Information Technology

Executive Summary > Overview
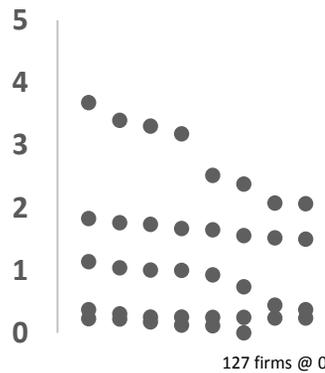
Top 3 Strengths
- Customer-led product development
- Proven models lead to wide adoption
- Sophisticated messages emerging

Top 3 Weaknesses
- Lack of detailed consumer research
- Retailers not focused on experience
- Talent/recruiting efforts too narrow

TABLE A – Technology Sector Peer RoD Results

127 firms @ 0

Executive Summary

There are 164 Information Technology firms that qualify for our U.S. universe of 1011 firms. 18 of these firms rank in the top 100 in the U.S.

Our analysis shows that the best players in the technology sector are the best actors in the disability market because they have overtly taken the steps to incorporate disability factors into the design of their core products and features. This is particularly evident in those firms that face a consumer market. Many firms have added a new C-level role – the Chief Accessibility Officer – as an explicit actor in R&D and product development, raising disability to a peer of security. Why? In search of innovation, disability naturally lends itself to 'extreme use'. Extremes produce breakdowns, which beg for untapped solutions. Technology firms have learned to harness disability to solve difficult consumer problems and uncover new 'itches to scratch'. The largest firms are starting to project messages externally – some better than others. The messages are being projected on prime properties like Super Bowl and the Academy Awards.

The best at recruiting talent that happens to have a disability are technology firms. By focusing on a business/success message, the largest firms are attracting great coders, architects and marketers to drive both corporate and individual wins. Only 8 firms are leveraging insights from People with Disabilities (PWD) to materially increase productivity, but they are positioned to reap both cost savings and innovations that add to their product line-up.

Overall, opportunity exists to build significant value in PWD markets by reaching out to customers and engaging in activities to grow market share.

Overall Result

0   1   2   3   4   5

Customer Result

0   1   2   3   4   5

Talent Result

0   1   2   3   4   5

Productivity Result

0   1   2   3   4   5

Sector Minimum
Sector Average
Sector Maximum

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The RoD Model > Capturing Shareholder Value

Cambridge Dictionaries defines shareholder value as "the total worth of a company to its shareholders". Many things can increase shareholder value, such as new products and services, entering a new market, and streamlined operations. The basis of the Return on Disability model is to measure those activities relative to disability that add to shareholder value. Specifically, we identify actions that:

1) add to net revenue and/or
2) reduce ongoing operational costs

The 20 disability-related KPIs that RoD measures within organizations ultimately impact one of these two fundamental building blocks of value creation. We focus on value for one simple reason: to shift the disability paradigm from 'added cost and effort' to 'added value' by demonstrating the shareholder value of disability.

Customer – Delighted Customers Lead to New and Enhanced Revenue Opportunities

For most established brands, finding a new way to talk to a mature market is the Holy Grail. From a purely demographic point of view, 53% of the entire consumer marketplace is touched by disability. The value-add comes from the 'halo effect' of talking about inclusion, empowerment and innovation that comes from a focus on disability. Consumer-facing firms drive top-line growth by leveraging insights from PWD, refining messaging, and incorporating insights from disability to enhance the customer experience.

DIAGRAM 1 – RoD Factors: Customer Result, Talent Result, Productivity Result → RoD Result
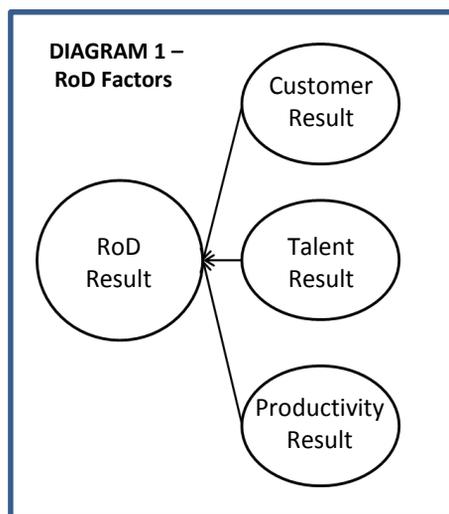
Talent – Finding Great People and Keeping Them at Their Best

The war for talent is real, and PWD represent a new pool to tap as part of the talent acquisition strategy. While the pool is real, it requires some effort to address. Understanding the space and connecting talent to core business goals are good first steps. Diversity recruiting has taught practitioners a few things: a) robust pipelines precede hiring; b) PWD must be attracted to the firm through brand appropriate messaging, and, c) done properly, the firm must be aligned internally on the rationale in hiring PWD. It is critical for companies to open their employee base to PWD in a robust way, which initially will be a high touch effort. Data and experience shows that this approach results in high productivity, higher quality and higher returns.

Productivity – Leveraging Insights from Disability to Drive Efficiency

Innovation is born from extreme environments, solving for a set of demands outside the norm. PWD do things in ways that "Joe Average" just does not think about. They are extreme users of technology and infrastructure. If one can solve for 'extreme users', one innovates applications for the average user. By empowering a line worker with one hand; who happens to have low vision, to reduce a 100 step process to 23 (simply because it is easier for her), it just became easier for all while removing complexity and cost from the operation. Firms acting in this area today are seeing efficiency gains in the area of 20%. This can also be applied to product development.

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