

Dr. Kirk Adams Book 'The Disability Dividend' Makes Business Case for Inclusion

The former CEO of two national disability organizations makes the financial case that overlooking disabled talent costs companies revenue and retention.

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Companies that run diversity programs without including disability are passing over the largest untapped talent pool in the American economy, according to a new business book by a chief executive who has been blind since the age of five. [The Disability Dividend: Supercharge Your Bottom-Line Through Disability Inclusion](#), by Kirk Adams, PhD, is available now in hardcover, paperback and Kindle editions.



The Disability Dividend

The book opens on a gap. Only 35 percent of people with significant disabilities are in the workforce, compared with 75 percent of the non-disabled population, while roughly one in four American adults has some form of disability, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adams also documents a reporting discrepancy inside corporations themselves: more than 42 million Americans have severe disabilities, and approximately 96 percent of those disabilities are unseen, yet employers commonly report that only 1.5 to 4 percent of their workforce is disabled.

"Disability inclusion is not charity. It is strategy. The companies that see that first will hire from a talent pool their competitors have not even opened," said Adams.

The book assembles the financial research behind that position. Accenture found that companies embracing disability employment and inclusion recorded 28 percent higher revenue and 30 percent higher economic profit margins over a four-year period. The 2024 Disability:IN

benchmark reported that companies leading on key disability inclusion criteria realized 1.6 times more revenue, 2.6 times more net income and twice the economic profit of other survey participants. A 2021 Accenture report found that employees with disabilities had 48 percent fewer safety incidents. A separate 2021 study found that 92 percent of customers feel more favorable toward companies that hire people with disabilities.



Dr. Kirk Adams

Adams writes from the chief executive's chair rather than the consultant's. As President and CEO of The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. in Seattle, he more than tripled revenue from 27 million dollars to 95 million dollars over eight years, expanded the organization from three locations to thirteen, and grew employment for blind and DeafBlind people from 150 to 250 while raising

their wages by 40 percent, through partnerships with companies including Boeing, ACCO Brands and CamelBak. At the American Foundation for the Blind he reversed a decade of net-asset decline, moving the institution from a 5.5 million dollar deficit to a 5 million dollar surplus. He has counseled Google, Microsoft and Meta on product and digital accessibility.

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Dr. Kirk Adams, author of The Disability Dividend

The book runs six chapters across 182 pages. It traces disabled employment from sheltered workshops through the Americans with Disabilities Act, examines four

common employer fears that the data does not support, and profiles disabled professionals including Jack Chen, assistant general counsel at Meta, Denna Lambert of NASA, and Christine Ha, the chef who won the third season of MasterChef. It closes with a ten-step corporate action plan covering mission statements, employee resource groups, centralized accommodation budgets, vendor accessibility requirements and board representation.

"We are not asking for favors. We are asking for fairness, and fairness turns out to be profitable. Most workplace accommodations cost less than five hundred dollars," Adams said.

The Disability Dividend is available in hardcover, paperback and Kindle editions from Amazon, and is published by Author Writer's Academy. An audiobook and a companion course are in development. Adams offers a companion [Disability Etiquette Guide](#) at no charge, and works with executive teams through his [disability inclusion consulting](#) practice at Innovative Impact, LLC.

About Dr. Kirk Adams

Dr. Kirk Adams is a blind chief executive, consultant and keynote speaker who turns disability inclusion into measurable organizational advantage. The former President and CEO of the American Foundation for the Blind and of The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., he serves as Managing Director of Innovative Impact, LLC, advising corporations, government agencies and nonprofit organizations on workforce accessibility, inclusive leadership and career-pathway design. He holds a PhD in Leadership and Change from Antioch University.

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