1).

Organisations are evaluated on similar macro- and micro-criteria, and it was thus felt that the remaining three organisations were of similar stature to the original seven. Of the original seven, five were also included in the Best Companies to Work for 2001 Index. This again proved that there were marked similarities between the organisations.

For confidentiality purposes it is not possible to provide the names of the organisations that took part in the study, however, Table 5.3 provides an indication of the type of organisations, which took part in the study.

Table 5.3: Types of organisations in the sample

TYPE OF ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS
Commercial banks	n = 4
Investment banks	n = 2
Accounting firms	n = 2
Telecommunication firms	n = 1
Insurance firms	n = 1
	N = 10

It is the opinion of the researcher that the mix of organisations as displayed in Table 5.3 is an adequate representation of the mix of organisations in the finance and business services sector of the economy.

Owing to the fact that the sample is relatively small it is accepted that the generalisation of results in terms of all organisations in South Africa is not possible. However, it can be argued that in total the 10 organisations employ an astonishing 134 091 employees who represent five percent of the total number of employees in the business and financial services sector, therefore allowing for a certain degree of extrapolation (Commission for Employment Equity, 2002:10).

5.5   THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The measuring instrument used in this study for the collection of primary data was a questionnaire designed by the researcher. Owing to the lack of recent studies on the topic there were very few questionnaires that could be used or adapted in the compilation of the questionnaire. There were also no psychometrically tested and accepted questionnaires dealing specifically with the topic researched. The decision was thus taken to design a questionnaire based on the research question and using the knowledge and information gained from conducting the literature study.

See Appendix B for a copy of the research questionnaire.

5.6   DATA COLLECTION

5.6.1 Method of collecting data

It was decided to make use of structured personal interviews as a data collection method for the following reasons:

- The main objective of the study is to obtain qualitative data regarding the barriers faced by human resource managers when employing people with disabilities. The most commonly used method of collecting qualitative data is the structured interview (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:196). Also in terms of content analysis, the transcriptions of structured interviews provide the raw data, which can then be interpreted using frequency analysis of certain concepts.

- A small statistical sample with a high return rate was chosen, which would make it possible to conduct interviews with all of the human resource managers. This ensured that the objective of collecting qualitative, as well as quantitative data, was achieved.

- The sample organisations are all large organisations, each employing more than 100 employees. The human resource manager is only one of these employees and in large organisations the chance of a random questionnaire ending up in the hands of the correct person is minimal. Furthermore, the chance that the said individual will pay any attention to the questionnaire is unlikely. It was therefore necessary to arrange interviews ahead of the time with identified human resource managers.

- In modern society individuals are cautious about divulging information, whether it concerns their personal or work lives. In order to obtain the qualitative data needed, it was therefore necessary to conduct structured interviews with the respondents. This was especially important as the study was investigating a sensitive research topic, namely people with disabilities.

It was decided that the researcher would conduct all the interviews and that the services of a research organisation would not be needed. This was also justified in view of the fact that a relatively small sample was selected. It is also the opinion of the researcher that richer data would be obtained if he, based on his familiarity with the topic, conducted the interviews himself.

A two-step process to data collection was followed owing to the fact that multiple research designs were used. Firstly, once respondents agreed to take part in the study, they were sent a copy of the questionnaire via electronic mail. The purpose of sending the questionnaire to the respondent prior to the interview was to provide the respondent with the context of the study, thereby stimulating the thought process in terms of their experiences in the employment of people with disabilities. Respondents were requested to complete Sections A and B of the questionnaire prior to the interview. Respondents were also informed of the fact that Sections A and B provided descriptive and biographical statistics and that the true purpose of the interview was Section C, which focuses on their experiences and difficulties in terms of employing people with disabilities.

Interviews followed the structure of the questions in the questionnaire quite rigidly and it was therefore possible to plan the time frame of each interview. This was important owing to the fact that all of the respondents were in very senior positions within their organisations and were constantly pressured for time. Respondents were informed that one hour would be required for the interview; however, in reality most interviews lasted approximately one hour and twenty minutes, with the longest interview lasting two hours and twenty-three minutes. This was largely due to the many experiences the respondent had to share.

Interviews were conducted in an open-ended manner and at no time did the researcher prompt the respondent in a certain direction.

5.6.2 The pilot study

Before finalising the questionnaire a pilot study was conducted in order to test the questionnaire for the following:

- Obvious errors
- Questions that were unclear or could be misinterpreted
- Questions that could be offensive. This is especially important because of the sensitive nature of the topic
- Time needed to complete the questionnaire. This was necessary to plan the structured interview time and sequence efficiently.

The pilot study was conducted in the form of personal interviews with five respondents. All five were academics from the University of South Africa. Based on the qualifications and academic background of the respondents used in the pilot study it was decided that five respondents would be enough to test for the aspects mentioned above. Based on the results of the pilot study the questionnaire was accordingly adjusted.

5.7   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Lincoln & Guba (1985:20) propose that the conventional constructs of validity and reliability do not apply to qualitative research, and as an alternative they propose four "more appropriate" constructs: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

- **Credibility**

  Credibility refers to attempts to demonstrate that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. A qualitative study aims to explore a problem or describe a setting or process, in this case, barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. In terms of credibility these parameters have been adequately stated in the research question and objectives of the study.

- **Transferability**

  Transferability refers to the applicability of one set of findings to another context. It has been accepted from the outset of the study that one of the limitations of having a small sample from only one sector of the economy will imply that findings will not generalise across the whole population or all organisations in South Africa. However, it is the opinion of the researcher that the findings of this study could be generalised to similar organisations within the same sector of the economy.

- **Dependability**

  The third construct proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985:21) is dependability, in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting and topic. As a result of a refined understanding, which was gained during the coding process, it was decided to review data that was originally viewed as irrelevant to determine whether it could be coded for inclusion in the findings.

- **Confirmability**

  The final construct, confirmability, corresponds to the traditional concepts of objectivity. Lincoln & Guba (1985:22) stress the need to question whether an external party can confirm the findings of the study. While external parties did not confirm data in this study, the results and findings were compared with the findings of the literature study to ensure a measure of confirmability.

5.8   PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Several problems were encountered during the execution of the study. The first problem encountered was that of securing the participation of selected organisations in the study. This was largely because of the nature of the respondents sought for the study. As mentioned earlier respondents had to be in a senior human resource management position within the organisation. This resulted in many of the respondents either declining participation in the study or requesting to just submit the questionnaire, as interviews were perceived as too time consuming. Explaining the importance of the study to the respondents and informing them that the results of the study would help them with the creation and implementation of their own disability management policies overcame this problem in some instances.

A second problem encountered was the reluctance of respondents to share information on the actual number of employees from designated groups. Competition for these employees, especially at senior levels, is very high and therefore respondents were wary of providing information on these candidates for fear that they might be headhunted by other organisations in the same sector. This problem was overcome by assuring respondents that the results of the study are kept strictly confidential and that no mention would be made of the name of the organisation. Some organisations were, however, reluctant to provide this data.

A third, and seemingly unavoidable obstacle, was the actual time period that it took to conduct the interviews. It was originally estimated that the setting up

and conducting of all 10 interviews would take approximately one month. In reality, however, this stage of the research took three-and-a-half months to complete. Unfortunately in this situation the researcher was at the mercy of the respondents and was reluctant to pressurise them for fear that they might refuse to participate in the study.

5.9   CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research methodology for the study was discussed. The planning of the empirical study was outlined, with specific reference to the objectives of the study. It was shown how quantitative and qualitative methodologies could be combined to achieve the research objectives.

It was also shown how the final 10 sample organisations were selected and which sectors of the economy they represent. It was further explained that collection of primary data would be done by means of a questionnaire that would be completed during structured interviews.

Finally validity and reliability were discussed with specific reference to qualitative research designs.

Chapter 6 presents the research results.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the results of the study in terms of both the first and second research objectives are presented and discussed. The results pertaining to the first research objective as well as the biographical data of respondents are descriptive statistics and are therefore reported in frequency tables. The results pertaining to the second objective are much more interpretive in nature and are therefore presented in a different format.

6.2   SECTION   A   OF   THE   QUESTIONNAIRE: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

6.2.1   Information pertaining to the respondent

The first section of the questionnaire requested the respondents to provide certain biographical information about themselves and their organisations. The purpose of including such questions in the questionnaire was merely to verify that respondent organisations did in fact comply with the sampling criteria identified in the previous chapter. These results are not reported in this section, as they do not have an impact on the attainment of the research objectives.

What can, however, be stated is that all of the respondents were in senior positions within their organisations and had an average of 9,8 years experience in human resource management. It was also verified that all organisations were part of the business and finance sector of the economy and that their head offices were situated in Gauteng.

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6.2.2 Information pertaining to the organisation

Respondents were requested to indicate the total number of employees employed by their organisations. This was important as an organisation employing less that 50 employees could not be included in the study as the EEA would not be applicable to them (See Section 5.3, Chapter 5). This information is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Total number of employees employed by sample organisations

Respondent	Total no. of employees	Cumulative no. of employees
A	148	148
B	38492	38640
C	2500	41140
D	2000	43140
E	34000	77140
F	27963	105103
G	18500	123603
H	700	124303
I	3734	128037
J	6054	134091

It can be seen from Table 6.1 that all the sample organisations employed 100 or more employees, thereby complying with the minimum requirements for inclusion in the study. Secondly, as can be seen from Table 6.1, a total of 134 091 employees were employed by the sample organisations. According to the Commission for Employment Equity (2001:3) a total of 2 903 000 employees are employed in the business and financial services sector of the economy. Therefore, the total number of employees from the sample organisations represents approximately five percent of the total numbers of employees in the business and financial services sector.

Finally, respondents were requested to indicate the number of black, coloured and Indian people and white females employed by their organisations. Collectively, together with people with disabilities, these individuals are defined by the EEA as designated groups (see Appendix A). The purpose of the EEA as discussed in Chapter 4 of this study is to ensure that the staff profile of designated organisations mirrors the demographic profile of the South African population. However, it is the opinion of the researcher that while organisations actively recruit individuals from designated groups in terms of race and gender, there is not an active effort to recruit and employ people with disabilities. Respondents were therefore requested to indicate the number of designated employees employed by their organisations. The information on designated employees is provided in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Designated employees per organisation

Respondent	Designated employees	% of total	White males	Total employees
A	116	78%	32	148
B	27 330	71%	11 162	38 492
C	1 632	65%	868	2 500
D	1 311	66%	689	2 000
E	24 795	73%	9 205	34 000
F	23 008	82%	4 955	27 963
G	14 246	77%	4 254	18 500
H	439	63%	261	700
I	2 334	63%	1 400	3 734
J	5 388	89%	666	6 054
Total	**100 599**	**75%**	**33 492**	**134 091**

One of the limitations of the study that was identified in Chapter 5 was the reluctance of some of the respondents to provide exact information on how many individuals from each designated group are employed in their organisations. While all of the organisations had reported this information to

the CEE and therefore were in possession of this information, two of the respondents declined to offer this information for competitive reasons. However, they were willing to provide information on the total number of designated employees. It was therefore decided to use the cumulative figures for designated groups for each organisation, rather than have two different sets of information. This does not affect the study in any way as the number of people with disabilities is being compared with the total number of designated employees and not with subsets within these categories, for example white females.

Based on Table 6.2 it is possible to compare the actual figures of the sample organisations with the mean for the business and financial services sector of the economy. This information was obtained from the annual report of the CEE (Commission for Employment Equity, 2001:3) and is presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Employee profile for the business and financial services sector

Population group	% Employees
Black people (African)	21,55%
Indian people	7,28%
Coloured people	14,09%
White females	35,68%
White males	21,40%
Total	**100%**

From Table 6.3 it can be seen that of the total employees being employed in the business and financial services sector of the economy, 78,6 percent are designated employees, while 21,4 percent are white males. A comparison of the number of designated employees from sample organisations with the average for the business and financial services sector is presented in Table 6.4.

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Table 6.4: Designated employees from sample organisations compared to the sector average

	Sample organisations	Sector average
Designated employees	75,02%	78,60%
White males	24,98%	21,40%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

When comparing Table 6.2 and Table 6.3 it can be seen that the majority of organisations are on par with the sector average, which is 78,6 percent. These figures are also quite close to being representative of the South African population and the deduction can be made that the sample organisations have been successful up to this point in terms of the attainment of quotas set out by the EEA.

6.3   SECTION B OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE: INFORMATION PERTAINING TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

6.3.1   Number of employees with disabilities

From the above discussion it becomes evident that the sample organisations are successfully implementing their employment equity and affirmative action measures in terms of people of colour and women; however, in this section the number of people with disabilities employed in the sample organisations will be examined. Respondents were requested to indicate whether or not their organisations employed any people with disabilities. This information is contained in Table 6.5 and 6.6.

It can be seen from Table 6.5 that only one of the 10 sample organisations did not employ any people with disabilities. More importantly nine of the 10 sample organisations did employ at least one person with a disability at the time of the study.

Table 6.5: Do you currently employ any people with disabilities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Respondents were then requested to indicate the number of people with disabilities employed by their organisations. This information is presented in Table 6.6. Respondents who did not employ any people with disabilities were not required to complete Section B of the questionnaire further. Therefore, all further information pertaining to employees with disabilities is based on nine respondents and not all 10.

Table 6.6: Number of people with disabilities within the sample organisations

Respondent	People with disabilities	% of total	Able-bodied employees
A	2	1.37%	146
B	373	0.98%	38119
C	37	1.50%	2463
D	5	0.25%	1995
E	300	0.89%	33700
F	122	0.44%	27841
G	45	0.24%	18455
H	10	1.45%	690
I	20	0.54%	3714
Total	914	0.72%	127123

From the above table it can be seen that a total of 914 people with disabilities were employed within the sample organisations, which represented less than one percent of all employees employed within the sample.

The first objective of the study was to examine whether people with disabilities are significantly underemployed in terms of the EEA when compared with other designated groups, that is, people of colour and women.

The EEA has as its objective that the South African workforce be representative of the South African population. If this were the case then the open labour market representation of people with disabilities should be around five percent in all organisations employing 50 or more employees. If this figure is to be used as a benchmark, then the sample organisations are clearly lagging behind in terms of the employment of people with disabilities. The use of this figure as a benchmark would be unrealistic, however, as many of the people with disabilities in South Africa currently lack the skills and exposure to employment to compete on the open labour market. Therefore it was decided to use the figures provided by the CEE and the Department of Labour as a benchmark.

The CEE has a national target of a four percent representation of people with disabilities at all levels of management on the open labour market (Commission for Employment Equity, 2002:7). Using this figure as a benchmark it becomes clear that the sample organisations have not successfully attained this goal. However, according to the CEE, 4095 employers reported in terms of the requirements of the EEA between 1999 and 2001. A total of 31 082 employees with disabilities were employed by the 4905 organisations representing less than one percent of all employees reported on (Commission for Employment Equity, 2002:59). Based on this it is clear that the sample organisations have a similar representation to that of the national average. Unfortunately, statistics are not available on the number of people with disabilities employed per sector of the economy. However, the Department of Labour does provide a provincial breakdown of the representation of people with disabilities on the open labour market (Department of Labour, 2001:33). According to the report provided by the Department of Labour, employees with disabilities in Gauteng represent 1,3 percent of the total number of employees for this province. Based on this

figure it can be seen that the sample organisations are quite far behind the average for the province.

It can therefore be deduced that while the sample organisations have not been totally unsuccessful in their attempts to employ people with disabilities, they do lag behind the national targets set by the CEE and the National Skills Development Strategy (Republic of South Africa, 2001). With the majority of the sample organisations being the top companies to work for in South Africa it could be presumed that they should be at the forefront of promoting the employment of people with disabilities; however, it seems this is not the case. Contrary to this in Section 6.2 of this chapter it becomes clear that the sample organisations are successful in terms of employing other designated groups, where the average for the sample organisations (75,02 percent) is almost equal to the sector average (78,60 percent) and the targets of the EEA.

In terms of the attainment of the first objective of the study, it cannot be explicitly stated that the sample organisations did not actively recruit employees with disabilities. However, it can be stated that sample organisations were more successful in terms of employing other designated groups when compared with the employment of people with disabilities, and hence people with disabilities are underemployed when compared with other designated groups. The reasons for the underrepresentation of people with disabilities within the sample organisations are discussed in greater detail in later sections of this chapter.

6.3.2 Nature of disabilities and employment

Respondents were requested to indicate the nature of the disabilities experienced by their employees with disabilities. All of the respondents were able to provide information on the nature of disability; however, one respondent chose to keep this information confidential as employees were assured of confidentiality when they disclosed their disabilities to the organisation. The researcher accepted the refusal of information as one of the obstacles that would be experienced when researching a sensitive topic.

Information regarding the nature of disability is presented in Table 6.7. It is important to note, however, that all calculations of percentages pertaining to the nature of disability are calculated using a total of 877 employees. This is necessary as Respondent C chose to keep the nature of disability confidential.

Table 6.7: Types of disability within sample organisations

Respondent	Visually impaired	Hearing impaired	Physically impaired	Mentally impaired	Multiple	Total
A	0	0	2	0	0	2
B	54	83	212	13	11	373
C	Confidential					37
D	0	0	5	0	0	5
E	120	10	150	10	10	300
F	38	26	49	6	3	122
G	6	3	34	2	0	45
H	0	0	1	5	4	10
I	6	0	11	3	0	20
Total	224	122	464	39	28	914
Percent	25,54%	13,91%	52,91%	4,45%	3,19%	877

It is clear from Table 6.7 that the majority of employees with disabilities from the sample organisations had physical impairments. Over 50 percent of the employees with disabilities from the sample organisations have physical impairments, while just over 25 percent have visual impairments. This means that of the total of 877 employees with disabilities over 75 percent have either physical or visual impairments. The first important fact to note from this statistic is that it differs significantly from Table 2.3 in Chapter 2 of this study. In Table 2.3 visual impairments are cited as the most frequent, with physical impairments second most common and hearing impairments third most common. The second important fact to note is why Table 6.7 differs so greatly from Table 2.3. Respondents were also asked to indicate the actual job that people with disabilities perform within the organisation. The categories used

for this question are the same as those used by the employers when reporting their staff profile to the CEE. This information is presented in Table 6.8. Note that it is possible to use the total of 914 employees with disabilities for this question, as Respondent C was only reluctant to provide information on the nature of disability, but was willing to provide information pertaining to the type of job.

Table 6.8: Type of job done by employees with disabilities

Respondent	Admin & clerical staff	Service & sales staff	Professionals & technicians	Managers	Total
A	2	0	0	0	2
B	281	49	31	12	373
C	23	0	12	2	37
D	4	0	0	1	5
E	250	40	8	2	300
F	79	3	40	0	122
G	35	5	0	5	45
H	0	0	10	0	10
I	11	3	2	4	20
Total	**685**	**100**	**103**	**26**	**914**
Percent	**74,95%**	**10,94%**	**11,27%**	**2,84%**	**100%**

From Table 6.8 it can clearly be seen that the majority (75 percent) of employees with disabilities were employed in administrative or clerical roles.

When Table 6.7 and Table 6.8 are examined in conjunction with one another the reason for the differences between Table 6.7 and Table 2.3 (Chapter 2) becomes quite clear. It can be deduced that the reason for the high number of physically impaired employees lies in the type of job in which they are employed. The business and financial services sector and more specifically the banking sector is primarily a service-based sector with organisations

relying heavily on support staff to ensure customer service and satisfaction. The banking and telecommunications sectors have well-managed call centres for dealing with customer queries and complaints telephonically. Modern call centres are highly automated and this has resulted in a large number of physically and visually impaired people finding employment in call centres. This point is illustrated by the high percentage of physically and visually impaired employees reported in this study, in contrast to the low percentage of hearing and mentally impaired people. This finding also supports the view of Lee (1996:240) that the nature of disability affects the type of job that people with disabilities can do.

6.3.3 Employment practices and people with disabilities

Respondents were requested to indicate during which stages of the employment process, if any, external specialists were consulted or employed to assist in ensuring the employment of people with disabilities was successful. This information provides an indication of the areas where organisations have shortfalls in terms of employing people with disabilities. The fields covered by this question are recruitment, selection, placement and training. According to Stevenson[*] (2001), these are the most common areas in which organisations tend to seek the help or advice of specialist recruitment agencies, occupational therapists and specialist trainers or training organisations. This information is presented in Tables 6.9, 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12.

Table 6.9: External consultant/specialist involvement during recruitment

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
Never	3	33%	3	33%
Sometimes	4	44%	7	78%
Always	2	22%	9	100%

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[*] Stevenson (2001). Presentation attended at Access College, therefore no page numbers

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From Table 6.9 it can be seen that two thirds (6) of the respondents reported having used specialists at some time in the recruitment of people with disabilities. The other three respondents relied solely on their own recruitment staff to source and recruit people with disabilities.

Table 6.10: External consultant/specialist involvement during selection

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
Never	4	44%	4	44%
Sometimes	3	33%	7	78%
Always	2	22%	9	100%

From Table 6.10 it can be seen that just over half (5) of the respondents reported having used specialists at some time in the selection of people with disabilities. This number is smaller than the number of respondents who used specialists during recruitment. This would suggest that organisations have less difficulty in the selection of people with disabilities than with the recruitment of these individuals. This view is supported by some of the findings from the structured interviews.

Table 6.11: External consultant/specialist involvement during placement

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
Never	4	44%	4	44%
Sometimes	4	44%	8	89%
Always	1	11%	9	100%

From Table 6.11 it can be seen that, similar to Table 6.10, just over half (5) of the respondents reported having used specialists at some time during the placement of people with disabilities. Only one respondent reported always

using external specialists to place people with disabilities within the organisation.

From Table 6.12 it can be seen that two thirds of the respondents used specialist trainers or training organisations during the training and development of employees with disabilities.

Table 6.12: External consultant/specialist involvement during training

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
Never	3	33%	3	33%
Sometimes	5	56%	8	89%
Always	1	11%	9	100%

From the above tables the conclusion can be made that organisations had a greater need for external consultants and specialists during the recruitment and training phases of the employment of people with disabilities. It can also be stated that in all four phases of employment (recruitment, selection, training and placement) at least half of the respondents reported having used external consultants and specialists to assist with the employment of people with disabilities.

Respondents were also requested to indicate whether or not they knew of any organisations in South Africa that assist companies with the employment of people with disabilities. Although this question is not essential in terms of answering the research question, it was included due to the fact that the initial research during the literature study showed that specialist organisations dealing with the employment of people with disabilities were uncommon in South Africa. As can be seen in Table 6.13, however, all of the respondents were aware of at least one such organisation in South Africa. A list of these organisations provided by respondents can be found in Appendix D of this study.

Table 6.13: Awareness of specialist support organisations

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
Yes	9	100%	9	100%
No	0	0%	9	100%

6.3.4   Job accommodation methods used

Respondents were requested to indicate what job accommodation methods had been used as to accommodate employees with disabilities within their organisations. The accommodation methods addressed in this question dealt primarily with the elimination of physical barriers. The elimination of social barriers was dealt with during the interviews. The information pertaining to job accommodation methods is displayed in Table 6.14.

From Table 6.14 it can be seen that almost all the respondents indicated that assistive devices and modifications to their infrastructure had been used to accommodate people with disabilities. The actual devices and modifications were discussed in the interviews with the respondents and are discussed in later sections of this chapter.

Table 6.14: Job accommodation methods used

Job accommodations	Frequency	Percentage
Job restructuring	3	9%
Assistive devices	8	25%
Training and retraining	4	13%
Personal assistant	3	9%
Building modifications	8	25%
Job reassignment	6	19%
Total	**32**	**100%**

The high incidence of assistive devices and building modifications as accommodation methods can be attributed to the high percentage of employees with physical and visual impairments employed by sample organisations. Building modifications are almost always required when hiring people with physical impairments while assistive devices such as voice recognition software and braille keyboards are essential when employing people with visual impairments. For both these classifications of disabilities considerable modifications need to be made to work areas and general infrastructure. Job reassignment was also used extensively by respondents. Many respondents indicated that this was often used for able-bodied employees who had become disabled while in their employment as a result of an accident or illness.

It is interesting to note that very little use was made of personal assistants. It is the opinion of the researcher that this can be attributed to the level of employment of the majority of employees with disabilities. More than 75 percent of employees with disabilities from the sample organisations are employed in the lower levels of organisations and the justification for great expense when accommodating lower level staff is difficult.

6.3.5 Turnover of people with disabilities

According to Lester & Caudill (1987:50), people with disabilities generally have a lower turnover over rate than able-bodied staff. This view was tested by requesting respondents to indicate the turnover rate of people with disabilities as well as the turnover rate of people with disabilities compared to able-bodied staff. This information is presented in Tables 6.15 and 6.16.

From Table 6.15 it can be seen that none of the respondents indicated a high turnover rate for people with disabilities. The majority of respondents (78 percent) indicated a low to very low turnover of people with disabilities. This is in agreement with the view Lester & Caudill (1987:50).

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Table 6.15: Turnover rate of people with disabilities within the sample

Turnover rate for disabled people	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
Very low	6	67%	6	67%
Low	1	11%	7	78%
Average	2	22%	9	100%
High	0	0%	9	100%
Very high	0	0%	9	100%

Respondents were also asked to whether they found the turnover rate of people with disabilities to be higher or lower than that of able-bodied staff members. These results are presented in Table 6.16.

Table 6.16: Turnover rate of people with disabilities compared to able-bodied employees

Turnover rate compared to ABE*	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
Much lower	6	67%	6	67%
Lower	1	11%	7	78%
The same	2	22%	9	100%
Higher	0	0%	9	100%
Much higher	0	0%	9	100%

Note: ABE refers to able-bodied staff members

It is clear from Table 6.16 that the turnover rate for people with disabilities is lower than that of able-bodied employees. Respondents were asked to say what, in their opinion, were the reasons for the lower turnover rate. The responses to this question are provided below.

Respondent A

"Employees in the industry are highly head hunted and organisations seek the best talent regardless of race, gender or disability."

* *This respondent reported the turnover rate to be the same as that of able bodied staff.*

Respondent B

"Employees find their comfort zone i.e. once employees with disabilities find a job they make the best of it, because they fear the prospect of having to find other employment."

Respondent C

"Our industry is a high turnover industry in which individuals can move from one organisation to the next once they have qualified. I recently had to pass on a graduate who was quite severely disabled to a competitor because he was made a better offer."

Respondent D

"Employees with disabilities have difficulty finding employment therefore once they are in a job they do their best to keep it."

Respondent E

"I think the reason for the low turnover rate is the lack of alternative jobs. By this I mean that there is a low availability of jobs for people with disabilities. "

Respondent F

"I am not exactly sure what the reasons are for the lower turnover rate, it is just something we have come to observe over the past few years. We have never actually looked into the reasons."

Respondent G

"I would say that it is largely due to the fact that because employment on the open labour market is difficult to come by for people with disabilities once they get a job they make sure they keep it."

Respondent H

"The turnover rate in our industry is very low in general."
* *This respondent reported the turnover rate to be the same as that of able-bodied staff.*

Respondent I

"It is a struggle for people with disabilities to get employment therefore when they have a job they hold on to it."

It is clear from the above answers that there is a perception among respondents that people with disabilities have difficulty in finding employment on the open labour market, and that it is these difficulties that keep them from seeking alternative employment, resulting in a lower turnover rate than that of able-bodied employees.

6.4 SECTION C OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE: BARRIERS TO EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In the previous chapter it was mentioned that content analysis involves conducting word-frequency counts on a data set; in the case of this study the

data set comprises the transcriptions of the interviews held with respondents (see Appendix C). Sections A and B of the questionnaire dealt primarily with descriptive statistics, and were therefore not transcribed. Only data from Section C was transcribed for purposes of content analysis.

According to Weber (1990:37) content analysis comprises more than just word frequency counts. What makes the technique particularly rich and meaningful is its reliance on categorising the data. The basics of categorising can be defined as follows:

"A category is a group of words with similar meaning or connotations" (Weber, 1990:37).

This methodology was applied to the data in an attempt to identify categories of barriers which organisations faced when employing people with disabilities.

To do this it was necessary to first code the data. According to Haney, Russell, Gulek & Fierros (1998:40) two types of coding are possible. In the first process categories are established following some preliminary examination of the data – this is known as emergent coding. In the second process categories are established prior to the analysis based upon some theory or existing set of categories – this is known as a priori coding. According to the research conducted during the literature survey no standard categorisation of barriers could be found that the researcher could apply to the coding process. Therefore an emergent coding process was applied.

6.4.1 Barriers experienced when employing people with disabilities

The above methodology was applied to the transcripts of interviews section by section, rather than the whole transcript. This was done due to the fact that interviews followed the structure of questionnaires with each question dealing with a related but different topic. In the first question respondents were asked to recall the barriers that they had experienced when employing people with

disabilities. The original coding process identified 46 concepts (words or phrases) which represented the barriers that respondents had experienced. These concepts were then grouped into eight categories, which according to Stemler (2001:3) must be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. These categories and concepts are displayed in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17: Categories of barriers identified by sample organisations

Concept coded for	Frequency
Social barriers	
Broad unspecified social barriers	6
Ignorance regarding disability issues	4
Stereotyping	3
Pre-conceived notions of abilities	3
Ostracism	2
Stigmatisation	2
Lack of awareness	2
Able-bodied staff not wanting to work in same office as people with disabilities	1
Fear of contracting disability	1
Prejudice	1
Client perceptions of abilities of people with disabilities	1
Mindset that people with disabilities belong in call centres	1
Able-bodied staff do not know how to react	1
Organisation needs to be sensitised	1
Inexperience in terms of employing people with disabilities	1
Total	**30**

Physical Barriers	
Broad unspecified physical barriers	7
Disability "unfriendly" status of buildings	5
Accessibility of organisation's buildings	4
Infrastructure	3

Table 6.17: (Continued)

Disabled toilet facilities	2
Mobility problems	1
Do not have specialised workstations for people with disabilities	1
Unsure of what to do when a person with a disability leaves the organisation	1
Total	**24**

Barriers related to large dispersed organisations	
Line manager resistance	5
Line managers do not have the knowledge and skills to manage people with disabilities	2
Burden on line manager's budget	2
Large organisation with dispersed offices	2
No formal guidelines are in place for disability management	2
Very old buildings	2
Regional offices not accessible	2
Line managers do not want to deal with the practicalities	1
Financial and time burdens on line managers	1
Total	**19**

Barriers related to a mobile workforce	
People with disabilities have to visit clients	2
Mobile workforce	2
Client's infrastructure	2
Client ignorance	2
Total	**8**

Barriers related to the nature of work	
People with disabilities lack skills and experience in corporate environment	3
Lack of progression of people with disabilities	1

Table 6.17: (Continued)

Very stable workforce	1
Nature of work is very specialised	1
Total	**6**

Barriers related to disclosure of disabilities	
Fear of disclosing disability	4
Mask their disabilities with medication	1
Total	**5**

Cost of accommodation as a barrier	
Capital expenditure on accommodations	2
Involving other staff members' time	1
Total	**3**
Legislation as a barrier	
Reactive approach	1
Tend to focus on gender and race	1
Total	**2**

From Table 6.17 it can be seen that the 46 concepts identified in the coding process have been condensed into eight categories or types of barrier. The first two categories namely, social and physical barriers, were expected to be prominent in the findings, however, the barriers relating to the size of the organisation were not expected to be so prominent. The barriers identified in Table 6.17 are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 as they form the main findings of this study in terms of the second objective.

6.4.2 Measures implemented to eliminate barriers to the employment of people with disabilities

Respondents were requested to recall any steps that had been taken by the organisation to eliminate the barriers they had experienced in terms of

employing people with disabilities. For this section of the data it was possible to use an a priori coding process as certain categories, as identified in Table 6.17, had been developed. Therefore, the measures implemented to remove barriers were categorised in terms of the categories of barriers identified. This information is displayed in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18: Measures implemented to eliminate barriers to employing people with disabilities in sample organisations

Concept coded for	Frequency
Elimination of social barriers	
Raising the level of awareness regarding disability	6
Sensitivity training and workshops	3
Educated able-bodied staff regarding disability-related issues	3
Promote a culture of mutual respect, teamwork and openness	3
Made use of specialist trainers and guest speakers	2
Involvement of the individual with the disability in creating awareness	2
Special office arrangements	1
Senior management in the organisation is fully committed	1
Total	**21**

Elimination of physical barriers	
Building modifications	7
Made necessary accommodations and adjustments	5
Specialists brought in to conduct workplace assessments	2
Wheelchair ramps	2
Job restructuring	1
The possibility of government providing a portion of accommodation costs	1
Total	**18**

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Table 6.17: (Continued)

Elimination of barriers related to large organisations	
Disability management policy for line managers	6
Penalisation/incentivisation programmes for the attainment of employment goals	3
Created a special fund from which line managers could draw to make accommodations	1
Total	**10**

Elimination of barriers related to a mobile workforce	
Sensitising of clients	1
Created teams in which people with disabilities operate	1
Total	**2**

Elimination of barriers related to a lack of skilled people with disabilities	
Actively sourcing people with disabilities	1
Contact with a specialist recruitment agency	1
Total	**2**

Table 6.18 indicated that 21 concepts were identified and coded for. These concepts were then condensed into five categories. It would appear that emphasis was placed on eliminating social and physical barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

It can be seen that initiatives taken to eliminate social barriers placed a lot of emphasis on creating awareness of disability and educating and sensitising staff regarding aspects of disability. According to respondents, this is the most effective means of changing attitudes and preconceived notions of able-bodied employees. Initiatives taken to eliminate physical barriers were largely based on modifying or adjusting infrastructure in terms of buildings, work areas and workstations. External specialists and occupational therapists were

also used to make assessments and adjustments to workstations. What is of concern is the fact that very limited mention was made of specialised equipment or adaptive technologies that could be used. In terms of line manager resistance it would appear that organisations predominantly use reward systems to increase the line manager's willingness to employ people with disabilities This could also be seen as being indicative of the fact that there is no clear corporate strategy in this regard.

6.4.3 Success of measures implemented to eliminate barriers to employing people with disabilities

Once respondents had identified the barriers they had experienced and the measures they had taken to eliminate the said barriers, they were requested to comment on the success of the measures implemented. Twelve concepts were coded for and these were condensed into the three categories.

Table 6.19: Success of measures implemented to eliminate barriers within sample organisations

Concept coded for	Frequency
Successful	
Measures very successful in general	5
Sensitivity training has been very successful in creating awareness amongst and educating able-bodied employees	2
Separate office use has been successful, but is not ideal	1
Standard disability policy has also been very successful	1
Specialist architects and programmers we brought in have proved to be invaluable	1
Buildings have improved extensively	1
Successful in creating a culture that is open-minded and aware	1

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Table 6.19: (Continued)

Line managers are starting to embrace the idea of employing people with disabilities	1
Total	**13**

Unsuccessful	
Not been successful as yet in terms of making our buildings disability friendly	2
Not been as successful as we would like in terms of attracting suitably qualified candidates with disabilities	2
Clients still prefer able-bodied staff and are reluctant to accept employees with disabilities	1
Total	**5**

Not determined	
Have not been in place long enough to evaluate their true effectiveness	3
Total	**3**

From Table 6.19 one can see that the majority of respondents felt that the measures their organisations had taken to eliminate barriers, especially social barriers, had been successful. Areas of concern include failure to make infrastructure accessible to people with disabilities and failure to attract suitably qualified people with disabilities to the organisation. Probably the most significant finding is that certain respondents reported that measures have not been in place long enough to determine their effectiveness. This would suggest that organisations, at the time of the study, had only recently started making efforts to accommodate people with disabilities.

6.4.4 Physical versus social barriers

Respondents were requested to give their opinion on whether physical or social barriers are the most difficult to overcome in their organisations. Significantly, nine out of the 10 respondents stated that social barriers are more difficult to overcome. This information is presented in Table 6.20.

Table 6.20: Social versus physical barriers

Concept coded for	Frequency
Social barriers	
Personal beliefs and attitudes are one of the most difficult things to change	6
We do not have the skills internally to change the awareness levels	1
Time consuming and involves a number of people with a number of different ideas and attitudes	2
You are dealing with the beliefs of people and this always increases the complexity	1
Our infrastructure is currently very disability friendly, therefore I would say social barriers	1
Total	**11**

Physical barriers	
Capital expenditures	1
Total	**1**

It should be clear from the above table that the main reason for respondents finding social barriers difficult to overcome was the fact that the personal beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of able-bodied staff are difficult to change. Coupled with this is the high costs in terms of money and time that must be incurred to create the awareness and give the education required to change beliefs and attitudes. The respondent who stated that physical barriers are the

most difficult to overcome had not encountered any social barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

6.4.5 Cost of accommodating an employee with a disability

It was stated in Chapter 4 of this study that the actual cost of accommodating an employee with a disability is relatively inexpensive. It was therefore decided to test this in the empirical study. Respondents were requested to indicate whether the elimination of employment barriers had resulted in any extraordinary expenditure for the organisation. This information is presented in Table 6.21.

Table 6.21: Cost of accommodating an employee with a disability

Concept coded for	Frequency
YES	
Yes they did result in extraordinary expenses: • *Employment of specialists to facilitate the recruitment and placement* • *Placement cost and workplace assessments are quite costly.*	1
Costs more to employ someone with a disability: • *10 percent more*	1
Yes: • *We have put a lot of money into making our facilities disability friendly* • *Costs of specialist recruitment agencies*	1
• *Specialist recruitment agencies, and the placing of recruitment advertisements in special media publications have resulted in certain expenses*	1
Total	**4**

Table 6.21: (Continued)

NO	
Expenditure on eliminating barriers is quite minimal	1
I would not say that the elimination of barriers has been extraordinarily expensive	1
Our current expenditure on accommodating people with disabilities has not been too exorbitant	1
We have not yet had to incur great expenses in terms of accommodating people with disabilities	1
I don't think that we have spent any more on employing an individual with a disability than we do when we headhunt a skilled professional or buy one out from a competitor	1
Has not resulted in any extraordinary expenditures	1
Total	**6**

From Table 6.21 it can be seen that six of the 10 respondents reported that the elimination of employment barriers had not resulted in any extraordinary expenditures. Four out of the 10 respondents reported that the elimination of barriers had resulted in expenditure for the organisation. Significantly, three out of the four respondents that said they had incurred expenses cited the cost of specialist recruitment agencies as one of the reasons for incurring expenses while accommodating people with disabilities.

The fact that six out of 10 respondents did not incur extraordinary expenses when accommodating people with disabilities supports the views expressed in Chapter 4 of this study.

All 10 of the respondents agreed that there is a direct relationship between the degree of disability and the cost of accommodating a person with a disability. Owing to the fact that all of the respondents were in agreement regarding this point this information is not tabulated here.

6.4.6 The effectiveness of employment legislation

In Chapter 4 it was shown that the Employment Equity Act (EEA) does not focus on the aspect of people with disabilities as thoroughly as other legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). It was decided to test this fact with the respondents. Respondents were requested to provide their comments on the effectiveness of employment legislation in assisting with the employment of people with disabilities. No mention was made of the EEA in the questionnaire sent to respondents or by the researcher during the interviews with respondents. Despite this the majority of respondents only discussed the EEA as legislation pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities. Some respondents did, however, refer to the Code of Good Practice. Coding was therefore divided into two categories, namely, the EEA and the Code. This information is presented in Table 6.22.

Table 6.22: Effectiveness of employment legislation according to respondents

Concept coded for	Frequency
Employment Equity Act	
Compliance role, in terms of the EEA	6
Do not think that the disability issue is enforced by legislation, as is the race and gender issue, people with disabilities play second fiddle to people of colour	4
EEA does not guide the employment of people with disabilities	3
Legislation does not aid in the employment of people with disabilities	3
Makes employers more aware of the disabled	2
EEA still has a long way to go	2
Use the EEA as a guide	1
Total	**21**

Table 6.22: (Continued)

Code of Good Practice	
The Code is effective in creating a better understanding of disability	4
Total	**4**

Table 6.22 illustrates that respondents felt that they are compelled in terms of the EEA to hire people with disabilities; however, many of the respondents felt that the EEA focuses more on correcting the racial composition of organisations than it does in terms of people with disabilities. Three of the ten respondents felt that employment legislation does not aid the employment of people with disabilities at all. All the respondents who commented on the Code of Good Practice stated that it was effective in creating a better understanding of people with disabilities and aspects regarding the employment of people with disabilities. The information presented in Table 6.22 supports the view raised in Chapter 4 that there was a need for the South African government to improve legislation pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities.

6.4.7 Main reason for hiring a person with a disability

Respondents were requested to indicate the main reason, in their opinion, why their organisation would hire a person with a disability. For this question there were no existing categories that could be used for the coding process, therefore an emergent coding design was used. This information is presented in Table 6.23. Totally in contrast with the expectations of the researcher; the most commonly cited reason for hiring a person with a disability was the protection or enhancement of the organisation's image as an employer of choice or top company to work for.

Table 6.23: Main reason for hiring a person with a disability

Concept coded for	Frequency
Protect and enhance our image	4
The top companies to work for in South Africa	4
Have the skills and abilities to do his or her job effectively	3
The best person for the job	2
Can add value to our organisation	1
Compliance with the EEA	1
Social responsibility	1
Total	**16**

Fortunately it can also be seen that some of the respondents reported that they would hire people with disabilities based on their skills and abilities, and not just to enhance the image of the organisation.

6.4.8 Main reason for not hiring a person with a disability

Respondents were requested to indicate the main reason, in their opinion, why their organisation would not hire a person with a disability. For this question there were no existing categories that could be used for the coding process, therefore an emergent coding design was used. This information is presented in Table 6.24.

Table 6.24: Main reason for not hiring a person with a disability

Concept coded for	Frequency
Unable to meet the requirements and demands of the job in terms of their skills and abilities	5
Current poor accessibility of buildings	2
Tokenism: • *Opposed to hiring someone to fill quotas or to look good in the eye of the public*	1

Table 6.24: (Continued)

Unable to learn the job	1
If accommodation of an individual with a disability will be excessive for the company	1
Disability inhibits them from doing the job	1
Total	**11**

It can be seen from Table 6.24 that the most commonly cited reason why organisations would not hire someone with a disability would be if they were not able to meet the requirements of the job in terms of their skills and abilities. Only two respondents cited the inaccessibility of their buildings as the main reason why they would not hire a person with a disability.

6.4.9   Improving the employment of people with disabilities

The final question that respondents were asked was for their opinions on how the employment of people with disabilities on the open labour market could be improved. For this question there were no existing categories that could be used for the coding process, therefore an emergent coding design was used.

Table 6.25: Improving the employment of people with disabilities within sample organisations

Concept coded for	Frequency
National awareness campaign	6
Legislation must be improved	2
Training and skills development of people with disabilities on a national level	2
Internships or learnership programmes offered by large organisations: • *Life skills and interviewing skills* • *Education and training*	2

Table 6.25: (Continued)

Need more institutions like Access College, which provide education and training for people with disabilities	1
Tax rebate for organisations that employ people with disabilities	1
Organisations should warm (be open) to the idea of employing people with disabilities	1
Employers should be allowed to advertise publicly for people with disabilities	1
A proactive approach is needed	1
Capacity-building initiative to build a critical mass of employable individuals within professions	1
People with disabilities must ensure that they are employable in terms of their skills and abilities	1
Total	**19**

Significantly, six of the 10 respondents stated that a national campaign run by government is required to increase the awareness of people with disabilities. The focus of this campaign should be on the abilities of these individuals, and also increasing tolerance towards people with disabilities. This is only possible by increasing the education levels people. It is significant to note that the majority of respondents have identified steps to eliminate social barriers but not physical barriers. The training and skills development of people with disabilities were also prominent in the responses.

6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research results of the study were reported. The results were presented according to the structure of the questionnaire used. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with the biographical and demographical information of respondents and organisations respectively. The data presented for this section were primarily descriptive statistics.

Section B of the questionnaire dealt with the first research objective of the study, namely the underrepresentation of people with disabilities in the sample organisations.

Finally, Section C of the questionnaire dealt with the barriers to employment of people with disabilities that organisations had experienced, as well as how they had gone about eliminating these barriers.

In Chapter 7, the research results are discussed in more detail. The results will be summarised and explained, and certain recommendations are made.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 6, the research results were presented in tabular format according to the structure of the questionnaire. In this chapter the attainment of the first and second research objectives are discussed as well as other significant findings from the results. The final part of the chapter offers some recommendations for overcoming the barriers identified. Recommendations for further research are also made.

7.2   FIRST RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The first objective of the study was to show that people with disabilities are underrepresented in sample organisations when compared to the representation of people of colour and women as designated employees, in terms of compliance with the EEA. The results showed that organisations have successfully implemented their employment equity plans in terms of correcting the racial compositions of their workforce and that they are on par both with national and sector averages in terms of representation of people of colour. The study also showed that the sample organisations were below the national and provincial averages in terms of the representation of people with disabilities. The representation of employees with disabilities was 0,72 percent. This figure is considerably lower than the figure of five percent that would be considered representative of the overall population and is also considerably lower than the goal of four percent set out in the National Skills Development Strategy.

It is therefore concluded that the study was successful in terms of showing that people with disabilities were underrepresented when compared to the representation of other designated groups. One can therefore state that the

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null hypothesis (people with disabilities are not underrepresented in sample organisations) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (people with disabilities are underrepresented in sample organisations) accepted.

It is accepted as a limitation of the study, owing to the small sample size, that these findings cannot be extrapolated to all financial and business service organisations. However, it is also important to note that almost all the sample organisations are considered top companies to work for in South Africa (see Chapter 5). It is the opinion of the researcher that if people with disabilities are underrepresented in the sample organisations, a similar underrepresentation might be found in the majority of financial and business service organisations.

7.3   SECOND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: BARRIERS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Based on the attainment of the first research objective, it becomes necessary to ask the question why such an underrepresentation of people with disabilities in the sample organisations exists. This leads to the second objective of the study, which is the identification of barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

A number of barriers were identified during interviews with senior Human Resource Management personnel from the sample organisations. A total of 46 barriers were identified, which were then condensed into eight classifications of barriers. It can therefore be stated that the second research objective was attained and that the null hypothesis (sample organisations do not experience significant barriers in terms of the employment of people with disabilities) can be rejected and the alternative hypothesis (sample organisations do experience significant barriers in terms of the employment of people with disabilities) accepted.

7.3.1   Social barriers

The most commonly reported barriers were barriers of a social nature. These included behaviours of able-bodied staff such as ignorance regarding disabilities, stereotyping, incorrect preconceived notions regarding the abilities of people with disabilities and the stigmatisation of people with disabilities. Respondents also reported that social barriers are by far the most difficult barriers to overcome. This was a significant finding with 90 percent of respondents in agreement regarding this fact.

7.3.2   Physical barriers

The second most commonly reported barriers were those of a physical nature. These barriers included the inaccessibility of buildings and infrastructure to people with disabilities, and mainly impacted on people with physical disabilities. Many of the barriers identified in this classification were identified in Chapter 4 of this study and were expected to be found in the research.

7.3.3   Barriers relating to large and dispersed organisations

In contrast to the above, a classification of barriers that was not identified in the literature study and also not expected to be found in the research, was barriers caused by aspects pertaining to large organisations. The most commonly identified barrier in this classification was resistance from line managers in terms of employing people with disabilities. Initiatives taken at corporate level to increase the representation of people with disabilities were met with resistance from line managers. This was largely due to the fact that managers were not educated or skilled in terms of accommodating people with disabilities, and also complained that the accommodation of people with disabilities placed a financial burden on their budgets. Another barrier pertaining to large organisations was the dispersion of their offices and places of business. This resulted in building modifications and adjustments being expensive. This finding is seen as significant for the financial and business services sector, and might not be as significant in other sectors.

7.3.4 Barriers relating to the use of a mobile workforce

A barrier that is significant probably only to the accounting and related professions is that of mobility of the workforce. The two respondents from this profession (see Table 5.3, Chapter 5) reported that they experienced barriers as a result of the fact that their employees often work in the offices of their clients. This implies that the social and physical barriers experienced in their own organisations are replicated in those of their clients. This finding is only seen as being significant for the accounting and related professions and not for all financial and business service organisations.

7.3.5 Barriers relating to the nature of work

Respondents reported that people with disabilities often lacked the skills and experience to perform many of the tasks required of their jobs, owing to the highly skilled nature of employment in the financial and business services sector. This indicates a gap in the tertiary education of people with disabilities in South Africa. This also was identified as a barrier in Chapter 3. This is a significant finding as the respondents who reported a lack of skilled people with disabilities also reported that their efforts to recruit these individuals had been unsuccessful.

7.3.6 Barriers relating to the disclosure of disabilities

Many of the respondents reported the reluctance of people with disabilities to disclose their disabilities as a major barrier. This reluctance could be related to the number of social barriers identified in earlier discussions. The failure to disclose disabilities, especially those that are not so obvious, could also be the reason for the very low representation of people with disabilities in sample organisations. This implies that the actual number of employees with disabilities could be far more; however, employers are not aware of these employees.

7.3.7 Cost of accommodation as a barrier

A limited number of respondents reported that the cost of accommodating employees with disabilities was excessive for the organisation. This was especially true for modifications to the physical environment.

7.3.8 Legislation as a barrier

A limited number of respondents identified employment legislation as a barrier. While the legislation itself is not seen to inhibit the employment of people with disabilities, the fact that it does not focus adequately on people with disabilities, and therefore does not support the employment of people with disabilities is.

The study was successful in attaining the second research objective by identifying a number of significant barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

7.4　　OTHER SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

7.4.1 Difficulty in eliminating social barriers

One of the most significant findings was that nine of the 10 respondents reported that social barriers are more difficult to overcome than physical barriers. Respondents stated that being the top companies to work for they had the financial resources to eliminate physical barriers; however, the elimination of social barriers was far more difficult as it involved the changing of perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that able-bodied staff had developed over many years. Respondents reported that the elimination of social barriers was both expensive and time consuming. The involvement of people with disabilities in initiatives to eliminate social barriers had proven to be successful. The above views are also supported by Crisp (1994:27) and Bruyere (2000:43).

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7.4.2 Type of disability and employment

Over 50 percent of the employees with disabilities from the sample organisations had physical impairments with a further 25 percent having visual impairments. This resulted in the majority (75 percent) of employees being employed in administrative or support roles where the use of the vision and mobility was not essential for doing their job. Shockingly, only 2,5 percent of all employees with disabilities were employed in management roles. This statistic supports the view raised by one respondent that people with disabilities reach a ceiling beyond which they do not progress in the organisation.

7.4.3 Inadequacy of employment legislation

Mention was made of the shortcomings of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) in Chapter 4. Respondents reiterated the shortcomings of current employment legislation, with the biggest problem being identified as the fact that the EEA's focus is on race and gender and not disability. This is a significant finding as all the sample organisations fall within the scope of the EEA. Respondents also highlighted the EEA's inability to guide employers through the employment of a person with a disability.

Respondents who had knowledge of the Code of Good Practice stated that it addresses many of the issues that the EEA fails to and that it has been an effective guide for employing people with disabilities as well as creating internal disability management policies. Unfortunately not all respondents had knowledge of the Code of Good Practice and had therefore not benefited from it. This is most likely due to the fact that the Code of Good Practice is not legislation and therefore organisations are not compelled to read and apply it.

7.4.4 Strategies to improve the employment of people with disabilities

A national awareness and education campaign regarding disability and people with disabilities is seen as being essential to improve the employment of

people with disabilities. Respondents state that this initiative should be the responsibility of the government. Respondents also felt that employment legislation must be improved. Interestingly, organisations see the improvement of the employment situation of people with disabilities as the responsibility of government, and not of "big business".

7.4.5 Main reason for hiring an individual with a disability

A finding that was not at all expected and also not regularly identified in the literature study was the fact that organisations were willing to employ people with disabilities to protect or enhance their image as a top company to work for. The research of Honey *et al* (1993:2) also found that a large number of employers state that they would employ people with disabilities in an effort to improve the image of the organisation. A similar view is also reported by Brading & Curtis (1996:29). This is in contradiction with the broad purpose of this study which seeks to promote the employment of people with disabilities based on their abilities and not because they are disabled.

7.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the barriers identified above it is clear that organisations experienced a certain amount of difficulty in terms of the employment of people with disabilities. The following recommendations are made with the view to eliminating barriers and improving the representation of people with disabilities on the open labour market:

- **A proactive approach is required**
  It was clear from the interviews that much of what had been done to eliminate the barriers to employment had been done reactively and because it had to be done in terms of compliance with legislation. Organisations should rather adopt a proactive and planned approach to the employment of people with disabilities.

For a proactive approach to work it needs to be driven from the top down. To make this realistically possible it is suggested that clearly defined policies be published which deal with the employment of people with disabilities. For these policies to have any meaning it is suggested that at the bare minimum they should contain information pertaining to:

- The employment procedures for dealing with applicants with disabilities;
- Summaries and implications of specific aspects of legislation which deal with the employment of people with disabilities;
- Protocol for dealing with people with disabilities;
- A reference list to the facilities and aids already in place within the organisation for accommodating people with disabilities;
- A reference list of external consultants and NGOs that assist in the recruitment and placement of people with disabilities.

The above list is not a complete list of the items that should be included in a "disability management policy", as the policy in reality will differ from organisation to organisation. They are however areas where respondents expressed a need for further information and guidance. Meager *et al* (1993:3) also report that the majority of the organisations included in their research did not have explicit policies driving the employment of people with disabilities. Further research into what should be included in a "disability management policy" is therefore recommended.

- **Appointment of a person to manage the employment of people with disabilities**

The compilation of the above policy will require a considerable effort on behalf of the employer or Human Resource Manager. It was, however, found that while the respondents in this study had knowledge of disability-related issues they were, in most cases, reluctant to take responsibility for the employment of people with disabilities. Often the actual person responsible for the employment of people with disabilities was the transformation manager. This person was also responsible for ensuring

representivity of people of colour and women. It is, however, the opinion of the researcher that a person should be appointed strictly to address the employment of people with disabilities, at least until the representivity of people with disabilities is at the targeted levels.

The role of this appointee would be to oversee the development and more importantly the implementation of the "disability management policy". This person should act as a liaison between people with disabilities and all aspects of their work. The appointed person would have to have a thorough knowledge of the employment of people with disabilities as well as the legislation pertaining to their employment. The individual would ideally also be well networked with NGOs and other organisations that assist people with disabilities in obtaining employment.

An argument that may be brought against this recommendation, is that an appointment of this nature may result in a financial burden for the organisation. While this is true, it must not be forgotten that the respondent organisations were the top companies to work for in South Africa, and in this regard would like to remain the top companies to work for. As was highlighted earlier, Thomas & Hlahla (2002:6) state that employers who become the employer of choice for people with disabilities also create the potential to become the employer of choice for all prospective employees. This can be used as one justification for the appointment of a "disability manager". Another fact for consideration is the cost of appointing a specialist weighed against the reduction of the cost of future barriers. It is expected that a specialist "disability manager" would be able to reduce the number of barriers to the employment of people with disabilities and in that way also reduce the cost of employing people with disabilities. Regardless of the above benefits for the organisation the appointment of a new member of staff at a relatively senior level will result in expenditure for the organisation. This recommendation might therefore not be applicable to all employers.

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- **Internal investigations to identify barriers**

  The barriers identified in the study were those experienced by respondents in their roles as human resource managers. However, only one of the 10 respondents reported that they had conducted an investigation to identify barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. It is therefore recommended that organisations make thorough investigations of both their physical and social working environments to identify the actual barriers to employing people with disabilities.

  In terms of investigating the physical environment, organisations can either choose to do the investigations internally or make use of external consultants through workplace assessments. It is envisaged that the responsibility for coordinating such efforts should rest with the person appointed to the post mentioned above.

  An investigation of the barriers, which are of a social nature, would to a large extent involve people with disabilities already working within the organisation. In this regard it is recommended that questionnaires be sent to, and/or interviews be held with, people with disabilities to determine the difficulties or barriers that they experienced in terms of working with able-bodied individuals. These interviews or questionnaires could also be used to identify barriers that they experience as a result of a handicapping working environment.

- **Internal awareness creation campaigns**

  The need for a national awareness creation campaign was raised by a number of respondents. It is recommended that similar campaigns be undertaken within organisations. This will aid in educating and sensitising employees, and will also encourage employees with disabilities to disclose their disabilities.

  It is further recommend that the assistance of NGOs dealing with specific areas of disability be used to raise the awareness of people with

disabilities. This could take place in the form of presentations or even marketing campaigns for the NGOs with the organisation. One respondent reported that they held a disability awareness week within their organisation to raise the awareness of the abilities and achievements of people with disabilities within their organisations. It is also recommend that organisations internalise national awareness campaigns such as Casual Day, by urging their staff members to support these initiatives.

- **Legislation be improved**

  The respondents and the researcher identified the shortcomings in employment legislation, especially the EEA. It is therefore recommended that aspects of the EEA pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities be revised. This recommendation is mentioned last as it will probably be the most difficult to achieve and is also essentially the responsibility of government and not of organisations. For legislation to change there needs to be a national drive to change legislation as well as support from society for the changes. It is, however, felt by the researcher and the respondents in the study that legislation does need to be improved. In this regard it is recommended that the Code of Good Practice should not remain an addendum to the EEA, but should become legislation, which is enforceable under the EEA. It is the opinion of the researcher that this would put South African disability legislation on a par with that of the US and the UK. It is also recommended that further government provide further support for employers who employ and accommodate people with disabilities, and that incentives for the employment of this group of people be formalised.

7.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is clear from all of the above findings that organisations did not find it simple to employ people with disabilities. One of the main reasons for this, which was identified during interviews with respondents, was the lack of a guide or structure that can be applied when employing people with disabilities.

Further research could therefore be conducted into the creation of a model for the successful employment of people with disabilities. Unlike this study the model should focus on all aspects of employing people with disabilities including the management of people with disabilities.

7.7   SUMMARY

Numbering over half a billion people worldwide, people with disabilities represent a significant portion of the South African and the world population. It has been shown in Chapter 2 of this study that people with disabilities as a group of people in South Africa and in other countries are significantly unemployed or underemployed when compared with the general population. Chapters 3 and 4 of the literature study examined some of the reasons for this disparity, both from an individual and more specifically from an organisational perspective.

Chapter 3 showed that even before people with disabilities attempt to enter the open labour market, they experience significant barriers to everyday life in public transport, access to education and many other physical and societal barriers. The individual with a disability was also discussed with emphasis on motivation for employment, the abilities of people with disabilities and the accommodation of a person with a disability. The focus of the literature study then shifted to the organisation, and showed that from a literature perspective employers face considerable barriers when employing people with disabilities. An empirical investigation in the form of a qualitative study was then conducted to determine what barriers were experienced by respondent organisations in their attempts and experiences with employing people with disabilities. The identification of these barriers was the overall objective of this study.

This objective was achieved when it was illustrated that people with disabilities are significantly underrepresented when compared to able-bodied employees in sample organisations. It was also shown that employers experienced a number of barriers to the employment of people with

disabilities. These barriers were of both a physical and a social nature. Respondents reported, however, that in almost all cases, social barriers were more difficult to overcome than barriers pertaining to the physical environment.

In this regard a number of recommendations are made which should aid employers in identifying and overcoming some of the barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. It is also recommended that further research should be undertaken with the aim of developing an effective model for the employment of people with disabilities in South African organisations.

In conclusion it can be stated that the study was successful in attaining its objectives and that much work will need to be done on the part of employers to eliminate the barriers identified and ensure the successful and meaningful employment of people with disabilities.

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APPENDIX A

DISCUSSION OF
DISABILITY
LEGISLATION

DISABILITY LEGISLATION

1. INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities are often excluded from the mainstream of society and denied full participation, especially in employment, through some form of discrimination. This discrimination can either be invidious, such as the denial of employment opportunities because of a disability, or subtler discrimination in the form of segregation or isolation resulting from the imposition of physical or social barriers. An obvious means to remedy such discrimination is through the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation yet disturbingly, with 600 million people with disabilities worldwide, only 40 of the 189 members states of the United Nations have enacted some form of anti-discrimination legislation for people with disabilities (Degener & Quinn, 2002:7). Disability legislation is a relatively new concept in South Africa as well as the International arena with over 40 countries enacting some form of disability legislation in the 1990s.

According to Degener & Quinn (2002:1) disability as an aspect of law in North America and European countries has commonly been addressed as an aspect of social security and welfare legislation, health law or guardianship, with legislation viewing people with disabilities as objects of welfare, health and charity programmes. A similar situation has existed in South Africa where, until recently, no legislation dealing specifically with people with disabilities was in place.

In recent years there has been a shift in the focus of international disability legislation. Previously legislation addressed disability as a medical impairment, however more recent approaches to developing disability legislation have focussed on disability as a social issue (Degener & Quinn, 2002:2). This is congruent with the shift in paradigm from the medical model to the social model of disability highlighted in Chapter 1. This shift in paradigm has resulted in the concept of disability being reclassified as a human rights

issue under international law, which has paved the way for civil rights legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (United States, 1990) and the Disability Discrimination Act (United Kingdom, 1995).

Degener & Quinn (2002:2) state that while almost all disability legislation seeks to promote equality, there exist different interpretations of the principle of equality. Degener & Quinn go on to identify three main ways of understanding equality. Firstly, juridical equality prohibits direct discrimination and aims at shifting the focus away from characteristics such as race, gender, disability or sexual orientation. This approach requires society to ignore physical differences, thereby moving away from the medical model of disability and emphasising that disability is not the source of the problem. The second approach, equality of results, examines disability through an outcome analysis. According to the equality of results approach an employee with a disability who receives equal pay, but bears an unequal cost of living burden, is discriminated against.   Underpinning this approach is the human rights theory that all human beings have equal value and dignity. The main criticism of this approach lies in the prerequisite of a strong welfare state, which at times can interfere with the functioning of a free market system. A third and less rigid approach to understanding equality is the equal opportunity approach, which seeks to provide equal opportunities while not ensuring equal results. The equal opportunity approach recognises both stereotypes and structural barriers as barriers to inclusion, and thereby seeks to find a balance between the medical and social models of disability.

According to Degener & Quinn (2002:3) the equal opportunity approach to understanding equality is the most frequently applied concept in modern disability legislation. South African discrimination and disability legislation is also based on the equal opportunity approach.

The present South African government, since its inception in 1994, has worked assiduously to remove and remedy all forms of discrimination. The focus of the government's attention has primarily been the removal of race and gender discrimination, with the effect that the elimination of discrimination

on the grounds of disability has had to take the back seat. This has put back the development, promulgation and implementation of legislation pertaining specifically to people with disabilities, with the earliest specific disability legislation only being promulgated in late 1997. Legislation encompassing or pertaining specifically to the concept of disability in South Africa includes the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000; the Employment Equity Act, 1998; and the Code of Good Practice on Aspects of Disability in the Workplace, 2002.

The discussion in this appendix seeks to provide insight into the legislation enacted by the present government that deals specifically with the prevention of discrimination in terms of disability and also specific legislation that aims to promote the employment of people with disabilities. True insight into the composition and efficacy of any legislation can only be obtained if the said legislation is compared with other existing or more reputable legislation. For this purpose legislation promulgated by the United States and United Kingdom which are used as a benchmark by which to compare the legislation enacted by the South African government.

2. PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND PREVENTION OF UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION ACT, No 4 OF 2000 (UDA)

Although significant progress has been made in restructuring and transforming South African society and its institutions, systemic inequalities and unfair discrimination remain deeply embedded in social structures. The basis for progressively redressing these conditions lies in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, (Republic of South Africa, 1996) which, amongst others, upholds the values of human dignity, equality, freedom and social justice in a united, non-racial and non-sexist society where all may flourish. Based on this the government of South Africa were compelled to promulgate the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, No 4 of 2000. Previously know as the Unfair Discrimination Act, the Act

creates a foundation for legislation such as the EEA and the Code of Good Practice.

2.1   Purpose Of The Act

The Act has three main objectives, and although there are many sub-objectives their inclusion in the study is not seen as vital.

- The prohibition and prevention of unfair discrimination and harassment
- The promotion of equality and;
- The prohibition and prevention of hate speech

In terms of the Act, discrimination means any act or omission, including a policy, law, rule, practice, condition or situation which directly or indirectly:

- Imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantage on; or
- Withholds benefits, opportunities or advantages from, any person on one or more of the prohibited grounds.

In terms of the Act, equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms as contemplated in the Constitution.

Based on the definitions provided for discrimination and equality it already becomes clear that the Act clearly has an influence on the relationship between the organisation and an individual with a disability.

2.2   Focus On Disability

The UDA is not designed specifically towards the prevention of unfair discrimination towards people with disabilities, as was indicated in the definitions above. However unfair discrimination towards people with disabilities is prohibited along with race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital

status, ethnic or social origin, skin colour, sexual orientation, age, religion, conscience, belief, culture, and language.

Further the UDA in terms of section 6 of the Act prohibits unfair discrimination on ground of disability. Subject to section 6, no person may unfairly discriminate against any person on the ground of disability, including:

- Denying or removing from any person who has a disability, any supporting or enabling facility necessary for their functioning in society;
- Contravening the code of practice or regulations of the South African Bureau of Standards that govern environmental accessibility;
- Failing to eliminate obstacles that unfairly limit or restrict persons with disabilities from enjoying equal opportunities or failing to take steps to reasonably accommodate the needs of such persons.

In terms of the Act a person includes a juristic person, a non-juristic entity, a group or a category of persons. Therefore the term person includes an organisation or business. Based on this definition, the impact of the UDA on the relationship between an organisation and a person with a disability again becomes apparent, with the Act specifically stating that no organisation may unfairly discriminate against a person with a disability.

3.   THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT, NO 55 OF 1998 (EEA)

The relevancy of the Employment Equity Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998) to this study is that not only does the Act address race and gender discrimination it is also geared at preventing disability discrimination in recruitment. Although the Act may not cover disability discrimination as conclusively as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), it is the key piece of South African legislation, which assists the disabled in terms of employment.

3.1   Purpose of the act

The Act has as its main purpose the promotion of the constitutional right of equality and the exercise of true democracy in South African organisations. This can be achieved through the attainment of certain secondary objectives, which include the following:

- The promotion of equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and

- The implementation of affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce (Republic of South Africa, 1998:8).

The EEA aims not to impose quotas but to ensure that designated employers should attain the demographic proportionality of the populations, within the workforce. This would imply the following proportions, people of colour 90 per cent, women 50 per cent and people with disabilities approximately five per cent.

The EEA aims to reverse past discrimination. The majority of the said discrimination was along racial lines, and not necessarily because of disability, however the act explicitly addresses the case of people with disabilities. The next section will highlight the extent to which people with disabilities have been included in the EEA.

3.2   Focus on people with disabilities

The EEA is applicable to all designated groups and designated employers. The definition of a designated employer will be discussed at a later stage and is therefore not included in the current discussion. According to the definitions provided in the EEA a person belonging to a designated group is:

- A black person, i.e. African, Coloured or Indian; and/or

- A female; and/or

- A person with a disability.

Unfortunately the EEA does not further elaborate on who and who is not included in the definition of a person with a disability, as was stated in Chapter 1. The lack of an adequate definition indicates that people with disabilities do not form the main focus of the EEA.   Therefore the assumption is made that the EEA is applicable to all people with disabilities, within the economically active population, who have the relevant qualifications and abilities to perform the inherent job requirements of their chosen occupation or those who have the potential to be trained for a specific position.

3.3   Effectiveness of the EEA

The effectiveness of any legislation is determined in how well the predetermined objectives have been fulfilled. In terms of this study the effectiveness of the EEA is determined by the growth in terms of the number of people with disabilities employed on the open labour market.

Table A1 indicates that the EEA has been successful in terms of reversing past discrimination regarding race and gender.

Comparing the 1992 statistics with the 2000 statistics presented in table A1 it is evident that formidable changes have taken place in terms of workforce composition. These changes are largely due to the measures enforced by means of the EEA and based on the figures in Table A1 it can be assumed that the EEA is progressively reaching its preset targets in terms of race and gender equality. However the main objective of the EEA is the proportionality of the population within the workforce, this therefore includes people with disabilities and it must thus be determined whether or not the EEA has been

effective in addressing the equitable representation of people with disabilities in the open labour market.

Table A.1   Pre- and Post EEA workforce composition

		African	Coloured	Indian	White	Male	Female
1992	Management	2.1%	1.7%	1.7%	94.5%	94.9%	5.1%
1998	Management	6%	4%	4%	86%	84%	16%
	Skilled	16%	8%	5%	71%	75%	25%
	Total staff	54%	10%	4%	32%	75%	25%
1999	Management	7%	4%	4%	85%	82%	18%
	Skilled	21%	9%	7%	63%	71%	29%
	Total staff	53%	10%	5%	32%	76%	24%
2000	Management	10%	5%	5%	80%	79%	21%
	Skilled	23%	13%	8%	56%	67%	33%
	Total staff	49%	14%	6%	31%	72%	28%

Source: Breakwater Monitor, 2000:2

The leading monitor of employment equity in South Africa is the Breakwater Monitor run by the Graduate School of Business, at the University of Cape Town (UCT). At the time of this study there were no available statistics available on the representation of people with disabilities in the workforce. The Graduate School of Business (UCT) report that this is largely due to the fact that people with disabilities constitute a relatively small proportion of the workforce, thereby making trends difficult to monitor.

According to research conducted in 1990, approximately 99 percent of people living with disabilities were excluded from employment on the open labour market (Republic of South Africa, 1997:9). This figure was 99.74 percent in 1985. In a recent discussion with a representative from Employment

Solutions, a recruitment agency dealing specifically with the people with disabilities, it was stated that out of 148 candidates they were only able to place two in the open labour market. Silver & Koopman (2000:10) suggest that as much as 88 percent of people with disabilities in South Africa are excluded from all forms of employment.

Further to this, a study conducted among one hundred organisations in South Africa by Global Business Solutions, showed that workforce participation of people with disabilities hovered around 0.93 percent and only 0.35 percent at management level. (Botha, 2002:1)

From this it becomes evident that, in terms of people with disabilities, the EEA has been unsuccessful in ensuring true equality in the South African workforce thus far.

4.   CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON KEY ASPECTS OF DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the EEA does not deal specifically with addressing the needs of people with disabilities and has also not been overly successful in ensuring the placement of people with disabilities on the open labour market. The Commission for Employment Equity therefore took the decision to develop a code of good practice dealing specifically with disability in the workplace. The Code of Good Practice was only promulgated in early 2002, and it is therefore difficult to determine its effectiveness as yet. For the purpose of this study however the contents of the Code of Good Practice are sufficient in providing an insight into the measures that the South African government will implement in the future.

The Code of Good Practice is not an authoritative summary of the law, nor does it create additional rights or obligations. Failure to observe the code does not itself render a person liable in any proceedings, rather the code is there to answer the many calls from the business community for clarity on

how disability in the workplace should be defined and managed (Chawirah, 2001:38).

4.1   Purpose of the code

The Code of Good Practice has two main purposes:

- The Code of Good Practice is a guide for employers and employees on key aspects of promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for people with disabilities as required by the EEA.

- The Code of Good Practice is intended to help employers and employees understand their rights and obligations promote certainty and reduce disputes to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy and exercise their rights at work (Republic of South Africa, 2002:2).

Additional to these objectives, is the essential element of providing clarity of definition. As has already been stated in Chapter 1, the failure of the South African government to provide a clear-cut definition of who is and who is not regarded as a person with a disability has resulted in much confusion amongst businesses and employers. The Code of Good Practice fortunately provides a definition of a person with a disability, and also provides clarity on which impairments are not considered disabilities, as well as what constitutes a reasonable accommodation by an employer. The Code of Good Practice is however intentionally general, this is justified in the fact that every person and situation is unique. Departures from the standards set out in the Code of Good Practice are also justified in appropriate circumstances.

4.2   Scope of the code

It must again be emphasised that the Code of Good Practice is a guide for managing a relationship, namely the relationship between the employer and the employee, the code is not a law. Unlike the EEA the Code of Good

Practice does not discriminate between designated employers, the Code of Good Practice therefore is relevant to all employers be they small, medium or large organisations. The Code of Good Practice also differs from the EEA in its scope. Where the EEA is specific to promoting equality in terms of employment i.e. recruitment, selection and placement, the Code of Good Practice is aimed at addressing all aspects involved in the management of people with disabilities. The Code of Good Practice provides specific guidelines to management of the following human resource management aspects:

- Recruitment and selection
- Medical and psychometric testing
- Placement
- Training and career advancement
- Retaining people with disabilities
- Termination of employment
- Confidentiality and disclosure of disability
- Employee benefits
- Employment equity planning in respect of people with disabilities

For the purposes of this study it is sufficient to recognise that the Code of Good Practice is divided into the various subsections, and it is not necessary to investigate the guidelines pertaining to each aspect.

One area of the Code of Good Practice that is, however, of particular interest is that of reasonable accommodation. The Code of Good Practice provides a certain amount of clarity on what constitutes a reasonable accommodation, and also states certain scenarios wherein an employer would be justified in not accommodating a person with a disability. In terms of the Code of Good Practice (Republic of South Africa, 2002:4) a reasonable accommodation is one which:

"Reduces the impact of an impairment of the person's capacity to fulfill the essential functions of a job, and which does not impose an unjustifiable hardship on the business of the employer."

In terms of the Code of Good Practice (Republic of South Africa, 2002:2):

"An unjustifiable hardship is action that requires significant or considerable difficulty or expense and that would substantially harm the viability of the enterprise."

The Code of Good Practice also provides numerous examples of what could be considered a reasonable accommodation, and in so doing eliminates some of the confusion created in other employment legislation.

4.3   Effectiveness of the Code of Good Practice

At the time of this study the Code of Good Practice had only recently been promulgated and the effectiveness thereof could therefore not yet be determined.

5.   INTEGRATED NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY (INDS)

The Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) stems from the South African government's recognition of the fact that people with disabilities, especially in underprivileged communities, have been and still are unfairly discriminated against (Republic of South Africa, 1997:2).

5.1   Purpose of the Integrated National Disability Strategy

The vision of the INDS is a society for all. This means that there must be an integration of disability issues in all government development strategies, planning and programmes. There must be an integrated and co-ordinated management system for planning, implementation and monitoring at all

spheres of government. To complement the process, there must be capacity building and wide public education (Republic of South Africa, 1997:2).

The INDS identifies and discusses priority areas to be targeted in a disability programme. The identified targets are environmental accessibility, education and training, employment, income maintenance and social security, housing and especially sensitive groups among the disabled.

It must be emphasised that the INDS is not a set of rules by which organisations should abide, instead it is the groundwork for creating an understanding of the nature and implications of disability in all aspects of society and it is not specific to the employment situation.

5.2 Effectiveness of the Integrated National Disability Strategy

The purpose of the INDS is to ensure the integration of disability issues in all government development strategies, planning and programmes, therefore the effectiveness thereof can only be determined by the extent to which this objective has been achieved.

From the discussion of the previous three documents it becomes clear that, to an extent, the issues concerning people with disabilities have been included in South African legislation. The development of the Code of Good Practice on Aspects of Disability in the Workplace is another indication that the INDS has been successful in creating an awareness of the needs of people with disabilities specific to the employment situation.

6 INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION

At the forefront of legislation pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which for sometime now has been considered a benchmark for comparing such legislation. For this reason the ADA is discussed in some detail below.

6.1   United States: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (hereafter ADA) enacted in 1990 and implemented in 1992, is America's first disability specific anti-discrimination legislation and covers approximately 43 million Americans. It is also one of the most significant employment laws in American history. Enacted for just over ten years, the ADA is only beginning to fulfil its objectives of independence, empowerment and integration (Miller, 2000:1). The ADA has not only affected Americans with disabilities but has had implications for governments and people with disabilities worldwide. According to Degener & Quinn (2002:8) the ADA has had such an enormous effect on international legal development that it seemingly has had a greater international than domestic impact. This is however not the purpose of the ADA.

The ADA is an act to establish a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability (United States 1990:1). The purpose of the ADA as held in the Act is as follows:

- The provision of a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities;

- The provision of clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities;

- To ensure that the federal government plays a central role in enforcing the standards established in this Act on behalf of individuals with disabilities; and

- To invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and to regulate commerce, in order to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities.

While Title 1 of the ADA is an employment-specific law other Titles of the Act prohibit discrimination in services rendered by the state and local government, public accommodation, transportation and telecommunication services. As the focus of this study is on the employment of people with disabilities, reference will only be made to Title 1 of the ADA, which relates specifically to the employment of people with disabilities.

The purpose of the Title 1 of the ADA is the prohibition of discrimination against qualified individuals with a disability pertaining to job application procedures, hiring, training, compensation, fringe benefits, advancement and any other term or condition of employment. Title 1 of the ADA applies to private employers with 15 or more employees, all city and state governments, employment agencies, labour organisations and joint labour-management committees. Discrimination on the part of the employer in terms of the ADA is viewed as the following:

- Limiting, segregating, or classifying a job applicant or employee based upon a disability that in any way adversely affects the employment opportunities or status of the individual;
- Entering into contracts or other arrangements with third parties that have the effect of subjecting an employer's workers to discrimination based on disability;
- The utilisation of any standards, criteria, or administrative methods that have the effect of discriminating based upon disability;
- Excluding or otherwise discriminating against a job applicant or employee because of that person's association with a person with a disability;
- Not making reasonable accommodations for the known disabilities of a job applicant or employee (United States, 1990:8).

Apart from prohibiting discrimination, the ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to the known physical and mental limitations of an otherwise qualified person with a disability (United States, 1990:4). Herein

lies the main remedial action of the ADA. Unlike other employment and anti-discrimination legislation the ADA does not require affirmative action plans, preferential treatment of job applicants, record keeping or governmental reporting (Frierson, 1992:5). Once reasonable accommodations are in place the Act provides that an employee with a disability should be treated as any other employee would. Reasonable accommodation is not specifically defined in the act, most likely due to the fact that the type of accommodation will be dependent on the type of disability, however a list of potential accommodations is provided.

Another area specifically outlined in the ADA is that of pre-employment disability inquiries and examinations. According to the Act employers may not request job applicants to voluntarily disclose the existence, nature or severity of a disability. Employers are also prohibited from conducting pre-employment medical or physical examinations (United States, 1990:8; Frierson, 1992:10). Employers are however entitled to make enquires into the individuals ability to perform job-related tasks. While these provisions might seem contradictory in nature, Frierson (1992:10) emphasises the distinction between them with the following examples. An employer may not ask a job applicant questions such as "Do you have a disability?" or "Are you in good health?", however if the applicant is applying for a position that involves lifting 50kg sacks of maize, the employer could ask a question such as "Will you be able to lift 50kg sacks of maize?". The employer in this case would also be permitted to apply testing procedures to see if the applicant can in fact lift the sacks. The Act also stipulates that once a tentative offer of employment is made, the employer may ask health questions and require a medical examination, provided that all information resulting from the testing is kept confidential. This raises another key issue addressed by the Act, namely that of confidentiality. The Act states that any information obtained regarding the medical condition or history of an applicant should be collected and maintained on separate forms and in separate medical files and be treated as confidential. Access to this information is limited to managers or supervisors who need to be informed of work-related restrictions, first aid personnel, and government officials investigating compliance with the Act (United States, 1990:8).

A final point to be addressed under the discussion of the ADA is that of the enforcement of the Act. According to Frierson (1992:15) employees can lay charges with the EEOC if they feel that they have been unfairly discriminated against in terms of section 102 of the Act. Individuals as well as the EEOC can also bring lawsuits to court to enforce the Act. Pending investigations and hearings the courts may issue injunctions requiring building modifications, the adoption of auxiliary aids or new company policies and in more sever cases the courts may award monetary damages and a civil penalty of $55,000 for a first violation and $100,000 for subsequent violations (Frierson, 1992:15).

In addition to the above-mentioned forced compliance with the Act, tax incentives from the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) are available to employers who comply with the ADA. According to Aloise (2001:25) organisations that comply with the ADA can receive a tax rebate of up to $15,000 on accommodations implemented in compliance with the Act. Employers hiring people with disabilities are also entitled to tax rebates on salaries and wages paid to these individuals, which is a further incentive in terms of compliance with the Act (Cook, Judice & Lofton, 1996:40).

The ADA is similar in nature to both the EEA and the Code of Good Practice, in that it is an informative document providing information and definitions regarding disabilities, reasonable accommodation and employment procedures just as the code does. However, it is similar to the EEA in that it compels employers to consider people with disabilities in their employment practices, while at the same time prohibits the unfair discrimination of qualified individuals with a disability. It also compels employers to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, provided they do not imply undue hardship on the employer.

A closer look at the code will suggest that it is modelled on the ADA as it follows a very similar structure and content. This is in itself a positive step if one looks at the success of the ADA.

According to Baldwin and Johnson (2000) the ADA has substantially increased the employment and income of people with disabilities as well as reduced their dependence on public programmes.

6.2   The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

Similarly to the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) enacted its own disability legislation in 1995. As was indicated in the previous chapter the employment opportunities for people with disabilities living in the UK are greatly reduced compared to able-bodied individuals. It is because this that the UK government enacted the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The DDA is applicable to employers of 20 or more employees, and defines a person with a disability similarly to the EEA and ADA. The DDA is generally in line with the ADA in terms of meaning of disability, employment practices covered, reasonable accommodations and the stand taken on confidentiality and disclosure of disability.

One interesting difference between the EEA and the ADA and DDA is that of support offered to employers. In the US financial assistance is available to employers who hire people with disabilities (Thomas & Hlahla, 2002:20). This comes in the form of tax credit, where tax credits of up to 50 percent of the cost of reasonable accommodations can be recouped. Under the DDA employers are entitled to technical and financial assistance under the Access to Work Scheme run by the employment service (Thomas & Hlahla, 2002:21). It is not uncommon for this scheme to meet up to 80 percent of the cost of providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

7.   CONCLUSION

The legislation discussed in this appendix are not the only documents governing the equitable employment of people with disabilities in the workforce of South Africa, however, it is the opinion of the researcher that the

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documents discussed in this appendix are those which impact the greatest on the employment of people with disabilities.

The fact that legislation dealing specifically with the needs of people with disabilities has been promulgated is an indication of commitment from the South African government and is a positive sign. The fact remains however that much of the said legislation and recommendations have not yet been implemented, and the effectiveness thereof not yet measured. However, with documents such as the Code of Good Practice, clarity on many issues surrounding disability and employment has been provided. The effectiveness of the EEA in addressing race inequalities has been shown to be very effective, yet in terms of people with disabilities relatively ineffective, indicating that amendments are required. Fortunately it would appear as though the Code of Good Practice provides many of the said amendments.

To conclude it can be stated that legislation in South Africa is not yet on par with documents of the likes of the ADA and DDA, however a start has been made and a solid foundation for future improvements has been set.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Pretoria

Mr Russell Wordsworth
Tel (012) 429-4073
Fax (012) 429-4573

To Whom It May Concern:

HIRING PEOPLE FOR THEIR ABILITIES AND NOT THEIR DISABILITIES

You are invited to take part in the above research project, which forms part of my Masters Thesis at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of the study is summarised below.

Studies have shown that people with disabilities are successful in retaining their employment and often have a lower turnover rate than able-bodied people; however the difficulty often lies in securing employment in the first place. Employers, such as yourself, are often blamed for the high unemployment rate of people with disabilities. More often than not, however, organisations are willing to employ people with disabilities and make active efforts to do so. Due to certain difficulties (barriers) employer's efforts are often hampered with the end result being that the unemployment of people with disabilities in South Africa is increasing.

The main outcome of the study is to identify the barriers which employers face in their attempts to secure the services of people with disabilities. The study is therefore focused on the perspective of the employer and not the prospective employee with a disability.

This questionnaire is merely phase one of a two-phased data collection process, the second phase being a structured interview, based on section C of the questionnaire. Although the interview will follow the structure of the questionnaire, the questionnaire seeks to obtain quantitative data, whereas your opinions and ideas will be more important in the interview. You will not be required to return the questionnaire to me, as it will be collected during the interview.

The information that you provide in the questionnaire and the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Only the researcher will see the completed questionnaire. No one from the University of Pretoria will have access to the information you provide and it will be used strictly for research purposes. Strict anonymity will be preserved in any ensuing publications.

I hope that you will be interested in taking part in this important research project, which aims to ensure that more people with disabilities find their way into the open labour market.

Thank you for your valuable contribution towards this important research. It is greatly appreciated.

Best wishes

Russell Wordsworth
(Researcher)

QUESTIONNAIRE: PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

This questionnaire consists of the following three sections:

Biographical information of respondent and organisation

People with disabilities in your organisation

Barriers faced when employing people with disabilities

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and will ensure that you are properly prepared for the interview as the interview will follow a similar structure to that of the questionnaire.

Section A: Biographical information

For this section please answer each question by making a cross in the square you have chosen, e.g. ⊠ or by writing a number in the square(s) provided.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please state the nature of your current position within your organisation.

A permanent position within the organisation	
An external consultant to the organisation	
Other (Specify):	

2. Please indicate your current job level in the human resource department.

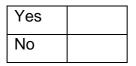|	
HR Director	
Senior HR manager	
Junior HR manager	
HR practitioner	
Other (Specify):	

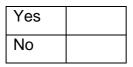3. Please indicate your number of years experience in the human resource management field.

4. Please indicate your number of years experience in your current human resource management position.

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5. Does your organisation form part of the business and financial services sector of the economy?

Yes	
No	

6. Is the head office of your organisation in Gauteng?

Yes	
No	

7. Please indicate the number of employees within your organisation.

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8. How many of the following "able-bodied" designated employees are currently employed by your company. Please indicate the number of employees next to the relevant classification.

Black persons	
Indian persons	
White females	
Coloured persons	

Section B: People with disabilities in your organisation.

9. Does your organisation currently employ any people with disabilities? If your answer is **no**, please skip this section and proceed to section C.

Yes	
No	

10. If you answered **yes** to the above question please indicate the number of employees with disabilities currently employed in your organisation.

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11. Please indicate the nature of disability by indicating the **number of people** next to the classification of disability.

Classification	No. of people
Visually impaired	
Hearing impaired	
Physically impaired	
Mentally impaired	
Multiple impairments	

12. What roles do these employees fulfil within the organisation? This can be done by indicating the **number of people** next to the relevant role.

Administrative and clerical staff	
Service and sales staff	
Professionals and technicians	
Managers	
Other	

13. Please indicate at what stages external consultants/specialists were used in the employment of people with disabilities within your organisation.

	Never	Sometimes	Always
Recruitment			
Selection			
Placement			
Training			

14. Are you aware of any organisations in South Africa that assist companies with the facilitated placement of people with disabilities in open labour market employment?

Yes	
No	

15. If you answered YES to question 35, please indicate the names of these organisations.

_____
_____
_____
_____

16. Please indicate if any of the following job accommodation methods were used by your organisation. You may tick more than one option.

Job restructuring	
Assistive devices	
Training and re-training	
Personal assistant	
Building modifications	
Job reassignment	

17. Please indicate the turnover rate of people with disabilities in your organisation?

Very low	
Low	
Average	
High	
Very high	

18. Please indicate whether the turnover rate of people with disabilities is higher or lower than that of people without disabilities.

Much lower	
Lower	
The same	
Higher	
Much higher	

19. What in your opinion are the reasons for the turnover rate identified above?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

20. Section C: Barriers faced when employing people with disabilities in your organisation. What barriers did you experience during the employment of people with disabilities?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

21. What measures were taken within your organisation to eliminate the barriers mentioned above?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

22. In your opinion, were the measures taken to eliminate the above-mentioned barriers successful?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

23. Please indicate which, in your opinion, of the following two classifications of barriers are/were the most difficult to overcome in your organisation.

Physical environmental barriers, such as inaccessible buildings	
Social based barriers, such as stigmatism and stereotyping	

24. What are the reasons for your answer to question 25?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

25. In your opinion did/does the elimination of barriers to the employment of people with disabilities result in any extraordinary expenditure, and if so how is this linked to the degree of disability of the person employed?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

26. To what extent does current legislation aid you in the employment of people with disabilities?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

27. What is the main reason why your organisation would hire someone with a disability?

_____
_____
_____
_____

28. What is the main reason why your organisation would not hire someone with a disability?

_____
_____
_____
_____

29. How could the placement of people with disabilities in open labour market organisations be improved?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF TRANSCRIPTS

RESPONDENT A

Barriers experienced

The majority of barriers experienced by us were of a social nature. In the case of the individual with psoriasis (a skin disorder which causes an individuals skin to flake off in large quantities) able-bodied staff did not want to work in the same office as the individual for fear of contracting the disability, as they were ignorant to the nature of the disability. "If I may say so myself, I have difficulty being in the same room as the individual with the disability, as the disability makes the individual look like something from a horror movie" This eventually resulted in us offering the individual his own personal office (which the individual agreed to without hesitation), however, this does cause a certain degree of ostracism as the rest of employees work in an open plan environment. It was almost the same as having a leper colony. The other individual with a disability is an amputee, who is missing one leg, and the attitudes towards him are much better than towards the individual with psoriasis, I think this is largely due to the fact the nature of his disability is simple to comprehend and able-bodied staff do not fear being in contact with him. In the same breath, there were other more physical barriers in terms of the individual with the disability. Apart from the obvious mobility problems we have a greater problem in that we only have toilets for people with disabilities on our ground floor (reception area) and therefore every time the individual needs to go to the bathroom he has to go down the elevator to the ground floor, very often this involves another staff member having to take time to assist him. We have considered moving the individual to the ground floor, however this is merely our reception and lobby floor and this would result in a certain degree of ostracism and in my opinion be a very negative move. Clearly something needs to be done about the disability-friendly status of our buildings.

Removal of barriers

The first step we took was in light of eliminating the ignorance surrounding the various disabilities. This was done by bringing in specialist trainers to conduct what we call "sensitivity training" in which individuals were educated regarding the types of disabilities (not just psoriasis and amputees but all broad categories of disability) Specialists were also brought in to conduct workplace assessments and make the necessary adjustments to the working environments of the individuals, this included wheelchair ramps and other building modifications. While this might sound like a small measure it is one of the most successful → where offices are usually only vacuumed every second day, special arrangements were made for the individual with psoriasis's office and immediate areas around him to be vacuumed three times a day to remove all of the flakes of skin, this has helped reduce the uneasy feeling one gets when in the office.

Success of measures

The sensitivity training has been very successful in creating awareness amongst and educating staff members who are in direct contact with our two people with disabilities and as a proactive measure we are considering extending this training to everyone in the organisation. In terms of the removal of physical barriers I would have to say that our efforts have been somewhat successful but we still have to go a long way in terms of getting our buildings disability friendly. The move to a separate office for the individual with psoriasis although not ideal, has been successful, as too have the special cleaning arrangements.

Physical versus social barriers

Social barriers are by far the most difficult to overcome. I think the reason for this lies in the fact that you have to change the perceptions and attitudes of people and this takes a lot of training and education, which is very time consuming and expensive.

Extraordinary expenditure

Yes they did and there is most definitely a direct relationship between the cost of accommodating a person with a disability and the severity or nature of the disability. Our main expenses came from the employment of specialists to facilitate the recruitment and placement of the individuals within our organisation. While the initial costs are not that much different from recruitment costs for able-bodied individuals, the placement cost and workplace assessments are quite costly. The removal of physical barriers has not yet cost us too much, however if we are to make our buildings totally disability friendly the expense will be large.

Legislation

We are a very compliant company; therefore we use the EEA as a guide and comply with the stipulations in the Act. However, thus far I would say that this is the only way in which the Act assists me.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

I will have to be totally honest with you and say for company image. We are one of the top companies to work for in South Africa and would like to keep it that way. Secondly as I mentioned earlier we are a very compliant company so the second reason would have to be in compliance with the EEA.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

If the individual is not able to do the job that we want to hire him for, or more importantly if the individual is unable to learn the job.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

I would say that the biggest barrier facing people with disabilities is a lack of adequate working experience. To rectify this I would suggest that we embark

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on apprenticeship or internship programmes designed especially for people with disabilities, in which individuals learn various life skills and interviewing skills. On top of all of this we need more institutions like Access College, which provide education and training to people with disabilities.

RESPONDENT B

Barriers experienced

One of the most commonly experienced barriers is that of accessibility of our buildings to people with disabilities. We are a very large organisation and while our head office is well on its way to becoming accessible much of our regional offices and training centres are not accessible at all to the disabled. Some of our buildings are very old and were built a long time before the interests of the disabled were considered important.

Another barrier related to this is line manager resistance to the implementation of assistive devices and reasonable accommodations. The reason for this is that line managers are responsible for their own budgets and very often these accommodations cut into their budgets. They are therefore reluctant to take on the financial and time burdens of accommodating people with disabilities.

Stigmatisation is also a huge barrier that we need to overcome. There is a mindset that people with disabilities belong in call centres, and while we do employ many people in our call centres this is not the only place in the organisation where they can be employed.

We also find that people with disabilities try and hide their disability and are afraid to disclose it to HR. I think they fear the social problems that may arise and also that they might be laid off because of the disability. Some of the less severe mental disabilities such as epilepsy can be masked to such an extent by medication that the individual appears totally functional.

Removal of barriers

The first thing that was implemented that covers all types of barriers was to create and implement a disability management policy for all line managers. This policy was sent to 300 line managers and covered all aspects of

managing disability. The policy was designed based on the code of good conduct (see chapter 4) and has similar content to the code. Additional to this we created a special fund from which line managers could draw to make necessary accommodations and adjustments. This fund is also intended to finance the accessibility improvements of our buildings. Following this clauses were included in the performance contracts of line managers whereby if they did not accommodate people with disabilities in the manner that they should they could stand to loose a portion of their bonuses.

A company wide disability awareness week was held in which people with disabilities were encouraged to disclose their disabilities to HR. Seven computer flash message (one per day) were sent to every employee in the organisation with a computer educating them about aspects of disability.

We also brought in experienced specialists from the United States to do workplace assessments and also to design specialised software packages to cater for the visually and hearing impaired. We have also contracted specialist architects to make recommendations regarding our buildings.

Success of measures

The disability awareness week has been our biggest success up to now, with the number of people with disabilities disclosing their disabilities almost doubling in the past year. The publication of a standard disability policy has also been very successful with line manager participation improving. The performance contracts and special fund I mentioned have only recently been implemented and we have not yet determined their effectiveness. The specialist architects and programmers we brought in have proved to be invaluable and we will continue to use them.

Physical versus social barriers

Social barriers are definitely the most difficult to overcome. With access barriers; provided you have the finances and knowledge available they are

relatively easy to remove. However with social barriers you are dealing with the beliefs of people and this always increases the complexity.

Extraordinary expenditure

It definitely costs more to employ someone with a disability. I would say somewhere in the region of 10 per cent more. While I do think that there is a relationship between cost of accommodation and degree of disability I think this could be overcome by placing people in a job that best suits his/her disability.

Legislation

Legislation has assisted us in a variety of ways. Firstly and most commonly in a compliance role, in terms of the EEA. However in my opinion the EEA does not assist guiding the employment of people with disabilities. Therefore I am glad that the code of good conduct was brought about as it has helped us create our own internal policy regarding best practice when employing someone with a disability.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

I would hire someone based on his or her ability to do the job.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

I think I would be reluctant to hire someone at the present time due to the current poor accessibility of our buildings. I think in some of our current buildings we would actually place the person in a negative position by hiring him/her.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

In my opinion government needs to improve legislation pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities. While they have made a number of

advancements there is still a long way to go. Also I think government should implement a reward system, such as a tax rebate, for organisations who employ people with disabilities.

RESPONDENT C

Barriers experienced

I must say that at present we are quite fortunate in that we don't experience many barriers in terms of employing people with disabilities, but I think we have come a long way as we battled with the first few. The main barriers we experience currently are of a social nature. There is a lot of prejudice and stereotyping and while I will be honest and admit that it takes place in our organisation, it is far greater when our employees with disabilities visit clients. We have a very mobile workforce and this means our staff visit a number of different clients in a year. Very often if we send an employee in a wheelchair we will get requests not to send him/her again or to at least inform them first. This is due to their ignorance regarding disability management and also their perceptions that they are not able to do the job as well as able-bodied employees. Another barrier is our infrastructure and our client's infrastructure. While our buildings are actually very disability friendly, until recently we had no real need for these facilities. When we employed our first quadriplegic in a wheelchair and he went to the bathroom, he was unable to use it as for many years it had been used as a storeroom. (I am not exaggerating here). This was an indication of our inexperience in dealing with people with disabilities. Similarly we often find that our client's buildings are not very disability friendly.

Removal of barriers

Our major efforts have been directed at sensitising our clients before we send an employee with a disability to them. However, we will continue to send people with disabilities to clients and not hide them behind desks at our offices. We have also implemented an awareness creation campaign internally to try and increase the acceptance of people with disabilities by other staff. We have open-plan work areas and do not tolerate strange or outrageous behaviour. Our employees have a job to do and both able-bodied and disabled employees must get used to working in each other's presence and learn to fit in as we expect people of different races and cultures to do.

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We have also implemented a performance management system where by if managers do not realise employment goals in terms of race, gender and disability they must leave ten per cent of their annual bonus on the table and I assure you that in our organisation that is a lot of money. I must however emphasise that currently in our organisation and industry the focus is on race and not on disability, with these pressures be generated by external parties such as government.

I must also mention however that every single senior manager in our organisation is fully committed to the employment of people with disabilities.

Success of measures

I would say that all of the measures that we have implemented have been very successful considering that in the past few years we have managed to attract and more importantly retain a good number of employees with disabilities.

Physical versus social barriers

I would have to say social barriers. The reason being that we have to change the attitudes of three parties namely our able-bodied staff, our staff with disabilities and our clients.

Extraordinary expenditure

At present I would say that expenditure on eliminating barriers is quite minimal, however the company would be willing to incur costs to accommodate employees in terms of training, workplace adjustments or any other reasonable expenditure. There is definitely a direct relationship between the cost of accommodating a person with a disability and the degree of that person's disability.

Legislation

I my opinion legislation does not aid in the employment of people with disabilities. The EEA is designed to compel organisations to hire people of colour and does not focus on disability per se; it merely makes you aware of the fact that they too should be considered. ***Have you heard of the INDS or Code?*** No.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

I would only hire any person who can add value to our organisation. We will not hire a person with a disability just to fill quotas.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

Tokenism! We are totally opposed to hiring someone to fill quotas or look good in the eye of the public or government!

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

The issue of people with disabilities needs to be raised nationally. I am not sure of where the funding will come from, but in my opinion it is the only way that social barriers will be eliminated. We need something similar to the Love Life campaign regarding AIDS awareness. Legislation must be improved. Current legislation in almost all HR fields is legislation, which compels organisations to take certain actions. Business is bruised by all of the current legislation, which merely compels and does little in terms of guiding organisations. Finally, organisations should warm to the idea of employing people with disabilities and not be afraid of the challenge.

RESPONDENT D

Barriers experienced

The biggest barriers I have experienced are the preconceived notions of able-bodied staff at all levels with regards to the abilities of people with disabilities. I suppose you could call it stigmatisation or simply just ignorance. Able-bodied staff believe that disability implies loss of ability, which in reality is very often not true.

Another major barrier we experience is in the actual recruitment of people with disabilities. I find that very often the people with disabilities applying for positions with the organisation lack the skills and experience acquired from working in a corporate environment. I suppose this stems from the past when people with disabilities were not really actively recruited.

Although to a lesser extent than the previous barriers, another barrier is that of our physical environment. Currently we only employ 5 people with disabilities quite successfully, I do think that as this number grows so to will the number of accommodations and adjustments that we will have to make.

Finally and to a very small extent is the unwillingness of some managers to make accommodations or minor adaptations on occasion.

Removal of barriers

We have held a number of workshops and training sessions to educate the able-bodied staff working in the same sections as people with disabilities. These workshops were interactive where the involvement of the individual with the disability was key to the training. This also helped able-bodied staff overcome preconceived ideas.

We are fortunate that by the nature of our organisation we have a number of occupational therapists and specialists working for the organisation. We used

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these resources extensively to assist with workplace assessments and the determination of reasonable accommodations, as well as job restructuring.

Success of measures

The measures we have implemented have been very successful in terms of retaining our existing employees with disabilities and ensuring that they are able to perform adequately. However we need to implement measure to attract additional suitably qualified people with disabilities.

Physical versus social barriers

Social barriers have been the most difficult to overcome, as the elimination of these barriers are time consuming and involve a number of people with a number of different ideas and attitudes. It must be added however that by involving the staff with disabilities in these initiatives has made the job a lot easier.

Extraordinary expenditure

To date I would not say that the elimination of barriers has been extraordinarily expensive, however, I would agree that the more severe the disability the more expensive it would be to accommodate that individual. I think the fact that we have internal occupational therapists also helped reduce the cost of accommodation.

Legislation

Legislation definitely makes employers more aware of the disabled and because of this more opportunities have arisen for these individuals. In my opinion there is still a long way to go before the perceived problems regarding the employment of disabled people are overcome.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

We hire people for the skills and abilities that they bring to our organisation, no other reason!

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

If the individual is unable to meet the requirements and demands of the job for which they are applying.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

I think a national strategy must be implemented that has two objectives. Firstly to create an awareness of people with disabilities, with a special focus on their abilities, i.e. what they are capable of doing. This strategy should focus of ability rather than barriers that need to be overcome. Secondly the strategy should aim to increase the skills base of people with disabilities, through the provision of specialised training. I am not sure how one would go about this but do know that it is vital.

RESPONDENT E

Barriers experienced

The most difficult barrier that we have had to overcome is staunch resistance from line managers in terms of the employment of people with disabilities. While it is an organisational goal to improve the number of people with disabilities in the organisation, line managers do not want to deal with the practicalities of this goal. They see accommodating people with disabilities as just another difficulty they have to deal with, not an opportunity. Line managers also have to overcome social barriers within their sections.

In my opinion there is also a lack of suitable qualified disabled candidates in the job market, and this is a big barrier in terms of recruiting people with disabilities.

Finally we have branches in almost every town and city in South Africa. This means that some of our buildings are not disability friendly at all, however to make the necessary adjustments to all of our buildings will results in huge capital expenditure which is currently to my knowledge not budgeted for.

Removal of barriers

In terms of social barriers we try and promote an open-minded culture and thereby raise the level of awareness regarding disability. Of course this is very difficult to measure and control as every person is an individual.

Although we do not have formal measures in place, which compel line managers to hire people with disabilities, we do have policies in place, which encourage them to actively recruit people with disabilities. it is my opinion that this approach is more constructive than forcing them to do something.

We are currently investigating and reviewing certain locations and branches which are totally disability unfriendly, however at present there are no formal measures in place to address the accessibility of our buildings.

Success of measures

We have been successful in creating a culture that is open-minded and aware. I would also have to say that line managers are starting to embrace the idea of employing people with disabilities.

To be honest though, we have not been successful as yet in terms of making our buildings disability friendly (apart from newly built facilities). We have also not been as successful as we would like in terms of attracting suitably qualified candidates with disabilities. We are therefore considering an incentivisation/penalisation of top management for achieving/failing to achieve employment targets.

Physical versus social barriers

Social barriers. While it might sound as if the majority of our obstacles are of a physical nature, I believe that personal beliefs and attitudes are one of the most difficult things to change, especially in an organisation as large and dispersed as ours.

Extraordinary expenditure

Our current expenditure on accommodating people with disabilities has not been too exorbitant, however, this is largely due to the fact that the measures that we have implemented have been more tacit rather than explicit. I also believe that the employment of a person with a disability does cost more than an able-bodied person and of course this expense will increase as the severity of the disability increases.

Legislation

The main way legislation assists in the employment of people with disabilities is in terms of compliance with the EEA as people with disabilities are also considered as designated employees.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

The main driver behind our employment of people with disabilities is social responsibility. We strive to be an employer of choice for all disadvantaged groups, and recognise that special efforts are required to assist in the development of employees do not posses the necessary experience and skills.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

If they are not suitably qualified and experienced to do the job.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

A public awareness campaign needs to be launched that highlights people with disabilities, their abilities and the barriers, which they face in everyday life. I also think employers should be allowed to advertise publicly for people with disabilities, while I know it is contradictory to anti-discrimination legislation, it would allow employers to actively recruit people with disabilities.

RESPONDENT F

Barriers experienced

The main barrier we are currently experiencing is in terms of accessibility. Our buildings are definitely not disability friendly, and it is only recently that we have started taking steps to make them more accessible to people with disabilities. Linked to this, is the fact that we do not have specialised workstations to deal with the variety of disabilities that we encounter. While there is capital available for improvements we also experience a lot of resistance from line managers who are responsible for profitability in their own departments. Line managers are also not equipped in terms of skills and knowledge to accommodate people with disabilities as no formal guidelines are currently in place.

The obvious social barriers are there such as stereotyping especially by line managers in terms of the abilities of the disabled. And linked to this is a barrier of lack of progression of people with disabilities in the organisation. People with disabilities have cited this as their biggest barrier in the organisation. They seem to hit a ceiling and do not progress very far. I think stereotyping and preconceived ideas of abilities have a lot to do with this.

A big barrier as well is the fact that employees with disabilities do not disclose their impairments. I am sure that the number of people I indicated to you is actually far greater. We have not however, had an active programme to encourage people with disabilities to disclose these disabilities.

I think a general barrier we experience is that we have followed a reactive rather than proactive approach to employing people with disabilities. We have tended to focus on race and gender far more than disability and I think this is largely due to the EEA.

Removal of barriers

We are currently in a process of refurbishing our head office as well as some of our other buildings. One of the main drivers behind this refurbishment is to make the buildings more disability friendly. We have included a number of wheelchair ramps, widened our doorways, improved the lifts and many other modifications.

We are busy writing a set of guidelines aimed at line managers, which will aid in the management of disability related issues. We have in place a incentivisation/penalisation programme in terms of transformation for line managers, however, at this stage managers are only penalised for non-compliance in terms of race. Therefore they do not feel compelled to hire people with disabilities.

We have invited guest speakers from the National Council for the Blind to do awareness speeches within the organisation about certain issues pertaining to the disabled and more specifically, the visually impaired.

Success of measures

We have only just started to take a serious look at the employment of people with disabilities and as I stated much of what we have done has been reactive in nature. The steps we have taken to eliminate the barriers we face have not been in place long enough for us to evaluate their true effectiveness. I must however state that in my opinion our buildings have improved extensively and are continuing to do so.

Physical versus social barriers

Social barriers. As you can see most of the steps we have taken have been to eliminate physical barriers. This is because we have the resources to do it, by this I mean money. However, it is much more difficult to change the EQ of a person i.e. his attitudes and behaviour. This is made even more difficult by the

fact that we do not have the skills internally to change the awareness levels of able-bodied staff.

Extraordinary expenditure

Yes. We have put a lot of money into making our facilities disability friendly. Also the costs of specialist recruitment agencies are much higher than your average recruitment agency. There is a definite link between the cost of accommodating someone and the type of disability.

Legislation

As I said earlier I do not think that the disability issue is enforced by legislation, as is the race and gender issue, so I would say that the EEA is not effective in compelling organisations to employ people with disabilities. The Code is effective in creating a better understanding of disability and reasonable accommodations.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

To be seen to be doing the right thing, in other words, to protect and enhance our image.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

Because of the barriers identified earlier. I really don't think that our organisation is ready to actively recruit people with disabilities. I think a number of improvements to our infrastructure and social environment must first be made.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

A proactive approach is needed. A national awareness campaign must be held, but it must be directed at school children, because by the time people are adults they have developed stereotypes that are very difficult to change. I think the campaign should focus on the many successes in the workplace and in life by people with disabilities. Internally within organisations, this can be achieved by having the right role models, for example one of our top managers is disabled but he still does his job as well as anyone else, this helps create awareness and inspire others.

RESPONDENT G

Barriers experienced

Our biggest barrier is a lack of information and awareness regarding people with disabilities among able-bodied staff. This results in the staff not knowing how to treat or react to people with disabilities. Therefore they often rely on the opinions and ideas, which are often incorrect.

A second major barrier that we experience is that line managers become frustrated with having to deal with people with disabilities and all of the issues surrounding the employment of people with special needs. Line managers as with other staff are ill informed in terms of aspects of managing people with disabilities and there is a clear need for a policy or rather a set of guidelines for the management of people with disabilities.

We also experience various barriers relating to our physical infrastructure. For example we only have toilet facilities for people with disabilities on every second or third floor of our buildings, and while we have only been in these offices for two years, some of our other offices are very old and are not suited for both disabled employees and clients. A major difficulty we are experiencing in terms of physical barriers is what to do when a staff member who has been accommodated leaves the organisation. For example, we have a relatively senior person who is blind working in this office. He is able to do his job very well and this is largely due to workplace adjustments that have been made and specialised equipment that has been purchased for him. These expenses have been quite large. The dilemma lies in when the person decides to leave the organisation. Do we show that we have invested in the individual and not the organisation and therefore allow the individual to take with him his modified workplace and equipment (as you would with someone who leaves with qualifications you have paid for), or do you retain the equipment et cetera? This however, implies that if you don't want the equipment to gather dust you must fill the post with a disabled person. We

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have not yet got the answers to all of these questions, but it is an issue we are currently dealing with.

Removal of barriers

We are currently writing a policy and set of operating principles on how to deal with people with disabilities and how the organisation intends increasing the representivity of people with disabilities. For now this policy is directed at line managers only, however if it proves to be a success we will expand the effort to all staff to help create awareness.

We have also put in place workshops aimed at changing the attitudes of able-bodied staff that work closely with people with disabilities. The purpose of these workshops is to educate staff and let them interact with people with disabilities.

In terms of the physical barriers mentioned above I think that the possibility of government providing a portion of accommodation costs and the organisation providing a portion should be investigated, thereby the government and the organisation are investing in the individual and they are free to leave the organisation with whatever specialised equipment they need. However this is only my opinion and it remains to be seen how we will overcome these barriers.

Success of measures

Our focus on disability and people with disabilities is still in its infancy and it still remains to be seen both how we will overcome the various hurdles identified and whether it will be a success. However I am optimistic that we have the talent and resources to overcome any barrier.

Physical versus social barriers

In my experience thus far it would seem that social barriers are the most difficult to overcome, due to the fact that you need to first educate individuals to be able to change their attitudes.

Extraordinary expenditure

The use of specialist recruitment agencies, and the placing of recruitment advertisements in special media publications have resulted in certain expenditures being incurred. For example if you are advertising for a post that you want someone who is blind to fill, you cannot advertise in the normal print media. Yes, there is a direct relationship between the cost of accommodating someone and the degree of severity of their disability.

Legislation

The EEA assists in that it forces compliance in terms of quotas on organisations, however in my opinion it is a very "levelled" piece of legislation. By this I mean that the top priority is placed on black people, then other people of colour, then females and as a last resort people with disabilities. Therefore organisations only begin to focus on people with disabilities once they have sorted out the other designated groups. The code of good conduct provides a very good framework and definitions, which can be used to create disability management policy.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

The main reason currently why we will hire someone with a disability is to proactively protect our image as one of the top companies to work for in South Africa. Once a company's image is tarnished it is very, very difficult to fix it.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

If the accommodation of an individual with a disability will be too excessive on the company. However, it must be stated that we will incur great expenses to hire the right individual for the job.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

Someone must take responsibility for the training and skills development of people with disabilities on a national level. My suggestion is that this should be a government initiative.

RESPONDENT H

Barriers experienced

Generally we have experienced very few difficulties in terms of the employment of people with disabilities. I think the primary reasons for this is the fact that we have not actively recruited for people with disabilities and the people with disabilities who are in our service are mostly able to control the handicapping nature of their disabilities with medication. Probably the biggest barrier that we have experienced is the lack of suitably qualified disabled candidates. Our business and the nature of our work is very specialised and requires individuals with a very high intelligence and ample experience, and I assume that there are very few people with disabilities in South Africa who possess these skills. This is unfortunate and will take time to change, however the changes must first come at the educational level. Other than this we have experienced minor physical barriers, but they have been easily overcome (for example wheelchair ramps) and therefore I don't think they can be included as actual barriers, rather accommodations.

Removal of barriers

This might come across as arrogant but we have a very open-minded, informed and educated staff complement, which makes the elimination of social barriers very simple. There are no strange glances or comments or sniggering when a person with a disability enters a room and staff understand the disability and get on with their jobs.

In terms of overcoming physical barriers we have, where necessary, made work place adjustments and building modifications, but I would prefer to see these as reasonable accommodations rather than overcoming huge obstacles.

Success of measures

Our staff with disabilities are very happy at our organisation therefore I can only assume that the measures we have put in place have been successful, I think it is a culture that is successful rather than a set of measure that have been implemented.

Physical versus social barriers

I can only re-emphasise the fact that we have not experienced the usual social difficulties one would expect such as stereotyping and stimatisation, and I would therefore have to say that physical barriers are the most difficult to overcome as very often they result in capital expenditures.

Extraordinary expenditure

In my experiences we have not yet had to incur great expenses in terms of accommodating people with disabilities, however if it was required we would be willing to incur these costs. I would agree that there is a direct relationship between the degree of disability and the cost of accommodation.

Legislation

I don't think that current legislation assists the cause of people with disabilities. I must emphasize the fact that we hire people for the skills they bring to our organisation not their colour, gender or disability. While we adhere to the principles of the EEA we will not be bullied into hiring someone who will not add value to the organisation!!!

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

If he or she is the best person for the job, and for no other reason! However, it is good for the organisations image as top organisation to work for.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

If the person is unemployable in terms of his or her skills and abilities.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

The awareness of people with disabilities, and more importantly tolerance of people with disabilities needs to be promoted nationally by government, in a campaign similar to that of the HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns that are currently being run.

RESPONDENT I

Barriers experienced

Probably our biggest barrier to employing people with disabilities lies not in the individuals, but in the nature of our business. The majority of our workforce spends more time in the offices of our clients than in their own. Therefore the employment of people with disabilities, especially physical disabilities, is very difficult. Added to this, the portion of our workforce that does reside at our offices, our support staff is very stable and has a very low turnover rate. Therefore there are limited opportunities to employ people with disabilities. I would say that our profession is very disability "unfriendly". Also the fact that our employees spend much of their time in the offices of clients creates a whole new set of barriers. It means that not only do we have too eliminate physical and social barriers within our organisation, to a certain extent we have to do the same in our client's organisation.

Another barrier is the lack of disabled individuals with the required skills, training and related experience in our profession.

Removal of barriers

To overcome the barrier of having to work at various locations we have created teams in which people with disabilities operate, this eliminates the need for personal assistance for each individual. Other members of the team assist the individual in terms of mobility and accessibility; however, the individual is responsible for all aspects of his or her job and is held accountable for this. We do not believe in feeling sorry for anyone!!! Clients are also informed of the nature of the disability and sensitised in terms of any special needs of the individual.

We have a culture of mutual respect, teamwork and openness and I think this has helped eliminate many of the social barriers that one might expect to

encounter. These values are instilled in every individual from the first day they enter the organisation.

Success of measures

We have been very successful in terms of eliminating physical and social barriers within our own organisation as well as in clients, however, there are still some of our clients who prefer able-bodied staff and are reluctant to accept employees with disabilities.

We have not yet implemented a programme to promote the entry of people with disabilities into our profession, but intend pushing this in 2003. We have been successful in creating this critical mass amongst black people and I am convinced we can do the same amongst people with disabilities.

Physical versus social barriers

Most definitely social barriers. It is not the client's buildings or the ability of our disabled employees that deters them from taking a person with a disability, but rather their perceptions that they are not able to do the job as well as an able-bodied individual. These perceptions are very difficult to change.

Extraordinary expenditure

I don't think that we have spent any more on employing an individual with a disability than we do when we headhunt a skilled professional or buy one out from a competitor. We look for the best talent and are willing to pay a lot of money for the right people. In our case the cost of accommodating someone is definitely linked to the severity of disability.

Legislation

I think that the EEA still has a long way to go in terms of promoting the employment of people with disabilities. People with disabilities clearly play

second fiddle to people of colour. However employers are still compelled to hire people with disabilities.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

While I admit that something needs to be done about the representivity of people with disabilities in our profession we will not hire people just to correct this. We will only hire someone who has the skills and abilities to do his or her job effectively.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

If they do not have the ability to do the job.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

As I mentioned earlier the representation of people with disabilities in our profession needs to be increased. We had the same situation with black people in our profession, to overcome this we embarked on a huge capacity building initiative to build a critical mass of employable individuals. I think this same methodology could be quite successfully applied to people with disabilities as a group.

RESPONDENT J

Barriers experienced

It is difficult to specify the actual barriers we have experienced, as I don't believe we have tested them in the amount of detail that you are perhaps looking for. I think one barrier is that of disclosure. While I told you we don't employ any people with disabilities, I don't actually believe this is true, it is only that we do not have any records of people with disabilities in the organisation. This is largely due to the fact that people have not voluntarily disclosed their disabilities and we have not requested this of them at any time.

Sensitisation of the organisation and a true understanding of what disabled means seems also to be a prominent barrier at the moment.

We are also focused on our existing budgetary pressures and have not as such injected too much money into the employment of people with disabilities.

Our infrastructure is relatively accessible to the disabled and I do not foresee to many obstacles in this area.

Removal of barriers

We have made some progress with disabled recruitment, but not due to specific initiatives being embarked on. We have also not actively gone out and looked for employees with disabilities. Our current focus is mainly on correcting the racial composition of the group. I would imagine that we would be more receptive to a specific disabled drive once we have made more significant progress in this area.

We have made contact with a specialist recruitment agency, Di@/bility. They have assisted us in terms of creating awareness and sourcing people with disabilities.

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Success of measures

We have not implemented any active measures to change the disability situation in our organisation and I therefore cannot comment on the success of such measures.

Physical versus social barriers

I would suspect in our organisation social barriers, as I believe our infrastructure is currently very disability friendly.

Extraordinary expenditure

To this date the employment of people with disabilities has not resulted in any extraordinary expenditures, however we would be willing to incur such costs if a person with a disability is the right candidate for the job. I would assume that the more severe a disability, the higher the cost of accommodation would be.

Legislation

The EEA compels organisations to hire people with disabilities, however that is all that it does. It does not provide guidelines on best practices in terms of employing disabilities. *Have you heard of the INDS or Code?* No.

Main reason for hiring an employee with a disability

If they are the right person for the job and they can add value to our group.

Main reason for not hiring an employee with a disability

If their disability inhibits them from doing the job that they are applying for.

How can we improve the employment of people with disabilities?

People with disabilities must ensure that they are employable, in terms of their skills and abilities. This can be made possible by large organisations offering internships or learnership programmes especially for people with disabilities. We prefer to empower individuals rather than provide short-term charitable handouts.

APPENDIX D

ORGANISATIONS SPECIALISING IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

1. Access College

    Access College is a business college, which specialises in training people with disabilities so that they can compete for employment in the open market.

2. Altitude

3. Association for people with disabilities

    To enhance full integration of people with disabilities into their communities through removal of disabling barriers preventing integration.

4. DEAFSA

    DEAFSA's constitution and activities are aimed at all people who are affected by a hearing loss.

5. Di@/bility

    Specialist recruitment and employment services organistion specialising in the employment of people with disabilities.

6. DeafBlind South Africa

7. Equitability

8. Leading equity options

9. South African National Council for the Blind

    The South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) is a Non Government Organization (NGO) striving to meet the needs of all blind and partially sighted people in South Africa. This support includes rehabilitation, education and training, the provision of assistive devices, social and economic development, the prevention of blindness and the restoration of sight.

10. PADI

PADI is a group of people - both disabled and non-disabled - who since 1987 have been committed to education and awareness on disability issues in both the academic and business worlds.

11. School for the blind

12. Quadriplegic Association of South Africa

The Association and its affiliated branches was established to assist quadriplegics by providing a range of highly specialised support services that are designed to promote and encourage their rehabilitation, community integration and independence.