



Disabilities Mentoring Day

Prepare for Potential

DOLPHIN DISABILITIES MENTORING DAY

MISSION STATEMENT:

Disabilities Mentoring Day utilizes technology to bridge the communication and knowledge gaps between business, employment and community support organizations, and persons with disabilities.

IN BRIEF:

Dolphin Disabilities Mentoring Day (DMD) was founded in 2011 based on our insights and experience and the belief that all businesses can benefit from employing people with disabilities. We founded Disabilities Mentoring Day to facilitate an experiential learning opportunity for persons with disabilities, and provide a beneficial mentoring experience for mentors. DMD is very much a strategic mechanism to improve diversity and inclusion, and address myths and misconceptions regarding people with disabilities in the workplace, i.e. accommodations, interactions, language etc.. DMD also facilitates access to an underutilized talent pool and has led to the successful hiring of some mentees.

Diversity is a competitive advantage that advances the innovation process. Diverse talent and multidimensional ideas, experiences and perspectives are the foundation of successful innovation at Dolphin. We encourage innovation and collaboration so that we all benefit from the value of each other's skills, abilities and experience.

The private sector has a vital role to play regarding the employment of persons with disabilities. By removing attitudinal barriers and making the workplace accessible, employers can greatly contribute to a society where persons with disabilities can fully participate.

Though founded in Waterloo Region, DMD has grown to locations across Ontario and Canada, and has occurred in the US and China. Mentees must be job ready (experience & knowledge through training, work or volunteering), with the skills and interests relative to the mentor positions. Any employee, from any industry, is welcome to participate as a mentor.

In 2011 we had 7 mentoring matches and four employers, in one city. In 2016, DMD received 270 applications; 136 mentors and 134 mentees and 75 businesses participated in Waterloo Region, London, Brantford, Hamilton,

Toronto and Kingston. We received applications from the six event cities, as well as Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, and Calgary. Employers have driving our expansion, so we have attempted to meet most of their requests and have beta tested events in Boston and China, and are considering requests from Philippines, France and New York. In 2016 we achieved **102** matches for mentoring day, with **94%** of mentees indicating a good match and **98%** of mentors indicating a good match.

For 2017 we have confirmed partners for events in an additional four cities in Ontario; Niagara Region, Sudbury, North Bay and Ottawa. As well we will be launching in Montreal, Vancouver, and have done a soft launch in Halifax. We have also received requests from Brockville, Belleville, Oshawa, Windsor, and Guelph, as well as Calgary, Edmonton, and St. John. We remain focused on managed growth and development to ensure consistency, effective community partners and a sustainable model.

As there has been accelerated growth with DMD many potential outcomes have been revealed. Businesses have requested disability language/interaction training, methodologies for identifying talent resources, and opportunities for sharing best practices. These requests present opportunity for new deliverables and will enable development towards DMD as a sustainable model. It will also require significant participation by more community partners, EO providers and the utilization of other business supports, like WPB's, Chambers, and Associations.

18% of mentees were hired after their 2016 mentoring experience. An additional two people, not mentees, were hired by mentor employers working with DMD community partners., post event. 89% of mentors had recommended/would recommend their mentees for employment, so we are now focusing on the transition from mentoring experience to nurturing the employment opportunity.

78% of mentees are able to identify a specific job skillset they still needed to develop,

92% of mentees indicate an increase in confidence in their job search

89 % of mentors recommend their mentees to apply to their business

98% of mentors indicate an increase in confidence in working with a person with a disability.

100% of mentors indicate DMD plays an important part in helping to promote the hiring of persons with disabilities as part of a diversity and inclusion strategy.

Together, by using the strengths of all our differences, and unique perspectives, by inclusion rather than division, we will achieve our greatest accomplishments.