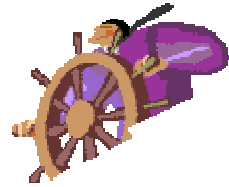


Helm of the Navigator

7/3/07



Careers for Individuals who are Blind and Visually Impaired

No Limits

People who are blind or visually impaired can perform almost any job you can imagine: lawyer, artist, accountant, secretary, customer service representative, food service worker, factory worker, financial analyst, teacher, medical transcriptionist, day care worker, counselor, computer programmer, cook, salesperson, clerk, and more. We cannot count the number of different jobs people who are blind or visually impaired are engaged in today or will be in the future. The possibilities are tremendous.

People who are blind or visually impaired have a wider array of career possibilities than ever before in history because of a combination of events since the passage of the [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#). Legislative and societal changes have reduced discrimination toward visually impaired workers as attitudes toward people with disabilities generally have improved. Employers, especially in midsized and large businesses, routinely follow equal employment opportunity practices and have diversity and disability-accommodation processes in place. Available assistive technology makes it easier for people who are visually impaired to perform many jobs that they never could have before. Proper training, appropriate tools, the ability to sell oneself, and a willing attitude on the part of employers constitute a winning formula.

Every Worker is an Individual

No two visually impaired people have the exact same level of functional vision or the same approach to executing work-related tasks. Some use their vision more than others; some may work more efficiently when they can use nonvisual techniques. Many learned to perform the essential functions of their jobs before they became visually impaired and will need to learn adaptive techniques to retain or return to employment. New employees who have been visually impaired for many years will need to use adaptive techniques as they learn to perform their duties effectively. The majority of people who are blind or visually impaired will benefit from accommodations or modifications to their work environment in order to perform competitively at work.

Accommodations in the Workplace

Visually impaired entrepreneurs can find support from the National Association of Blind Merchants, an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind; and the Randolf-Sheppard Vendors of America, an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind.

Other resource lists are provided by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision maintained by Mississippi State University.

The Small Business and Self-Employment Service (SBSES) provides information and assistance to people with disabilities who wish to start a small business, including information on starting and managing a business, and issues specifically related to disabilities. The SBSES is staffed by the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a valuable resource in disability information services.

The Disabled Businesspersons Association is "dedicated to assisting enterprising individuals with disabilities maximize their potential in the business world, and work[ing] with vocational rehabilitation, government and business to encourage the participation and enhance the performance of the disabled in the workforce."

Reference: <http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=7&TopicID=269&DocumentID=2839>