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Accommodating Workers Ageing into Disability: Findings from a Policy Delphi Study

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Background

- Ageing of the U.S. workforce:
 - 101% increase in workers aged 65+ between 1977 and 2007
 - By 2016, workers 65+ to account for 6.1% of U.S. labor force, vs. 3.6% in 2006

Background (continued)

- Disability, ageing, and work:
 - People between ages 55-64 experience higher rates of work disability
- Policy and the ageing of the workforce:
 - Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Lack of data on accommodations

Policy Delphi Method

- Conventional Delphi: systematic, judgmental forecasting procedure among experts
- Policy Delphi: key “stakeholders”, rather than policy issue “experts”, to capture policy context
- Rather than “forcing” consensus, process considers range of options, and clusters of alternative options


Policy Delphi Method (continued)


- Four principles of Policy Delphi:
 - 1) anonymity
 - 2) asynchronicity
 - 3) controlled feedback
 - 4) statistical response
- Closed (forced) and open-ended probe questions: forecasts, issues, goals and options

Methods and Evaluation

- January 2007-March 2009
- 45 participants over 3 rounds
- Five categories: 1) awareness, 2) policy/regulatory, 3) economic, 4) technological, and 5) social
- Round 1 probed issues; Round 2 refined issues and studied goals; Round 3 explored policy options

Pennsylvania State University's HERO eDelphi System

Topic: Workplace RERC Policy Delphi	Round 3
Round Description: Thank you for participating in the WorkRERC Policy Delphi on Workplace Accommodations, Round 3. Participants are being presented with a set of detailed awareness, economic, regulatory, and technology policy-related issues and options. The round should take 20-30 minutes to complete.	
Please review the referenced material prior to starting.	
The e-Delphi is set up to have 1-hour sessions for resource and security reasons. After 1 hour, the session expires and session info is erased. If you submit answers every now and then (at least once an hour), it will save your responses. You can then re-enter the round and pick up where you left off.	
If you have any questions, or comments please feel free to contact me: Nathan W. Moon Research Specialist Workplace Accommodations RERC [www.workrerc.org] nathan.moon@caspp.gatech.edu	
Round Instructions: Please review the following before responding to this round:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Round 1 Summary and Results (optional)• Round 2 Summary and Results• Policy Matrix	
Note: This round of the Policy Delphi on Workplace Accommodations asks respondents to consider specifically the "feasibility" of selected policy options. By feasibility, the study is concerned more with the practicality of the presented option—whether it is implementable as policy—than the desirability of the policy option in question.	
Please Note: There are 27 items to respond to in this round. If you have not yet answered an item, a  appears next to it. When you have answered all of the questions, click Submit responses at the bottom of this page. You may login to e-Delphi again to return to this page and change your answers or answer questions that you skipped, until this round closes at midnight Eastern time (US; GMT +5:00) on the end date.	

Issues - Awareness									
IA3.1 The physical absence of teleworkers reduces participation in many workplace activities, leading to isolation, employee and employer dissatisfaction, and diminishing a worker's social capital and possible opportunities for advancement. These factors, along with efforts by disability stakeholders to improve the physical inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace, challenge telework as a viable workplace accommodation. How important is this issue?	<table border="1"><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr><tr><td>Very Important</td><td>Important</td><td>Slightly Important</td><td>Unimportant</td></tr></table> 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Important	Important	Slightly Important	Unimportant
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>						
Very Important	Important	Slightly Important	Unimportant						

Pennsylvania State University's HERO eDelphi System

Options - Awareness						
OA3.1	National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)'s projects, such as the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Workplace Accommodations (WorkRERC) and the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) to explore development of new Internet (i.e., Web 2.0) based resources to inform employers about the economic and social benefits of providing accommodations for workers with disabilities. How feasible is this option?	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Possibly Unfeasible	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Unfeasible	⚡
OA3.2	The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice's ADA Task Force to conduct survey of business/employee stakeholders to assess key regulatory and legal misconceptions regarding workplace accommodations. How feasible is this option?	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Possibly Unfeasible	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Unfeasible	⚡
OA3.3	The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), in conjunction with the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) and other relevant stakeholder groups to undertake informational campaigns directed at helping employees understand their accommodation needs and how to request appropriate accommodations. How feasible is this option?	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Possibly Unfeasible	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Unfeasible	⚡
OA3.4	The development of employer peer groups, arranged by sector, to bring together employers to share information about making accommodations and obtaining VR resources, as well as share relevant case studies. How feasible is this option?	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Feasible	<input type="radio"/> Possibly Unfeasible	<input type="radio"/> Definitely Unfeasible	⚡
OA3.5	What other awareness initiatives or strategies, developed with the employer in mind, do you believe would provide the greatest benefit to people with disabilities in the workplace?	<input type="text"/>				⚡
OA3.6	What other awareness initiatives or strategies, developed with the employee in mind, do you believe would provide the greatest benefit to people with disabilities in the workplace?	<input type="text"/>				⚡

Most Reliable Forecasts

- Increase in U.S. population aged 65+ will lead to major changes in composition of American workforce.
- Pool of potentially qualified workers will increase during next 20 years.
- Changes in population characteristics, notably ageing, will make determination of appropriate employment accommodations increasingly complex.

Most Important Issues

- Workers ageing into disability less likely to find new employment, be rehired after a job loss.
- Older workers with disabilities may lack awareness of eligibility for workplace accommodations.
- Employer corporate culture may negatively impact attitudes toward employment of ageing workers.

Most Desirable Goals

- Initiatives to help integrate ageing workers into workplace environments.
- Models and materials to educate employers about the capabilities of employees in the workplace.
- Improve the accuracy of existing data sets regarding people with disabilities and workplace accommodations.

Policy Options: Key Stakeholders

Federal Agencies and Offices

- Office of Disability Employment Policy
- ADA Task Force
- National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- Federal Communications Commission
- U.S. Access Board

Policy Options: Key Stakeholders

Federally Sponsored Projects

- Job Accommodation Network
- Work RERC
- National DBTAC: ADA Centers

Private Sector Organizations/Associations

- RESNA (Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America)
- AARP (American Association of Retired Persons)

Most Feasible Options

- Development of federal programs to encourage accommodation of ageing workers.
- Assess key regulatory and legal misconceptions regarding workplace accommodations.
- Information campaigns to help employees understand how to request appropriate accommodations.

Discussion

- Social issues as most important for ageing
- Technology solutions based on universal design
- Preference for voluntary, not mandated, solutions for addressing workplace accommodations issues

Conclusion

WORKING PAPER AVAILABLE

<http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/docs/MoonBakerWAFPWD.doc>

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