Think Beyond the Label Launches Online Tool to Help Businesses Realize the Benefits of Hiring a Person with a Disability

_Hire Gauge shows how a typical business can save nearly $32,000 while reaping critical workplace diversity and marketplace returns._

Chicago, IL (PRWEB) September 20, 2011 -- Think Beyond the Label, a leading public-private partnership that works to increase employment for people with disabilities, today rolled out Hire Gauge, an online resource that calculates the financial return on investment and other benefits of hiring a person with a disability.

Think Beyond the Label’s Hire Gauge is the only online tool of its kind that depicts the tangible monetary incentives that can accumulate each time a company hires a person with a disability, which, for a typical large business, can reach $31,800 per hire. At the same time, Hire Gauge sums up the wide range of workplace and marketplace benefits that businesses also reap when they recruit, hire and retain a qualified job seeker with a disability, including veterans.

“Hire Gauge demonstrates all the reasons—financial and otherwise—that make hiring people with disabilities a good business decision,” says Barbara Otto, CEO of Health & Disability Advocates, the Chicago-based policy and advocacy organization that operates the Think Beyond the Label partnership. “Apart from monetary advantages like tax incentives and lower recruiting costs, businesses that practice inclusive hiring will boost workplace diversity, as well as improve the way they think, operate, innovate, and grow,” she says.

Hire Gauge, which can be found at www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com, asks users a series of questions about their business and disability employment hiring practices, and calculates the monetary incentives for which the business is eligible to arrive at a total estimated number.

Examples of typical results include:

- A large financial services company is eligible for $17,400 in annual tax incentives, and saves up to an additional $15,000 on recruiting and training costs per hire if the employee is recruited through a state vocational rehabilitation program (based on a $60,000 salary)
- A small real estate agency is eligible for $7,400 in annual tax credits, including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, plus a tax deduction of $15,000 for money spent to improve access to their building
- A manufacturing company that hires a veteran with a disability through a Veterans Affairs program qualifies for a $4,800 tax credit, plus reimbursement of up to 50% of the new hire's first six months of wages

Other key benefits:

- More than half (56%) of workplace accommodations cost $0, while the rest typically cost only $500, yet result in improved retention and productivity
- Employing workers with disabilities stimulates growth in new products and services and opens up access to new markets, giving businesses a competitive edge
- New entrants to the workforce are increasingly seeking out work at companies that possess a strong social conscience, which includes creating jobs for the disabled

Think Beyond the Label created Hire Gauge using data from human resource and diversity organizations, federal and state government agencies, and case studies from companies on their disability hiring efforts. The results are intended to guide and provide support to hiring managers in their ongoing diversity and inclusion
programs, as well as to encourage more businesses to broaden their recruitment efforts to include people with disabilities.

“By presenting multiple sources of research into one package, businesses can get, and share with others, an instantaneous, factual look at how inclusive hiring can and will positively impact their bottom line,” adds Otto.

About Think Beyond the Label
Think Beyond the Label is a private-public partnership that helps businesses and the public workforce system more effectively recruit, hire and retain job seekers with disabilities across 50 states. Our partnership spans state health and human service and employment agencies; businesses; and Health & Disability Advocates, a national nonprofit organization that manages the Think Beyond the Label partnership. For more information please go to www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com.

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