



## **Research on the Effectiveness of Support Offered by Job Coaches who Belong to Companies and the Supported Cases**

### **(Research Report No. 152) Summary**

#### **[Keywords]**

Job coaches who belong to companies, effectiveness of support, supported cases, support contents, best practices, leaflets, education and training of job coaches, employment stability subsidy for persons with disabilities

#### **[Point for practical purpose]**

Based on the results of questionnaire surveys and interviews, this report aims to identify the role of “Job coaches who belong to companies”, support contents, effectiveness of their support and the challenges they face. We hope that the companies who want to promote the use of Job coaches who belong to companies will find this information useful.

We have also created a booklet entitled “Best Utilization Practices of Job coaches who belong to companies” and a leaflet titled a “Guide to Utilize Job Coaches Who Belong to Companies”, which can be used in conjunction with this report.

April 2020

Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and  
Job Seekers (JEED)

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## **2. Research period**

FY 2018 to 2019

## **3. Composition of the research report**

Chapter 1 Purpose and background of this research

Chapter 2 Questionnaire survey for Job coaches who belong to companies

Chapter 3 Interviews by visiting workplaces

Chapter 4 Summary

## **4. Background and purpose of research**

The number of persons with disabilities employed by companies is increasing. To be able to promote settling of persons with disabilities into workplace, it is important for the companies to build an internal system to proactively support their retention. For this purpose, the use of “Job coaches who belong to companies” (the employees who assigned the “job coach” in the company) is considered to have certain effects.

In this research, questionnaire surveys were conducted for people in management positions at companies where the Job coaches who belong to companies work and the job coaches themselves. (Those job coaches have completed the education and training for Job coaches who belong to companies.) Interviews were also carried out by visiting the companies that employ the job coaches. By clarifying the situation of the job coaches and collecting cases, we examined what will be the most effective coaching method, the coaching problems and what should be done to solve them.

## **5. Method**

In this research, we clarified the actual state of activities and the effectiveness of Job coaches who belong to companies by the following methods.

(1) Questionnaire survey

#### a. Purpose

Questionnaire surveys were conducted for managers and the job coaches to examine the states of employment and settling of persons with disabilities into the offices where the job coaches work, the role of the job coaches, their effectiveness, and the challenges they face .

#### b. Survey target

We conducted a pre-survey on the companies that employed job coaches who have completed the education and training of job coaches from 2013 to 2017 at job coach training institutions (JEED and private training institutions). Of the companies from which responses were obtained, questionnaire surveys were sent by mail from January to February in 2019 to 877 managers and job coaches of 355 offices.

#### c. Major questionnaire items

##### <Survey for managers (survey for workplace)>

- Trends in employment of persons with disabilities, state of settling of persons with disabilities into the workplace over the past three years
- Whether the job coaching is performed as full-time or as a part of his duties, why job coaches are deployed, effects of such placement
- Contents of responsibilities of a job coach, duties that seem to be particularly important
- Scheme for the job coach's skill-up, required knowledge and skills, and a mechanism for career advancement
- Strategy for placing Job coaches who belong to companies and challenges faced by the job coaches

##### <Survey for job coaches (survey for individuals)>

- Employment type, state of work performance and qualifications of job coaches
- Support contents for job coaches
- Duties of job coach deemed important
- Duties of job coach difficult to perform
- Requirements to fulfill the role of a job coach

## (2) Interviews by visiting workplaces

#### a. Purpose

In order to learn about the effective supports offered by Job coaches who belong to companies and conditions that enable such supports, we conducted interviews in workplaces which employ the job coaches.

#### b. Survey target

To choose the target for interviews, we first selected a certain number of offices out of those who answered the questionnaire surveys. Based on the information in JEED's reference service and best practices compiled by municipalities, we chose 31 offices for interview. We carried out

interviews for a period from April to October in 2019 mainly with those engaged in the employment of persons with disabilities in the management and personnel division and with the Job coaches who belong to companies.

#### c. Interview items

The interview was conducted mainly on the following items:

- (1) Information on attribution of Job coaches who belong to companies
- (2) Job contents of Job coaches who belong to companies
- (3) Perceived change after attending the education and training of job coaches
- (4) Challenges surrounding Job coaches who belong to companies and their solutions
- (5) Others

## 6. Results of research

### (1) Questionnaire survey

#### a. State of response to survey

Survey for workplaces: 248 offices (response rate 69.9%)

Survey for individuals: 570 persons (response rate 65.0%)

#### b. Surveys for workplaces (survey for managers of workplaces that employ job coaches)

With regard to the change in employment situation of persons with disabilities, the results are as follows: "The number of employed persons with disabilities is increasing" (70.2%), "The number of employed persons with disabilities remains unchanged" (24.6%), "The number of employed persons with disabilities is decreasing" (2.8%). The number of persons with disabilities employed has increased by about 70% of offices (Figure 1).

Looking at the job retention rate over the past three years, 61.3% of the offices replied that "10% to 20% of the persons with disabilities quitted job," followed by 28.6% of offices which replied "All of such persons continued the job" (Figure 2).

With regard to reasons for placing the Job coaches who belong to companies, the most common response was "To strengthen support for settling of persons with disabilities into the workplace" (96.0%), followed by "To actively promote employment of persons with disabilities" (74.0%) and "To have the job coach play a role of supporter for persons with disabilities in the departments where they were placed" (59.0%). This can be interpreted that job coaches were placed as part of an effort to create an internal system for the employment of persons with disabilities.

People were asked on the effectiveness of the placement of job coaches when before and after the placement were compared. When asked if they thought that "Persons with disabilities were able to adjust themselves smoothly to the workplace environment when employed," 81.1% answered that they "Strongly agree" or "Moderately agree". People who answered "Strongly agree" and "Moderately agree" accounted for 78.8% when asked if they think "Settling of

persons with disabilities into the workplace improved,” and 69.8% for “Cooperation with external support organizations for persons with disabilities became smooth”. This can be interpreted that about 80% of the offices felt that positive effects were created by placing Job coaches who belong to companies in terms of the adjustment of persons with disabilities into the workplace and the settling of such persons into the workplace (Figure 3).

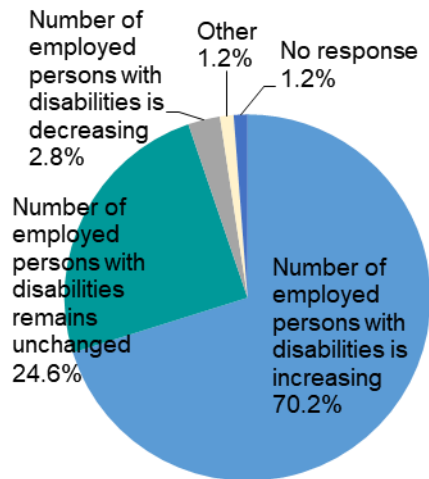


Figure 1 Trend of employment of persons with disabilities [n=248]

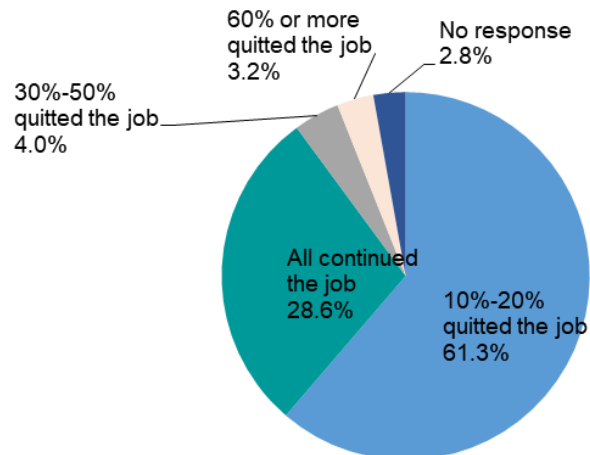


Figure 2 State of settling of persons with disabilities into the workplace over the past three years [n=248]

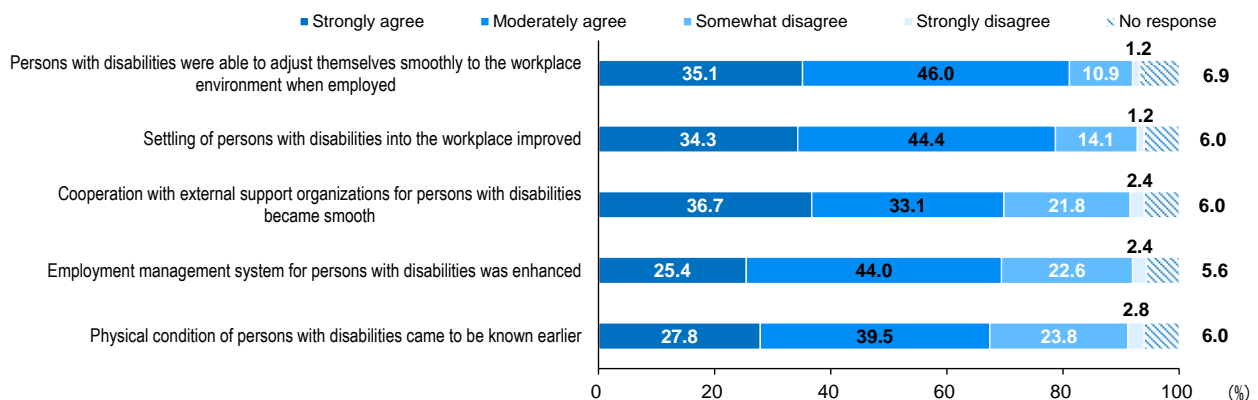


Figure 3. Effects of placement of Job coaches who belong to companies (top 5 items) [n = 248]

### c. Survey for individuals (survey for Job coaches who belong to companies)

The most common type of support offered by job coaches was “Human relations, communication at the workplace” (82.6%), followed by “Work performance” (76.6%) and “Reduction of anxiety, tension and stress” (63.0%). Supports were given more for human relations and communication than work performance (Figure 4).

Concerning the usefulness of supports given by job coaches, “They are useful in counseling persons with disabilities” comes first (90.0%: Strongly or moderately agreed to this question item), followed by “They are useful in getting the company to promote employment of persons

with disabilities” (83.7%), and “They are useful in getting the employees to understand disability characteristics” (83.4%). This can be interpreted that the support given by Job coaches who belong to companies are useful not only for supporting the persons with disabilities themselves, but also for having companies promote the employment of persons with disabilities and for supporting co-workers.

As for difficulties faced by job coaches (free description), descriptions on “Responding to disability characteristics and content of support” were most common, followed by “Support to employees (such as for getting disability characteristics understood, or teaching know-how for support to co-workers, etc.)” and “Company’s internal system.”

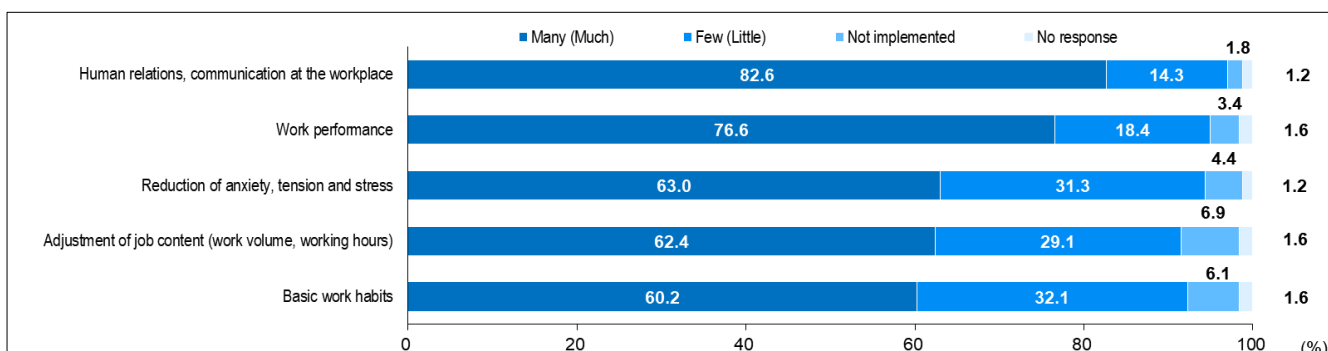


Figure 4 Support Contents offered by job coaches (top 5 items) [n = 570]

a. Information on attribution of Job coaches who belong to companies

There were different backgrounds for people working as Job coaches who belong to companies. Many of the Job coaches who belong to companies were workers of the company, who had completed the education and training of job coaches, and came to be qualified as Job coaches who belong to companies. There were also cases where professionals, such as job coaches who used to work at Local Vocational Centers for Persons with Disabilities, job coaches who belong to welfare institutions and dispatched to companies, or specialists for supporting persons with disabilities, were newly employed by companies to become Job coaches who belong to companies.

Some Job coaches who belong to companies were placed in the department where employees with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as “disabled employees”) work, and others in the head office or the personnel and general affairs department of the workplace. There were also cases a person in charge or the manager was also found to be concurrently working as a job coach.

b. Job contents of Job coaches who belong to companies

The job contents of Job coaches who belong to companies consist of following three types, (1) work support and consultation for disabled employees, (2) support for those who work with disabled employees, and (3) job creation, workplace environment adjustments including

liaison/coordination with related organizations. With regard to (1), a lot of support was provided for job redesign, career development and communication according to the characteristics of disabled employees and, for employees with mental and developmental disabilities in particular, mental support was emphasized. As for (2), there were cases where job coaches were in charge of developing human resources by supervising the employees who supported disabled employees in the workplace, while both promoting understanding for disabled employees and forming natural support (it means that the manager and colleagues of the workplace where disabled employees are working provide various assistance necessary for them to continue working, either naturally or by planning). And for (3), there were many detailed support cases, which ranged from internally promoting understanding for disabled employees from the preparatory stage of employing them to the creation of a support system inside and outside the company to settle them into the workplace.

c. About education and training of job coaches

The impression embraced by the attendees of education and training of job coaches was mostly as follows: "Good to be able to learn about the efforts of other companies," and "The points of view broadened by exchanging information and opinions with employees of other companies." In addition to the above, such opinions as "Getting basic knowledge," "Learned what to learn," "Could organize knowledge and information" and "Could increase the variation of support" were also heard.

d. Challenges surrounding Job coaches who belong to companies and their solutions

Many workplaces cited long-term, uninterrupted and timely support as advantages of direct support offered by Job coaches who belong to companies. On the other hand, they pointed out many items related to the support system and career development as challenges faced by job coaches. The workplaces that did not take up the support system as a challenge had something in common as follows: a cooperation system was established between a job coach and the department in charge of personnel and general affairs to fully communicate with each other, a plural number of job coach and counselor for vocational life of persons with disabilities were placed to support together in cooperation, and the company had a long-term vision for their employment (how to build a support system to turn such persons into a labor force and continue to support them).

One of the challenges that many Job coaches who belong to companies pointed out was concerning how to support settling persons with mental disability into the workplace. Most companies have little experience on the matter and have not internally accumulated necessary knowledge, either. Accordingly, many companies voiced that they were currently groping for a way of providing relevant support, needing an offer of support know-how and advice from experts.

e. Other

There were many companies that did not utilize the employment stability subsidy for persons with disabilities (workplace adjustment support course for persons with disabilities), for which the most common reason was the burden of preparation of documents. On the other hand, it was voiced that the utilization of the subsidy thoroughly ensured the creation of support records, leading to the improvement of job coach's skills, information sharing at the company, and accumulation of support know-how.

## **7. Considerations**

We summarized the results of this research from the viewpoints of the effects of placing job coaches, challenges and establishment of necessary conditions to further the activities of the job coaches, as shown below:

### (1) Effects of placing Job coaches who belong to companies

#### a. Accurate support based on understanding of job contents, early identification of challenges and timely/uninterrupted support

Since a job coach who belongs to a company is an employee of the company and has a good understanding of the job contents, the job coach can consider the appropriate placement of disabled employees, give accurate guidance and advice on site, identify challenges early and provide timely and uninterrupted support. In addition, while it becomes important to train disabled employees to a strength of the company, the job coach is the key person that understands the process of career development and can make an accurate decision on the continuous support ranging from hiring to placement, the settling of such employees into the workplace and development of their ability with a view to even career advancement.

Furthermore, even if there arises a case difficult to deal with only at the workplace, it is possible to search for a solution in cooperation with the vocational center for persons with disabilities and support organizations in the region through the job coach.

#### b. Effective proposal and support for improvement of company's employment management and environment

One role of a job coach, when the job coach realizes problems such as maladjustment of disabled employees in the workplace, is to make environmental adjustments, including developing an environment easy for such a person to work and reviewing the job contents and placement. In such a case, the job coach is considered to be able to make effective proposals to be easily accepted based on the actual conditions of the company's employment management and personnel system.

#### c. Support for colleagues of disabled employees (building of natural support)

Since a job coach has many opportunities to come into contact with persons with disabilities as well as other employees around them in the workplace, he/she is in a position to effectively build so-called natural support. Actually, in both the questionnaire survey and interview by visiting workplaces for job coaches, there were many opinions indicating the importance of



providing not only direct support for disabled employees but also support for their working colleagues.

(2) Challenges facing Job coaches who belong to companies

a. Cases where the status of a job coach who belongs to a company is weak without a mechanism for career advancement

It is the strength of a job coach who belongs to a company that can make proposals such as for improvement of employee placement and workplace environment from the standpoint of both disabled employees and the company according to the actual situation of the company. But, the job coach sometimes cannot make a proposal, or even if doing so, it may not be accepted, due to his lack of voice. If the performance of job coach is not duly evaluated, or if the company has no scheme for his career advancement, it becomes a problem from the viewpoint of the job coach's support motivation.

b. Case where the internal support system is weak for Job coaches who belong to companies

One of the challenges facing Job coaches who belong to companies, which was often pointed out by both workplaces and job coaches themselves in the questionnaire survey, was that the burden on job coaches is heavy because of the weak support system from the company, while the number of difficult support cases has been increasing.

Even in the interview by visiting workplaces, such cases were noticed that the manager and colleagues in daily contact with disabled employees on site came to gradually understand that they could leave matters related to such employees to the job coach. So, gradually they lost consciousness to actively engage with disabled employees.

(3) Establishment of necessary conditions for Job coaches who belong to companies to work more effectively

a. Scheme for strengthening the status of job coaches and improving their career advancement

In order to get disabled employees accustomed to the workplace, it will be important for the company to clarify the expected roles of the job coach who has completed the education and training and belongs to the company, and communicate such roles not merely to them, but also to disabled employees, managers and colleagues, thereby ensuring smooth communication between all parties in the workplace. By so doing, a job coach who has completed the required education and training of job coaches can perform the duties and fulfill the roles effectively. Also, since additional duties may result in an increase in burden, such measures need to be considered as to reduce the duties of a job coach or a multiple number of employees attend the job coach training course, thereby preventing the burden of job coach from increasing.

Furthermore, it is also important to develop a scheme for career advancement by encouraging managers/employees of the personnel/general affairs department to get qualifications for Job

coaches who belong to companies, and by increasing treatment of the personnel so qualified as job coaches according to their experience and support skills, giving a certain position or authority.

b. Team support that supports the success of Job coaches who belong to companies

With regard to the form of support offered by Job coaches who belong to companies, various patterns are found in practice depending on the size and type of company and the number of job coaches being placed. In the case of job coaches providing support, however, there are effects as follows: the burden on the job coach can be reduced by sharing the roles with other supporters, managers and colleagues, and they can cultivate the consciousness and responsibility as well.

In order to promote the settling of disabled employees into the workplace throughout the company without isolating Job coaches who belong to companies, it will be important for the company to draw a long-term vision for turning disabled employees into labor force and building a system that can support it, and enabling the job coach and the employment management department to work together and communicate with each other.

c. Brush up of support skills for Job coaches who belong to companies

As disabilities are becoming more diverse, causing the number of cases where their settling into the workplace becomes difficult to increase, how job coaches improve their support skills and maintain their motivation is becoming a challenge. Accordingly, it is important for Job coaches who belong to companies to participate in group trainings to improve their support skills, and to increase opportunities for exchanging experiences with job coaches of other companies and building networks with external support agencies. Since a certain amount of time and financial burden is required to attend such group trainings, consideration needs to be given to creating an environment and a system which facilitates participation in these trainings and activities.

## **8. Relevant research outcomes**

Best Utilization Practices of Job coaches who belong to companies - Job Coaches Who Belong to Companies and Support Employment of Persons with Disabilities -, 2020

For Business People in Charge: A Guide to Utilize "Job Coaches Who Belong to Companies" ~ For Employing Persons with Disabilities ~, 2020