

Disabled people are able to compile and prepare a Curriculum Vitae (CV) with on site help using pre-set formats and information guide-lines which, when complete, will be able to be searched by potential employers. Those people not wishing to compile a CV may put their own 'profile' on the site for inspection.

Potential employees can search the site for employment opportunities.

The site will also automatically match clients and inform both parties discreetly before making introductions, through Key Word and Phrase association.

Impact of Jobability.com

The full impact of Jobability.com has yet to be fully measured but it is safe to say that with almost 4000 unique users in May 2002 the site has caused a huge degree of impact. More employers are being approached directly by the Jobability.com team and the totaljobs.com sales force regarding the placement of vacancies. During June 2002 all organisations placing vacancies on the general totaljobs.com site will be able to repeat the advert free of charge on the Jobability.com site. The site is already proving a commercial success for totaljobs.com and will continue. Once a critical mass of vacancies and applicants is reached the site will become the pre-eminent one stop Internet site for job seekers and employee seekers. Plans are underway that include attracting the support of National and Local Government Offices and a proposed cinema campaign running in late Autumn or January to coincide with new cinema releases.

Website links

www.totaljobs.com

Government Agencies

Charities

Employment Agencies

It is the intention to link with all organisations that can offer help and assistance to users of the site.

Enclosures;

1. Choice Apr 2002 ref page 6 K Evans showing ICT02 Award
2. Choice Dec 2001 Front page Workability team eWeek Award
3. Jobability.com leaflet
4. Press Releases from Jobability.com launch. (32 cuttings: 2 National, 19 Regional, 2 IT Trade, 9 other)

*** Leonard Cheshire Workability; winner of the eWeek 2001 award for "Best Initiative Supporting Inclusion of Individuals".**

Month Jobs advertised are varying between 800 and 1000 This in a period of quiet activity over the summer period. An upturn in the jobs advertised is predicted in the Autumn

Site Statistics

March	1632	unique users	10,000	page impressions
April	1734	unique users	9,300	page impressions
May	3295	unique users ¹	14,600	page impressions

The jobability.com website is attracting disabled people looking for work many of whom having read the site become aware of the need for education and training. Jobability.com is becoming a source of new clients to the Workability project.

Case study

James is 23 and has cerebral palsy. **James'** debilitating condition affects his limbs, making everyday tasks difficult. **James** registered as a student for Workability after hearing about the scheme through his employment advisor.

After successfully completing the Workability course, **James** received the nationally recognised RSA Computer Literacy And Information Technology 1 certificate (CLAIT) qualification certifying the candidate's IT literacy.

On his Workability experience, James says

"I worked for a number of years in the catering industry and I felt that I needed a career change and, with businesses all using computers, becoming IT skilled would be an obvious advantage. Workability gave me the opportunity to learn and use the latest hardware and software. Through the initiative I've gained confidence in my own IT abilities."

James' participation in Jobability.com led him to find employment with an accountancy firm in Manchester.

"Jobability.com immediately matched my hopes and aspirations to an employer. The skills I learnt through Workability have helped me enormously with my job at XXXXX and Co. As an Administrative Assistant I need to use Microsoft Office and the Internet every day. The training and experience I gained through these Leonard Cheshire programmes has guaranteed that I'm able to do my job effectively and with confidence."

Jobability.com

Jobability.com is primarily a website for employers to advertise vacancies with the difference that all employers using the site guarantee to interview all applicants meeting their basic requirements.

Jobability.com allows employers to search the site for suitable potential employees by a number of discrete parameters including location, job type, education, experience etc. and the normal demographic information.

Small to Medium Enterprises (SME's) who may require part-time, self-employed or 'ad hoc' people with special skills such as accountancy, human resources or health and safety executives for particular tasks can find people with those skills.

Awareness Factors

National and Local Government bodies and Industry at large need to be made aware of ICT developments, such as WWW.Jobability.com, that enhance the prospects of individuals through inclusion and reduce the technology divide in an ever increasing and dependent ICT culture. Only by this means will there be true equality of opportunity and a competitive European economy.

Following the recognition of Workability at the eWeek 2001 Awards, over 20 newspaper 'hits' were recorded in the UK. Following which we expect to invite 1000 new applicants to join the Workability programme this year. Members of the Workability team are now participating on a number of ICT and Employment committees. Examples include the: British Computer Society Disability Group; Multiple Sclerosis and Employment Steering Group; The Prince's Trust Disability Group; ReCom a company and charity designing protocols for Government and Industry to follow with respect to the EU WEEE directives. Members of the team are also regularly invited to give opinion at seminars and conferences relating to disability and employment, and to other influential organisations where decisions on the use of ICT and the bridging of the digital divide are current topics for discussion and solution.

It is from such groups and discussions that Jobability.com was identified as a solution to some of the problems facing disabled people seeking employment and another step in closing the digital divide. Should this submission to eWeek 2002 be successful, many new opportunities will unfold in raising awareness and informing those who make decisions that inclusiveness must be at all times a prerequisite for future developments.

During the last decade the profile of the disabled population has been changing. While the profile remains highly heterogeneous, work related disability issues have changed. Muscular skeletal or cardiovascular problems were most commonly cited - now psychiatric issues, often linked to workplace stress, dominate. Jobability.com will also contribute to changing work patterns, as it will feature teleworking opportunities enabling 'remote flexible working' to become a reality. Firstly, this will be achieved by making employees aware of that there are teleworking opportunities currently available. Secondly, by encouraging employers to consider the untapped source of talent available who are looking for teleworking opportunities, they may be inclined to change their business practices to their benefit.

Achievements

The Jobability.com web site exceeds all accessibility test parameters. Constant usability and accessibility testing involving control groups of users with varying ICT literacy skills and disabilities have achieved this.

Jobability.com has formed a Steering Group comprising of disabled people who have used the site in their job-search activities. The Group meet on a regular basis to monitor the site, with formal meetings initially planned to take place every month and then quarterly with additional tele-meetings as and when required.

Mere facts do not do convey the delight caused by one person finding employment when previously all doors seemed closed. Therefore we have listed a 'case study' along with Site hits.

Many safeguards have been built into the site for data protection purposes.

Separating fact from fiction, Figures taken from the National Office of Census

1. There are 8.5 million disabled people in the UK, all of whom are potential customers of Jobability.com
2. It is estimated that disabled people spend around £40 billion a year on goods and services.
3. There are more than 2 million disabled people in employment in the UK.
4. And there are a further 1 million plus disabled people who want jobs but who are out of work, many of whom, having become disabled during their working life are already highly skilled. With the additional IT skills provided through Workability they are able to update existing and learn new skills to offer potential employers.
5. Disability is too often associated with wheelchairs but only 5% of disabled people actually use a wheelchair.
6. Disabled people have no more likelihood of being generally ill than their non-disabled colleagues.
7. Recognise the individual not the disability and help us provide skilled people to enhance your workforce.

- Having disabled people in the recruitment pool increases the employers' choice, making it more likely that they will get the right person for the job.
- Employers have found that disabled employees stay in the job for longer and have a strong commitment to work as well as good punctuality records and low levels of absenteeism.
- Retaining an employee who becomes ill or disabled at work generally costs less than having to recruit and train someone new.
- Employing disabled people can help increase the number of disabled customers using the service and improve staff morale since they will view the organisation as more representative of their community.
- Often the adjustments made to help in employing a disabled person can bring benefits for other employees and or customers. (low-level handrails on stairs, ramps and lifts are good examples where customers including the elderly, disabled and people with children can feel the advantages of adjustments made for employees).
- Should changes to the workplace or special equipment adaptations be necessary, these are often paid for through Governments programmes i.e. Access to Work.

Impartial Platform for Employment

No other platform exists that has been especially designed for disabled and disadvantaged people to view vacancies or offer their talents to prospective employers impartially. Jobability.com is the **FIRST** in a new concept of employment strategy.

Before Jobability.com there was nothing of a similar nature. Leonard Cheshire is a pioneering organisation always looking for better ways to integrate disabled people more fully into their local communities.

Many disabled people complain that they are never given an interview if they disclose their disability. Worse still is if they are interviewed they are given less attention than they feel warranted. However failure to disclose a disability could prejudice future employment and or benefits should that disability call for a change in working conditions e.g. Multiple Sclerosis and other progressive conditions.

Jobability.com is able to give careers advice on their site to those looking for employment and in addition is able to advise employers with regard to providing accessibility options for disabled employees. In this way, Jobability.com is tackling the issue of disability and employment by offering a new service to both disabled and disadvantaged people looking for employment and employers looking for committed employees.

Employers in using the site, benefit by showing the outside world and prospective employees (and customers) that they endorse an open, non-discriminatory employment policy. More importantly, it proves their willingness to abide by recent UK disability legislation, which seeks to offer equal opportunity to all. Jobability.com allows employers to actively seek people with disabilities to ensure that the workforce of their organisation is as diverse as the population it serves.

Employment Opportunities, an associate of the project has 27 offices throughout the UK and has complimented its services by making use of the site to identify 'disability friendly' organisations. Once identified these organisations are targeted to provide 'work-experience' programmes that benefit both trainees and management alike.

Jobability.com targets all **employers** in the public, private, commercial, business and voluntary sectors who are looking for skilled and knowledgeable ICT literate employees. Potential employers in this group have been targeted by totaljobs.com and are being approached to place their vacancies on the Jobability.com web-site at special rates. A member of the totaljobs.com workforce has been dedicated to following up these tasks.

Jobability.com also targets all ICT literate **disabled and disadvantaged people** (and ICT trainees) seeking employment on equal terms with their non-disabled peers. This is being done by mail shots to disability employment organisations, government jobcentres and partners and clients of the Workability project.

Background

Leonard Cheshire Workability * is a project designed to provide disabled and disadvantaged people in the UK with ICT skills free of charge. The successful Workability client receives an Internet linked computer, software, a printer and appropriate adaptations both hardware and software, together with tailored education and training programmes. On completion, the client graduates from Workability and moves along the pathway to Employment with assistance from an associated job search partners.

Due to the restricted mobility of the majority of the participants; either by disability or personal circumstances, coursework is completed through a distance-learning programme, with clients accessing a virtual classroom, via e-mail and the Internet covering modules in online communication, spreadsheets and word processing. In a similar manner, these clients are unable to attend employment-training courses, attend interviews or participate in work experience programmes, even though they have acquired the ICT skills to aid them in today's employment marketplace.

Jobability.com is able to offer a solution to this problem by offering a new and unique opportunity whereby the client is able to utilise their ICT skills to search the WWW discretely for employment through the Internet using the www.Jobability.com web site.

The main aim of Jobability.com is to make job-hunting as easy as possible. Clients can post their CV on the site, apply for jobs online and have details of suitable jobs emailed direct to their home computer.

Jobability.com and Workability are helping to break down the barriers faced by disabled people as they look for employment. More often than not these barriers are due to nothing more than misconceptions that employers and managers have about the skills and abilities of disabled people. Jobability .com in an effort to reduce these misconceptions has made strategic alliances with a number of charitable organisations and information sources. These include the MS Society and the Disability Rights Commission and many others. Web site links have been made allowing users of the site to obtain, first hand, the specific information they require whether regarding a specific disability, the working practices that may be effected or legal issues.

Jobability.com is establishing itself as part of the employment strategy for both disabled individuals and employers.

Independent research in the UK shows that there are good business reasons for employing disabled people:

Jobability.com

Jobability.com is a new initiative, which aims to extend the effectiveness of Workability by providing new opportunities through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to disabled people in the United Kingdom searching for employment.

Jobability.com is an initiative supporting and promoting the use of ICT; the purpose of which is to narrow the digital divide for disabled and disadvantaged people seeking employment and additionally, to allow employers to access job seekers in order to fill vacancies.

Jobability.com has created a unique interactive web site promoting employment for disabled and disadvantaged people. It is a partnership between Internet recruitment specialist's totaljobs.com, Leonard Cheshire Workability and Microsoft, which provides a new, flexible way of searching for employment/employees. Jobability.com offers independence and choice to help a person find the right job and an employer find the right employee.

Jobability.com has set up a number of parameters to overcome major difficulties faced by disabled people looking for work. It lists vacancies with employers who are committed to providing equal opportunities to disabled people in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (UK). The jobs featured are also advertised on the totaljobs.com website, but companies on Jobability.com.com guarantee to interview any disabled person who applies for a job as long as they meet the person specification.

Partners and Associates

Jobability.com is supported by a number of partners who have special expertise and make a valuable contribution to the success of the project:

Partnership

- Leonard Cheshire originators of Jobability.com manage and co-ordinate the operation through a Steering committee and a client user group.
- Microsoft a major sponsor through their community projects division provides the computer platforms to display and allow interactivity with the site.
- WWW.totaljobs.com a major internet recruitment consultancy in the UK, listing over 50,000 vacancies on their general vacancy web site, provide the site architecture and operate the service.

Associates

- Leonard Cheshire Workability extends provision of the facility to its 2500+ clients and 50+ partners.
- Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities provide advice, support and careers training and information to clients and are a major user of the site to form new alliances with Industry to the advantage of disabled people.
- Ability Magazine offer media support and is the only national publication focusing on ICT for disabled people.

The target groups for Jobability.com are two fold: