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Employment Trends and the Population Identified as Visually Impaired

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Employment Trends and
The Population Identified as Visually Impaired
(TITLE)

BY

Donna Mumford-Hinrichsen

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1985

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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Employment Trends and
The Population Identified as Visually Impaired

Donna Mumford-Hinrichsen
Eastern Illinois University
Master of Science in Education

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Abstract

In an effort to obtain careers that are competitive, with advancement opportunities, persons identified as visually impaired have been blocked by attitudinal barriers of society. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of employer attitudes on employment opportunities for persons who are visually impaired in competition with individuals who are sighted. The population surveyed was a group of 200 employers of accountants field in the state of Illinois. The study was conducted using a questionnaire and a set of eight resumes of fictional individuals. Employers received packets containing the materials and were asked to review the resumes as if they were planning to hire an accountant. The cover letter provided step-by-step instructions for ranking and selecting candidates for interview and possible employment based on applicants' employable skills. The employers indicated the influencing factors upon which they based their decision. Analysis of the data suggests the barrier of unrealistic opinions and attitudes of employers was found to be prevalent in the employers' responses. Even though the applicants were competitive with regard to education, specialized skills, and work experience, those applicants who were visually impaired were generally ranked as least likely to be chosen. The results of the study indicate that there is support for the hypothesis that the label visually impaired negatively influences the hiring practices of employers in the accounting field.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the children of southeastern Illinois who are visually impaired. It is sincerely hoped that their career aspirations and avenues to competitive employment are not negatively influenced or obstructed by attitudinal barriers of society.

To: Sara Waggle

Amy Myers

Marlow Wolfe

Bobby Jones

Crystal Garcia

Chris Utley

Billy Joe Tomasek

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A review of the literature reveals that individuals identified as visually impaired have limited career opportunities (Acton, 1981; Dixon, 1983; Field, 1982; Packer, 1983; Pfouts & Nixon, 1982; Posner, 1980). The terms partially sighted and blind are used to describe visual impairment. This population experiences a high level of job failure and unemployment (Shackleton, Wild, & Wolfe, 1981). Three studies reviewed pointed out the two major causes of this problem. First, "their avenues to knowledge of occupations are seriously obstructed" (Hyman, Stokes, & Strauss, 1973, p. 404). Second, employers are unaware of and often neglect those persons identified as handicapped, therefore leading to their underemployment. Underemployment, as defined by Field (1982), is a term used to describe those who are handicapped as being employed below their potential skill levels. Persons identified as visually impaired have career aspirations, yet gainful employment has been an elusive goal as found by Pfouts and Nixon (1982).

In 1971, Sidney P. Marland Jr. led the drive for funding to infuse career concepts into the public school curriculum (Brolin & Konar, 1982; Kirchner, 1982). The purpose of career education is to help the student develop to full capacity by combining two strategies: helping a student learn and helping the student learn to make a living (Wurster, 1983). Brolin and Konar (1982) and Kirkman (1983) also agree that career education should be a lifelong process, beginning with early exposure in kindergarten and be

available through the retirement years. "Career education encompasses the entire spectrum of education and training for life roles, including habilitative skill development, survival skills, daily living skills, academic and vocational skills" (Wurster, 1983, p. 100). Field (1982) supports the idea that career education is a good alternative to dependency (of people who are handicapped) on the world for human and financial support.

Thurman (1983) placed individuals who are visually impaired into two groups: those who use print and vision as a learning mode and those who use braille and use other senses as a learning mode. Persons who are visually impaired require special career development programs and opportunities according to Kirkman (1983). He also reports that an adapted curriculum will be necessary, along with early career exploration. To expand on this concept, Inana (1981) identified five essential elements of career education for persons identified as visually impaired: (a) exposure to the world of work, (b) development of job aspirations, (c) knowledge of job availability, (d) daily living skills and social skills, and, (e) the knowledge of a variety of resources that can be utilized. These five elements may serve as guidelines for counselors and parents in the development of a career education program adapted for those persons who are visually impaired. Kent (1983) reports that persons who are blind or visually impaired should start gathering direct work experiences as early as possible to

assist in the development of interests, abilities, and skills. Kent continues that volunteer work can strengthen and improve the individual's self-image.

Holmes, Wanner, and Bishel (1983) identified four developmental stages that lead persons who are visually impaired to a realistic career choice: career motivation (kindergarten through sixth grade), career orientation (seventh and eighth grades), career exploration (ninth and tenth grades), and career preparation (eleventh and twelfth grades). The identification of these stages provides information and time lines for the implementation of a balanced and complete career education program. Thorough preparation for the world of work is vital to the success of persons identified as visually impaired.

Dahl (1982) identified four barriers that influence career education and employment of persons who are handicapped. The first and largest barrier as indicated by several studies (Dixon, 1983; Koestler, 1983; Packer, 1983; Roberts, 1983; Thurman, 1983) is the unrealistic opinions and attitudes, specifically stereotypes of persons identified as handicapped. Thurman (1983) described three stereotypes for persons identified as visually impaired: "blind people are good with their hands," "blind people are good musicians," and "blind people should be in a profession that is not appropriate for all people in general" (for example, persons who are blind can teach at schools for the visually impaired population, but they should not teach in public

schools) (p. 135). This example demonstrates the lack of available occupations for this group. Lang (1984) supports the idea that some stereotyped images can dictate lifestyle. In opposition, Ruffner (1981) contends that "negative attitudes are not a major impediment to employment of disabled people, instead it is inadequate job preparation that affects the employment rate of handicapped persons" (p. 6).

Spain (1981) found that employers are not able to find enough qualified workers who are handicapped. This is the same opinion shared by Ruffner (1981), who also contends that there is a shortage of qualified disabled candidates for jobs and that persons with handicaps are unable to present and sell their qualifications for a job. This assumption relates to Cacich and Dasch's (1984) findings that persons who are blind or visually impaired have been so protected that they have not assumed basic responsibilities for themselves. With regard to unrealistic attitudes, Gossett (1983) stated that children who are blind have hopes and dreams not unlike those of children who are sighted. Teachers help to instill the concept of imagination, but when the child who is blind uses his imagination, the public states that the child is being unrealistic.

Unrealistic attitudes and opinions also exist with employers (Brolin & Carver, 1982; Clayton, 1983; Fiorito, 1983; Lang, 1984). For example, Fiorito (1983) found that employers believe that persons who are blind and visually

impaired are less competent than sighted individuals. Stern (1983), in a study on employer attitudes, used television and a feature film called "Employed Ability." The film was shown to various employers at local business meetings. The film depicts men and women who are visually impaired employed in blue collar occupations and professional, managerial, and technical jobs. After reviewing the film, employers demonstrated improved positive attitudes toward persons who are visually impaired and their capabilities. Branson (1982) and Hyman et al. (1973) both found that employer discrimination still affects the employment rate of persons who are blind or visually impaired. The negative attitude of the community can also influence the employment of a person identified as visually impaired (Clayton, 1983). Some communities are less accepting of people identified as handicapped. The negative attitudes of employers and the community have largely contributed to limited career opportunities for persons identified as visually impaired. Once these factors are accepted perhaps change can occur.

Keim, Rak, and Fell (1982) demonstrated the importance of career exploration for considering a variety of occupations, interests, aptitudes, work habits, attitudes, and behaviors. To carry out career exploration, one must determine what occupational fields are open. There are various types of jobs in the labor force and business field, yet the occupational fields open for individuals identified as handicapped are minimal. Horn and Drury (1982) explored the

reasons behind the lack of occupational fields for individuals who are handicapped. They found three reasons why this group has been limited. First, persons who are handicapped may not have had prior experience in an occupational field, thus contributing to job failure. Second, the unavailability of on-the-job training has not allowed a wide range of occupational fields to open up. Finally, a particular occupational field may have simply never been considered as an area of employment for these persons. Graves (1983) reported that the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center in Blindness and Low Vision has been working to prevent and minimize the vocational effects of blindness and severe visual impairments. Service agencies that work with clients who are blind or visually impaired need to "set objectives and clarify future opportunities and threats" (Carter, 1984, p. 145).

A second barrier as reported by Dahl (1982) is one of inadequate skill development. Brolin and Konar (1982) and Clayton (1983) both agree that poor job preparation by means of incomplete training for a position and lack of marketable skills will influence the employability of persons identified as handicapped. Skill development can be obtained by enrollment in vocational programs, career education programs, or post-secondary education. When any of these methods is not utilized properly, problems will arise.

Phelps (1984) reported that 545,000 persons who are handicapped were participating in vocational education

programs in 1980-81, as compared to 235,000 participants in 1973-74. Even with increased involvement of these persons in vocational education, Dixon (1983) found that women who are visually impaired are still underemployed in the labor force. The literature pointed out that some individuals identified as visually impaired were enrolled in colleges as an alternative to the world of work due to the lack of awareness of alternatives to traditional jobs as reported by Coker, Sorensen, and Ward (1983).

Phelps (1984) found that inadequate skill development can be due to the individual's having limited access to vocational education programs. The negative and misleading concepts about their ability have led some persons who are visually impaired not to seek vocational services (Lang, 1984). As stated earlier, Ruffner (1981) supports the idea that skill development determines the employability of handicapped persons. Through interviews with employers, Ruffner discovered that workers who are handicapped and possess more than one job skill retained their jobs, while workers who are not handicapped and only possess one job skill were relieved of their duties. "Many blind students make vocational choices upon having known or heard of another blind person who had been successful in a choice of similar vocations" (McCauley, 1961, p. 22). Others avoid job training because they fear that they will end up with inferior jobs that offer little chance for advancement (Branson, 1982). Spain (1981) contends that if good

ing programs existed, persons who are blind or visually impaired would be attracted to them. Through a study of children who are totally blind, Hyman et al. (1973) showed that these individuals can direct their efforts cautiously around barriers and take sensible steps along a path to a career.

To become independent, productive citizens in the community, persons who are visually impaired must join the work force. Employment is a long-term activity. To be competitive, the person who is visually impaired should utilize two suggestions by Branson (1982). He reported the person identified as visually impaired should: obtain the best preparation possible for a job and apply for a job that fits the training received. These suggestions may help persons identified as visually impaired overcome the barriers which obstruct their goal of obtaining a desired career.

The literature reported that persons who are handicapped have been receiving training only for "employment skills that have been traditionally considered applicable to the handicapped" (Horn & Drury, 1982, p. 1). Pfouts et al. (1982) found that persons who are visually impaired are still employed in traditional jobs even though they appear to have qualifications for a variety of occupational positions. Through a study of vocational role preferences, Weeks (1983) found that children were inquisitive about nontraditional role models, but they still chose traditional

occupations for themselves. Horn and Drury (1982) support the idea that individuals who are handicapped need to have the opportunity to choose from a variety of occupational fields and receive a wide spectrum of skills training.

Technology is helping to remove some of the barriers for persons who are visually impaired (Brunken, 1984; Graves, 1983; Pfanstiehl, 1983; Sandhaus, 1983). Coker et al. (1983) reported that the technological boom opened the door for the population identified as visually impaired because of the adaptive equipment that has been developed. Adaptive equipment, such as magnifiers, electronic reading aids, and talking calculators have made it easier for persons who are visually impaired to enter nontraditional jobs (Dixon, 1983). New sensory and optical aids have also increased the ability of the population identified as blind and visually impaired as shown in several studies by Graves (1983), Pfanstiehl (1983), and Sandhaus (1983). Computer technology has brought about greater opportunities for this special population to increase their job skills (Brunken, 1984). Now that computers can be equipped with speech output units, printed materials are no longer an obstacle to people who are visually impaired. Gugerty, Roshal, Tradwell, and Anthony (1981) have developed a resource catalog for employers, vocational educators, rehabilitation counselors, and other individuals who work with clients who are handicapped. The catalog contains adaptive devices, descriptions, and illustrations of modified tools, equipment,

and machinery and a list of resources complete with addresses and the types of services provided.

In conclusion, several studies supported the idea that persons who are visually impaired are limited in their career opportunities. They are unaware or misinformed about career education programs. Too often, the person who is visually impaired is locked into traditional and/or stereotyped training and occupations. Several factors contribute to these findings. Unrealistic attitudes and opinions of persons identified as handicapped, employers, counselors, and the community have contributed to the traditional and stereotyped training and placement. Inadequate skill development of persons identified as visually impaired has influenced their employability. Once again, traditional roles and stereotypes have influenced this factor.

One positive factor that has influenced the employability of persons who are visually impaired is technology. Adaptive equipment and sensory and optical aids have allowed the visually impaired population to widen their choice of occupational fields.

Several factors have obviously influenced career choices for the special population of the blind and visually impaired. The review of the literature clearly shows that persons identified as visually impaired have been limited in their career opportunities. Further research is needed to determine if improvements in career education programs have

made and, if so, what the implications are for the visually impaired population.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of employer attitudes on employment opportunities for persons who are visually impaired in competition with individuals who are sighted. The null hypothesis: Employers in the accounting field are not influenced by the label visually impaired. The hypothesis for this study is: Employers in the accounting field are negatively influenced by the label visually impaired and will tend not to select for an interview and possible employment an individual who is visually impaired over a person who is identified as sighted.

Method

Subjects

Two hundred employers at accounting firms and hospitals in the state of Illinois were surveyed. The accounting firms were selected from the 1984-85 Illinois CPA Society/Foundation Directory. This was accomplished by selecting every fourth entry in the directory. The hospitals were selected from the 1982 Edition of American Hospital Association Directory of Health Care Institutions. Every fifth entry was selected for the study.

Materials

The following materials were developed for this study: a cover letter, a set of eight resumes of fictional individuals, and a questionnaire. The eight resumes were developed

with the assistance of a hospital accountant from southeastern Illinois, an accountant from a large company in Chicago, and a CPA group from southern Illinois. These individuals were interviewed to obtain information regarding employment skills, resume format, and hiring practices in the accounting field. The eight resumes were constructed with the supplied input. Several drafts of the resumes were given to the accountants for review. The main goal was to develop resumes with appropriate information, format, and competitive employable skills. The end product was to appear as realistic as possible and demonstrate variances between the eight candidates. By varying the employable skill levels and not matching each applicant exactly with another, it was anticipated that the candidates identified as visually impaired would at least be ranked in the middle to upper half of the group. The actual resumes can be found in the Appendix, while a brief summary is provided in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Each employer received a packet containing the following items: a cover letter, a set of eight resumes placed in a random order, a questionnaire, and a return envelope. The cover letter explained the purpose of the project and step-by-step directions for the employer to follow. The set of eight resumes presents eight fictional individuals in search of accounting positions. Two of the eight resumes were for

Table 1
Contents of the Eight Resumes

Resume Identification (letter, sex, characteristic)	Education (GPA)	Related Coursework	Specialized Skills	Experience in Accounting	Experience in General
A. Female - sighted	B.S. Business Administration	None	None	1/2 year <u>Now</u> employed	4 years
B. Female - sighted	B.S. Business Administration GPA 3.2	Auditing & Management	None	None	3 years <u>Now</u> employed
C. Female - sighted	B.S. in Accounting	None	Computer Typing Foreign language	1 year <u>Now</u> employed	1 1/2 years
D. Male - sighted	B.S. in Accounting	None	None	None	8 years <u>Now</u> employed
E. Male - visually impaired	B.S. in Accounting	Communications Public Relations Journalism	Computer Foreign language Typing	2 years <u>Now</u> employed	2 years
F. Male - sighted	B.S. in Accounting	Auditing Taxes Economics Management	Computer Correspondence Public Relations	3 years Hospital accounting <u>Now</u> employed	None
G. Female - visually impaired	B.S. in Accounting GPA 3.3	None	Typing Leadership	None	5 years <u>Now</u> employed
H. Male - sighted	B.S. Business Administration GPA 3.0	None	None	3 years <u>part-time</u> <u>Now</u> unemployed	None

individuals identified as visually impaired while the remaining six were for sighted individuals. Each resume was unique in format, type set, experience/skill level, and geographic and personal data. The questionnaire was one page in length, surveying the employers' attitudes regarding competitive employment between individuals who are sighted and non-sighted. The employers were asked to rank the 8 fictional individuals from 1 to 8 based on the employers' preferences of individuals chosen for an interview and possible employment. Based only on the resumes, the employers were then asked to select 1 individual from the 8 that he/she would most likely call first for an interview. The employers then indicated which factors influenced their decision. Each questionnaire was coded with a series of numbers for follow-up purposes. The form allowed for demographic information and additional comments. A return envelope was provided for utilization by the employers. All documents were mailed to the employers in large manila envelopes. Copies of the cover letter, eight resumes, and questionnaire are included in the Appendix.

Procedure

The purposed study took approximately 14 weeks to complete. The survey was mailed to each employer; therefore, there was no formal administration procedure. Each subject was instructed to review the eight resumes and to rank the fictional individuals according to employable skill levels. The subjects demonstrated their selection and attitudes by

filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaires were returned to the researcher in the return envelopes supplied. Four weeks after the initial mailing date, reminder notices were sent to those employers from whom returned questionnaires had not been received.

Design

This was a survey of employer attitudes. The treatment was administered only once to one group of individuals. The questionnaire served as the measurement device.

Analysis

The purpose of this study was to measure the attitudes of employers with regard to competitive employment between individuals who are sighted and those who are visually impaired. The results were charted based on the frequency of matched responses. The major points of concern were the applicant ranked first, the single applicant chosen, the rank placement of the two individuals identified as visually impaired, and the factors which influence employers' decisions.

Results

There were two hundred surveys mailed to employers in the state of Illinois. Eighty-one questionnaires were returned. The accounting firms returned forty-two questionnaires, and the hospitals returned thirty-nine. The return rate was approximately forty percent. The size of the communities of the employers ranged in population from 160 to 7 million. The majority of responses came from communities that were 15,000 to 100,000 in population.

The businesses surveyed employed from one to three hundred accountants. There were 614 male accountants employed and 348 female accountants employed. The majority of responses indicated employment of five or fewer accountants. The employers were asked if any of these employees were identified as handicapped. Four employers stated that they employed one accountant who was physically impaired, and one employer indicated that an employee was identified as visually impaired.

Utilizing the resumes, the employers ranked the fictional individuals from one to eight in order of which candidate would be selected for an interview and possible employment first, second, third, etc. Table 2 contains the ranking, votes, resume identification letter, sex, and characteristic of sighted or visually impaired.

Insert Table 2 about here

When the employers were asked to choose only one applicant for an interview and possible employment, the majority of respondents selected Resume F, a male with sight. Table 3 contains the rank placement, votes, resume identification letter, sex, and characteristic of sighted or visually impaired.

Insert Table 3 about here

Table 2
Ranking of the Resumes

Rank	Votes	Resume Identification Letter	Sex	Characteristic
1	33	F	Male	Sighted
2	15	C	Female	Sighted
3	10	A	Female	Sighted
4	6	H	Male	Sighted
5	4	8	Female	Sighted
6	2	D	Male	Sighted
6	2	G	Female	Visually Impaired
8	0	E	Male	Visually Impaired

Table 3
Selection of One Candidate

Rank	Votes	Resume Identification Letter	Sex	Characteristic
1	37	F	Male	Sighted
2	14	C	Female	Sighted
3	8	H	Male	Sighted
4	7	A	Female	Sighted
5	5	B	Female	Sighted
6	2	G	Female	Visually Impaired
7	1	E	Male	Visually Impaired
8	0	D	Male	Sighted

Employment factors were listed to determine what factors influence the employers' decisions. Responses were tallied, and the six factors were ranked from one to six in order of frequency: education, work experience directly related to accounting, work experience in general, related coursework, specialized skills, years of work experience, and CPA. The respondents were asked to check which factors influenced their decision and were not limited as to how many factors they could select. Some employers marked one or two factors while others marked several. Table 4 contains the results and ranking of the factors.

Insert Table 4 about here

The employers were then asked to select one of the factors that was the most influential. Some of the employers had difficulty with this and responded with two factors. The majority of the respondents selected education and work experience (not directly classified as accounting) as the most important factor(s) (see Table 5).

Insert Table 5 about here

A few of the employers had difficulty completing the ranking and selecting one applicant. Three of the questionnaires were returned blank, and twenty-seven employers requested the results of the survey.

Table 4
Factors That Influence Employer Decisions

Rank	Votes	Factor
1	56	Education
2	52	Work Experience Directly Related to Accounting
3	33	Work Experience in General
4	28	Related Coursework
5	24	Specialized Skills
6	21	Years of Work Experience
7	7	CPA

Additional factors noted:

Leadership qualities, resume format, community involvement, GPA, and outside activities.

Table 5
The Most Important Influencing Factor

Rank	Votes	Factor
1	22	Education
1	22	Work Experience (<u>not</u> classified as accounting or general)
2	21	Experience Directly Related to Accounting
3	10	Related Coursework
4	6	Specialized Skills
5	5	Work Experience in General
6	4	Years of Work Experience
7	3	CPA

Additional factors noted:

Personal qualities, GPA, affiliations, resume format, and computer experience.

Discussion

The completion of the survey was strictly voluntary on the part of the employers. Of the two hundred surveys mailed, eighty-one were returned. Reminder notices were sent to those employers who failed to respond in four weeks' time. To increase employer participation, consideration was given to the length of time required to complete the survey. Thus, it was decided to utilize only eight resumes and keep the questionnaire to one page in length to increase the number of returns. The majority of the employers who responded were from large communities. Interestingly, the three employers who selected candidates identified as visually impaired as their number one choice were from large communities. Perhaps these larger communities would be more accepting of persons with handicapping conditions. As the literature indicated, the attitudes of the society/community can be a barrier to gainful employment for persons identified as handicapped.

The number of accountants employed at the responding businesses was usually under five. Comparison of this finding with the candidate selected did not indicate a relationship. Those three employers who chose a candidate identified as visually impaired employed either a few or a large number of accountants. The size of the accounting department in this study did not appear to influence the probability of employment of a person identified as visually impaired. The total number of male accountants employed was

614, and there were 348 female accountants employed. While most of the businesses tended to employ male accountants, a male and female were ranked at the top for interview and possible employment. Even though the literature pointed out that females identified as visually impaired were more underemployed than males, the female who was visually impaired ranked higher than the male who was visually impaired in this study. Therefore, sex did not appear to be an influencing factor. Those employers who identified their employees as handicapped did not select the candidates who were visually impaired. Perhaps their responses were influenced by their direct and personal experience with persons identified as handicapped.

The directions for ranking the eight resumes needed to be clarified, since a few employers had difficulty completing the section. Some employers chose not to select one candidate. Those employers who returned blank questionnaires indicated that they were no longer in the accounting field.

To be realistic, the resumes were developed with the concept of competitive employment among individuals with various qualities. Rarely would an employer receive a set of resumes where each applicant possessed the exact same skills. The employers surveyed indicated that education and work experience (not classified as related to accounting) were the most influencing factors. All eight candidates held a Bachelor of Science degree. Three resumes included

grade point averages (GPA), with the highest being a 3.3/4.0 obtained by the female who was visually impaired. This candidate, although holding a higher grade point average, was consistently ranked seventh by the employers. She also possessed the second most years of work experience in general of all of the candidates. The male identified as visually impaired had a Bachelor's degree and had two years' work experience directly related to accounting and two years' work experience in general. This individual was consistently ranked eighth. These results appear to be in direct conflict with the stated important influencing factors noted by these same employers. The barrier of unrealistic opinions and attitudes of employers appears to be affecting the employers surveyed. The majority of the employers chose a male with sight (Resume F) with three years of hospital accounting experience and no general work experience listed. This candidate's qualities did not match the indicated list of important influencing factors. Perhaps the employers were swayed by the number of years this individual had in accounting experience. When the employers ranked the factors from one to seven in order of importance, the majority ranked the number of years sixth. This indicates that the years of experience were not as important as the work experience itself.

When utilizing the employers' input for vital qualities a good candidate must have, it appears that the male who is visually impaired would be one of the best candidates. He

has a good education with related coursework and specialist skills in computer work and typing, and he is fluent in a foreign language. He also has two years' accounting experience and two years of general work experience. A male with sight (Resume F) who was chosen and ranked first was competitive with the male identified as visually impaired. The anticipated responses were that both of these males would be ranked in the top half of the group. The actual responses indicated the individual with sight at the top and the male identified as visually impaired at the bottom. The barriers discussed in the literature have been confirmed by these results and findings for those employers surveyed in the state of Illinois.

The implications are: labels can have a negative effect on an employer's hiring practices, work experience is a vital element in obtaining a job, and attitudinal barriers are still an obstruction to gainful employment for persons identified as handicapped. Since two of the males, Resume F and Resume E, were competitive with each other with regard to skill level, one fact separated them - one individual was labeled as visually impaired. Of these two, the male with sight was ranked at the top and the male identified as visually impaired was ranked at the bottom. These results indicate a negative effect due to the label.

A male with sight (Resume F) had the most years of work experience directly related to accounting compared to the whole group. Since he was selected as the best candidate by

the majority of respondents, the importance of work experience related to gainful employment seems quite clear. Persons who are visually impaired must be made aware of this finding so they can better prepare themselves for the world of work.

Attitudinal barriers have created problems for persons identified as handicapped. The barriers have obstructed them from gainful employment. Persons who are identified as handicapped should be aware of this and take steps to resolve this problem. Society must also realize this barrier and take steps to resolve this problem. Perhaps by working together to remove the barriers, they can be overcome, opening the doors to gainful employment for persons identified as handicapped.

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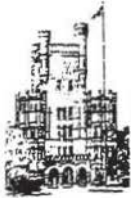
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Appendix



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS 61920

Department Of Special Education
(217) 581-5316

Department of Special Education
Eastern Illinois University
Charleston, Illinois 61920-3099
September 16, 1985

Dear Employer:

I am a graduate student at Eastern Illinois University; and for my thesis, I am conducting a survey on employment trends in the state of Illinois.

Enclosed in this packet you will find 8 resumes, a questionnaire and a return envelope. The 8 resumes are of fictional individuals who are applying for a position as an accountant.

I would appreciate 15 minutes of your time to review the resumes as if you were planning to hire an accountant. On the questionnaire you are asked to rank and/or choose an individual(s) according to your requirements that you feel would be a candidate(s) for an interview and possible employment. Each questionnaire is coded for follow up purposes only.

These packets are being sent to selected employers in the state of Illinois. A high return of the questionnaires will allow for more validity in this survey. The data from this survey will only be used as part of my thesis, and all results will remain strictly confidential. If you would like a copy of the results, please note this on the bottom of the questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope within 5-7 days.

Your cooperation will greatly benefit this survey and assist me in completing my graduate program requirements.

Coordially yours,

Donna Hinrichsen

KIMBERLY L. WILSON

1006 Ninth Street

Carbondale, Illinois 62708

(618) 594-3344

PERSONAL

Single

Born: May 28, 1963

Weight: 106

Interests: Horses and camping.

Height: 5'4"

JOB
OBJECTIVE

A position as an accountant where I will be able to utilize my education and have advancement opportunities.

EDUCATION

1981 Southern Illinois University - Carbondale, Illinois.
to Degree: Bachelor of Business Administration
1985 Major: Accounting, with emphasis in the field
of Public Accounting.

Qualified and plan to sit for the December 1985, Uniform Certified Public Accountant Examination.

EXPERIENCE

1980 CARBONDALE IGA Carbondale, Illinois
to Cashier to Accounting Clerk. Handled all receipts
and advanced to Head Cashier. Worked on
1985 inventory and employment records. Since graduation
I currently hold a clerical accounting position.
Responsibilities include accounts receivable, accounts
payable and payroll distribution.

1978 PARKSIDE POOL Carbondale, Illinois
to Life Guard. Worked summers supervising young
children to adults in recreational activities.
1980

REFERENCES

Will be supplied when interest is established.

ELIZABETH ANN MUMFORD

428 Norman Drive
Pinkstaff, IL 62478

OBJECTIVE: An entry-level accounting position.

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science in Business Administration,
December, 1984, Eastern Illinois University,
Charleston, Illinois.

Major GPA: 3.2

Courses Related to Career Objective

Principles of Auditing
Cost Accounting
Management

FUTURE EDUCATION: I enrolled in a CPA Review Class at Champaign,
Illinois which started December 1, 1984 and
went through the May CPA Exam.

EXPERIENCE: Eastern Illinois University, Charleston,
Illinois. Marketing Department, Secretary.
January 1985-Present.

Druthers Restaurant, Lawrenceville, Illinois.
Counter help/cashier.
1978-1980 and summers.

PERSONAL DATA: I am married. I enjoy photography, tennis
and bowling. I am a hard worker and can
handle responsibility.

REFERENCES: These are available upon request.

CURRENT ADDRESS: 607 Lincoln Drive, Apartment 2 B
Charleston, Illinois 61920
(618) 455-3398

PATRICIA S. MILLER

828 SOUTH ELM APARTMENT 6 A
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 60741
(312) 892-6691

CAREER
OBJECTIVE

An accounting position with career advancement opportunities.

EDUCATION

Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, IL
Bachelor of Science in Accountancy
May 1983

EXPERIENCE

Arrow Sign Company, Rockford, Illinois
November 1984 - present. Accountant responsible for computerizing monthly financial statements, implemented internal reports, implemented standardized charts of accounts and loaded all payroll data into computer.

St. Luke's Medical Center, Rockford, IL
April 1984 - November 1984. Receptionist responsible for files, scheduling appointments and operating the switchboard.

Aluminum Distributors, Inc., Forest Park IL
October 1983 - April 1984. Secretary responsible for correspondence, schedules, office supplies.

Dean Foods Company, Franklin Park, Illinois
May 1983 - October 1983. File Clerk responsible for organization of files, reviewing and updating files and records.

RELATED
SKILLS

Computer skills
Shorthand and typing skills
Ability to speak basic Spanish

PERSONAL

Excellent health
Divorced, one child
Date of Birth: 1/6/61
Interested in art and travel

REFERENCES

Furnished upon request.

D

JEFFERY RICHARDSON
3N321 Joan Drive
Peoria, Illinois 46706
(309) 697-5015

**CAREER
OBJECTIVE:**

A position with an accounting firm or company, where my education in Accounting can be utilized and developed on a professional level.

EDUCATION:

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY Normal, Illinois
May 1985 - Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting.

PEORIA HIGH SCHOOL Peoria, Illinois
June 1974.

**WORK
EXPERIENCE:**

CITY OF PEORIA Peoria, Illinois
Snow Plow Operator/City Maintenance
1979 - Present

CATERPILLIAR East Peoria, Illinois
Line worker, 1975 - 1977

**PERSONAL
DATA:**

Born August 2, 1956; 6'2"; 195-lbs;
divorced; good health. I enjoy reading,
cooking and music.

REFERENCES:

References are available upon request.

E

SAMUEL JAMES ZELLER
1002 North Grove
Springfield, IL 62702

EDUCATION

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, Bachelor of Science in
Accounting 1983
Major: Accounting
Minor: Organizational Communications, additional
courses in Public Relations, Journalism and
Literature.

SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Speak fluent Italian.
Type 40 words per minute.
Experience with a Hewlett Packard 150 computer.

WORK EXPERIENCE

ALLIED AMERICAN INSURANCE COMPANY/ILLINOIS FINANCE CO.,
1983 - Present. Financial Processor and Quality Control
Supervisor - Maintained and processed customers' premium
payments on a Hewlett Packard 150 computer. Controlled
quality of data output and made recommendations on both
system and procedural operations.

SPRINGFIELD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, 1978-1980 part time
Volunteer Switchboard Operator

INTERESTS

Reading and writing short stories.

PERSONAL DATA

I am single and in good health. I am legally blind and
utilize braille as a reading medium. I also use a
Hewlett Packard computer with a Total Talk PC speech
output unit. I am an independent traveler with my cane.
In order to work efficiently, I require a good sized
desk with an electrical outlet close by. Basic
orientation to new environments is necessary.

ACTIVITIES

Active member, Association for the Education of the
Visually Handicapped, 1980 - present

Member, Loyola Marketing Club, 1981 - 1982

REFERENCES

My references are available upon request.

Richard Jamerson

209 North Plum
Robinson, Illinois 62454
(618) 544-3968

Married
26 years old
Excellent Health

CAREER OBJECTIVE: A position in the accounting field where my education and experience can be utilized on a higher professional level. I am looking for a position with advancement opportunities.

EDUCATION: Olivet Nazarene College, B. S. Business, 1982 Kankakee, Illinois.
Emphasis in Accounting.

Related Coursework

Principles of Financial Accounting
Intermediate Accounting
Cost Accounting
Principles of Auditing
Advanced Accounting
Federal Income Tax
International Economics
Management classess
Principles of Marketing

SPECIAL SKILLS/ABILITIES & EFFORTS:

Solid computer background - IBM PC XT Microcomputer
Excellent interpersonal relations
Handled a variety of business correspondence
Provided half of my college support

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Crawford Memorial Hospital - Robinson, Illinois 1982-Present.
Accountant to Data Processing Manager. Responsibilities include accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll distribution, assigning proper account codes to each transaction. In 1984 I was promoted to Data Processing Manager.

AFFILIATIONS:

Hospital Financial Management Association.

REFERENCES:

Supplied when mutual interest is established.

SAMANTHA STOWER

819 N. Pick Street
Park Forest, IL 61320
(312) 726-2140

OBJECTIVE

Public accounting position dealing with auditing or capital budgeting.

PERSONAL DATA

I am legally blind. I am partially sighted and I am able to read large print. I utilize magnifiers, computers with speech output and readers when available. I am single and in good health.

EDUCATION

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois
Bachelor of Science in Accountancy, May 1985
Accountancy GPA: 3.3/4.0
Overall GPA: 3.5/4.0

EXPERIENCE

1983-present -- Receptionist, Geona Furniture
Geona, Illinois

Duties include inventory control, public communications and customer relations.

1980-present -- Volunteer, Chicago Lighthouse
for the Blind, Chicago, Illinois

Assist with orientation and mobility for new clients and organized recreational activities for clients and the community.

RELATED ABILITIES

Typing speed 55 words per minute with excellent accuracy.

Leadership abilities due to volunteer work.

INTERESTS

Enjoy meeting new people, collecting foreign coins and swimming and camping.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

CRAIG T. NELSON

11052 S. Bell Avenue
Park Ridge, IL 60643
(312) 881-8583

CAREER OBJECTIVE

Entry-level accounting position.

EDUCATION

Roosevelt University, Chicago, Illinois
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
December, 1984 Major: Accounting GPA: 3.0

INTERNSHIP

Richland Memorial Hospital, Olney, Illinois Summer 1983
Gained experience working with the professional staff
in data processing and auditing. Assisted in preparing
financial statements and reviewing computer programs.

WORK EXPERIENCE

LaMar Insurance Agency, Chicago, Illinois 1980 - 1983
Accounting Clerk, part time position while attending college.

Reviewed invoices, assigned proper account codes to
transactions, prepared bank reconciliations, payroll,
business and individual tax returns.

Big Brother Association, Park Ridge, Illinois 1978-present
Volunteer, evenings and weekends.

Assisted in planning recreational activities for young
boys and providing educational tutoring.

PERSONAL DATA

I am single and in excellent health. I enjoy outdoor
activities such as golf and baseball.

ACTIVITIES

Member of the Organizing Committee at St. Brazil Boulevard
Center for the youth.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE

QUESTIONNAIRE

YOUR JOB TITLE IS: _____
(NO personal name required)

CHECK ONE: _____ ACCOUNTING FIRM _____ HOSPITAL OTHER: _____

APPROXIMATE SIZE OF YOUR COMMUNITY IS: _____

PRESENT NUMBER OF ACCOUNTANTS EMPLOYED IS: _____

Of these persons - _____ are male

_____ are female

If any of these individuals are identified as handicapped, what are the impairments?

_____ Hearing impaired _____ Physically impaired _____ Visually impaired

_____ Other, specify: _____

Each resume has a letter (A-H) on it. Please rank them 1 - 8 on the basis of individuals who would be chosen for an interview and possible employment first, second, third, etc. 1 means most likely, 8 means least likely chosen.

_____ A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ E _____ F _____ G _____ H

If you could only utilize the resume to determine possible interview/employment, which individual would you choose? ***Please choose only one.

_____ A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ E _____ F _____ G _____ H

YOUR DECISION WAS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING FACTORS - CHECK APPROPRIATE ANSWERS.

_____ CPA _____ Related coursework

_____ Education _____ Years of work experience

_____ Specialized Skills _____ Work experience in general

_____ Work experience directly related to accounting

_____ Other: _____

Which of the above-mentioned factors was the most influential?

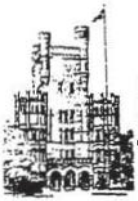
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

**If you would like a copy of the results of this survey, please fill out the information below:

Name and title: _____

Address: _____
(City) (State) (Zip)

PLEASE UTILIZE THE ATTACHED RETURN ENVELOPE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS 61920

Department Of Special Education
(217) 581-5316

Department of Special Education
Eastern Illinois University
Charleston, Illinois 61920-3099
October 7, 1985

Dear Employer,

A short time ago, you received a survey on employment trends. The packet contained 8 resumes of fictional individuals and a questionnaire. You were asked to review the resumes and rank them according to your standards for employment. I have not yet received your reply and would appreciate it if you could return the questionnaire as soon as possible.

If you have recently returned the questionnaire, please accept my thanks.

Sincerely,

Donna Hinrichsen