

Attainment Company
P.O. Box 930160
Verona WI, 53593
Don Bastian, Founder and CEO
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Background

Attainment Company, a family owned business in Verona, was founded in 1978. The company makes a variety of material for people with cognitive disabilities. Owner Dan Bastian focuses on those with significant cognitive or learning disabilities in three main focus areas: school aged children, adolescents, and older adults. Currently, 95% of its business is done with schools. The assistive technology line includes: books and videos, communication aids, go talk, software and Attainment workstations. Attainment has 32 employees, three of whom are developmentally disabled, and one has autism.

| Attainment Company |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has employed one person with autism for 10 years• Proactively employs people with developmental disabilities |

Story

Ten years ago, Work Opportunities in Rural Communities (WORC) approached the Attainment Company about providing real work experience to a Verona High School student with autism. Owner Don Bastian told the student that after graduating from high school he would be employed as a paid, part-time employee. According to Don, “The new employee was very shy and I couldn’t even get a hello from him for the first four to five years. Today, this employee now originates conversation with multiple people.”

As a business owner Don feels that it is important for local businesses to respond and contribute to the community needs by investigating hiring people with autism, “Some people with autism are very bright and capable.” Don currently serves as a WORC board member. When asked about how hiring people with autism has bettered his company, Don said, “It helps the other employees, those without a clinical understanding, to understand what a person with autism is like, and what their abilities are.” It helps to build long-term friendships as well, “At first you might be reluctant,” Don says, “and not know how to react, but then you begin to understand and accept the person.”

Reported by Mischelle Grabner, Edgewood College, March 2007, for Professor Denis Collins (dcollins@edgewood.edu) and the 2007 Good Samaritan Award, co-sponsored by the Samaritan Counseling Center and Edgewood College.