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*Attitudinal Barriers
to Employment*

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Attitudinal Barriers to Employment

Summary and Implications

Eight hundred personnel managers throughout the conterminous United States (except Minnesota) and 510 first-line supervisors in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area were surveyed by mail concerning their attitudes toward the employment of physically handicapped persons within private industry. Total usable returns were obtained from 74% of the personnel managers ($N = 594$) and 60% of the supervisors ($N = 306$).

The attitudes of the personnel managers and first-line supervisors seemed to be generally favorable to the hiring and utilization of physically handicapped workers, when all items are considered. Handicapped workers were *not* seen as having higher accident rates, turnover, absenteeism, or lower production rates than non-handicapped workers. Most items pertaining to the personal characteristics of partially disabled persons also evoked favorable responses. Contrary to findings of other attitude surveys of a similar nature, the cost of hiring the handicapped was not advanced as of major importance. Most personnel managers were familiar enough with workmen's compensation laws to know that hiring handicapped workers does not automatically raise their compensation rates. The results of this survey seem to show that past efforts to educate private industry as to the merits of hiring the handicapped have had positive results to the extent that information given in such campaigns has been assimilated by those for whom it was intended. Representatives of private industry generally have the facts concerning production, turnover, absenteeism, tardiness, and some aspects of workmen's compensation.

While attitudes seemed generally favorable, some fairly specific attitudes that seem unfavorable to the hiring of the handicapped were identified. Almost all the respondents agreed that anyone, handicapped or not, who was willing to work hard had a good chance of succeeding in their companies. However, responses to certain items indicated that employment and advancement opportunities of handicapped workers were greatly minimized. The survey found that much emphasis was placed on the importance of health and good appearance. To an even greater extent, flexibility

