

Bascule Disability Training



Chris Jay, Managing Director

Born with cerebral palsy, Chris Jay has been a wheelchair user for over 20 years and is an experienced training facilitator, public speaker, guest spokesperson and writer on the topic of disability awareness. As founder of Bascule Disability Awareness Training, he explains the many benefits of inclusivity and why the best training is always user-led. He believes that businesses, alongside statutory and educational organisations, should consider awareness training to expand their market, improve customer service and increase staff retention.

At Bascule, we believe that disability awareness training should be user-led – the training we provide is developed and facilitated by people who have disabilities themselves. This means we can shape what we offer with our unique personal experiences and insight into disability, thus providing authentic, tailored training packages for all types of business. It is our intention to raise awareness and consequently benefit organisations and their workforces, working towards an overall positive impact for all areas of industry; a survey found that 53 per cent of people with disabilities have experienced bullying or harassment at work because of their impairments.

We empower workforces by providing them with a firmer understanding of all areas of disability. This means covering issues from customer service, etiquette and communication to the correct use of language, legislation and the development of inclusive business environments.

By deploying a targeted training programme, we aim to raise the confidence of any staff team by removing any barriers that may exist. These usually arise because of

FACTS ABOUT BASCULE DISABILITY TRAINING

- » Managing Director: Chris Jay
- » Based in Southampton
- » Incorporated in 2018
- » Services: Disability awareness training
- » The word “bascule” is a form of bridge – we chose it for our name because of the bridges we build between people with disabilities and businesses
- » www.bascule.com

“53 per cent of people with disabilities have experienced bullying or harassment at work because of their impairments”

a lack of training, understanding or knowledge.

Inclusivity is profitable

If any business owner was told that they are failing to engage with 20 per cent of their potential customer base, they would likely stop in their tracks to learn more. It may come as a shock to some, but a vast majority of companies simply don't engage with this portion of the market – and the cost of this failure is an estimated £1.8 billion a month for UK businesses alone.

The customer base in question is, of course, people with disabilities.

This vast number of British consumers accounts for an enormous segment of our population, yet, despite the power of the “purple pound”, the term used for the spending power of people with disabilities and their families, businesses in the UK are still failing to see the many business benefits of inclusivity.

Many business owners already perceive themselves as “inclusive” organisations, given that they currently follow and adhere to all the correct legislation. Unfortunately, this isn't enough. You can create and develop the most inclusive environments in the

entire world, but these adjustments are worthless if the people that you employ lack an inclusive mindset.

If you take into consideration the results of a study performed by Scope, the national disability charity, it becomes clear that understanding and attitudes towards disability are not as positive as we might imagine. The survey found that as many as two thirds of the British public admitted to feeling “uncomfortable” when talking to disabled people and felt “awkward” about seeming patronising or saying the wrong thing.

It has to be considered how this discomfort or awkwardness may impact the way in which a workforce may communicate, and also how it could potentially affect a business's reputation, staff attraction and employee retention.

The fact is, a huge number of businesses simply aren't aware of the many benefits that inclusivity could bring, and how it can be achieved. Adjusting is easier than you would imagine, however – and by simply changing staff perceptions through education and increased awareness, most businesses will see immediate benefits.

Developing awareness in the workplace at Coutts



The impact of awareness

When awareness is fostered and developed through our training programmes, it provides workforces with a greater sense of empathy, especially when it comes to the needs of other people. This will naturally enable businesses to appeal to a wider customer base and a larger pool of talented employees.

In total, 12 million people in Britain have disabilities. A huge number of these are hidden – only 8 per cent are wheelchair users. Even if an SME employs as few as ten people, there is a strong possibility that the company already employs someone with a disability without knowing. The reason for this could well be that staff don't feel comfortable disclosing their disability in the current workplace environment. If an inclusive workplace was to be developed, however, these staff members, and the wider workforce, would benefit hugely.

When considering that 2 per cent of the working age population, which is roughly 1.3 million people, becomes disabled every year, and that 78 per cent of disabled people acquire their impairment aged 16 or older, it becomes impossible to think that disability will never affect a business. Providing a workplace or business with an open, empathetic approach towards disability will increase the likelihood of people with disabilities remaining with the company. If they don't, the loss of output and the logistics of the recruitment process can cause serious administrative and financial concerns, costing as much as £30,000 in many cases. Disabled employees will also recognise that they have a better opportunity to fulfil their potential while having a closer understanding of their goals and aspirations, all of which will massively increase both productivity and morale.



Chris delivering user-led training

Any client-facing workforce needs disability awareness training if they are to improve their ability to communicate to a wider audience. It will boost their level of understanding and also their confidence in communicating. Once an organisation develops a reputation of being an inclusive service provider or business, interest in the brand and customer loyalty will be enhanced within a previously inaccessible portion of their customer base.

Cultivate your public image

When a business becomes openly inclusive, it's able to proudly promote its significant contribution to reducing the numbers of unemployment for people with disabilities in the UK. This allows it to openly reap the rewards of publicity when declaring its dedication to becoming and remaining a fully inclusive organisation.

Although we were only recently incorporated, we hope to continue bringing our experience and user-led awareness and inclusivity training to organisations across the country.

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