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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 HERO RERC Policy Delphi/Workplace Accommodations Round 3. Participants are being presented with a set of detailed economic, economic, regulatory, and technology policy-related issues and options. The round should take 20-30 minutes to complete.

Please email any questions or comments to hero@psu.edu.

The eDelphi is set up to run 24 hours a day to allow you to complete your survey at any time. When you click on the survey link, you will be taken to the survey and then you will see a list of all survey questions. You can then re-earn the round and pick up where you left off.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me:

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Additional Links:

Round Instructions: Please review the following items regarding the round:

- Round 1: [Round 1 Instructions](#)
- Round 2: [Round 2 Instructions](#)
- Policy Matrix

Note: This round of the Policy Delphi/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 22 items for you to rate this round. You will need to respond to each survey question (1-5) on a scale of 1-5. When you have completed all 22 questions, click on the **Submit** button at the bottom right of the page. You may skip any questions in the survey and always go back to review your answers before submitting. All 22 questions are required for this round. hero@psu.edu or NHesse@psu.edu for any questions.

Issue - Question

Q6.1: The physical environment of the workplace can be a challenge for people with disabilities. Creating a work environment that is accessible and inclusive for all employees and helping to reduce barriers to work and disability is one of the most important and practical responsibilities for what company. How feasible, why or why not, will you be able to evaluate opportunities to improve the physical inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace, challenge feedback as a viable workplace accommodation. How important is this issue?

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PREVIOUS
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Pennsylvania State University's HERO eDelphi System

Options - Awareness						
043.1	National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIODRR) 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 low-cost (i.e., \$10k-\$20k) 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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
043.2	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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
043.3	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 aimed at helping employees understand their accommodation needs and how to request appropriate accommodations. How feasible is this option?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
043.4	The development of employer peer groups, arranged by sector, to bring together employers to share information about making accommodations and obtaining VET resources, as well as other relevant labor studies. How feasible is this option?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
043.5	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"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
043.6	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"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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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