

Crafting an Effective Self-ID Campaign

Leadership Council-Exclusive Resource



Many companies express frustration and discouragement with the outcome of self-ID campaigns aimed at capturing disability status among employees. As you plan an effective self-ID campaign, consider the following **"dos and don'ts."**

Don't: Four key reasons why self-ID campaigns often fall short of expectations:

1. Lack of Awareness

Some individuals may not self-identify because they don't realize what constitutes a disability under the ADA. This is particularly common with mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety disorders.

2. Stigma

There is a significant stigma surrounding disabilities in our society. This stigma often perpetuates misconceptions and stereotypes, leading to reluctance to disclose disabilities in professional settings.

3. Fear of Discrimination

Individuals with disabilities may fear discrimination or negative consequences if they self-identify, leading them to hesitate or avoid participation in such campaigns.

4. Lack of Trust

People with disabilities may lack trust in the confidentiality and integrity of self-identification processes. They may worry that disclosing their disability could be exploited or used against them.



Do: Address each of the following concerns:

1. Incorporate Disability Inclusion

Recognize the importance of disability inclusion by weaving the self-ID campaign and wider disability initiatives into the fabric of the company's belonging and inclusion initiatives. This approach ensures that disability inclusion becomes intrinsic to the organization's overarching strategy.



Action Steps

- Integrate the self-ID campaign into broader communication efforts aimed at fostering inclusion and belonging within the company.
- Actively integrate the experiences and viewpoints of individuals with disabilities into routine discussions and decision-making processes.

2. Educate and Raise Awareness

Employees will feel more comfortable and empowered to disclose their disabilities within the workplace when they are fully aware of what constitutes a disability and, critically, how employees with disabilities are protected. Employees will also have a clear understanding about whether their experience is considered a disability under the ADA—and greater confidence and appreciation for your company's efforts.



Action Step

- Start your self-ID campaign with a disability awareness training and include educational materials in your outreach.

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3. Representation and Visibility

Representation and visibility play a crucial role in validating employees' experiences and empowering others to embrace their identities. This is particularly impactful at the leadership level; in 2023, the NOD Employment Tracker™ found that companies with executives who openly share their disabilities have a 34% higher self-ID rate than companies who don't.



Action Step

- As part of your campaign, set up a space for people who are comfortable disclosing that they have a disability to speak openly about their experiences. Note that they don't need to disclose which disability they have for this to be effective. If possible, have at least one senior leader be a champion for the campaign.

Do: Address each of the following concerns:

4. Ensure Confidentiality and Privacy

Employees will feel comfortable self-identifying as a person with a disability if they fully trust that the company will protect their information.

Action Steps

- Explain the difference between self-ID and self-disclosure, emphasizing that choosing to self-ID doesn't necessitate self-disclosure.
- Include information on the ADA and the legal requirements for employers to maintain the confidentiality of all disability-related information.

5. Offer Support and Resources

Offering support and resources including accommodations, flexible work arrangements, mental health support, and Employee Resource Groups demonstrates a commitment to employees with disabilities. When employees see their well-being valued and their needs respected, they're more likely to feel comfortable self-identifying.

Action Step

- As part of your campaign, communicate a comprehensive list of available resources tailored to support your employees with disabilities.

