Disabled, Not Disqualified

Ableism in Recruitment and
Retention for Game Development

Office of
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Presented By: Will Loxley
Co-Authors: Drs. Fernando Rodríguez & Ashley Guajardo

Game development is always evolving...

But does that include how we hire?

How are disabled developers being publicly and actively recruited for the next generation of the games industry?
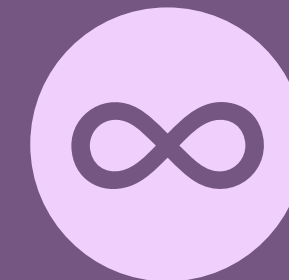
Image of presenter

Presented By: Will Loxley

Creative collaborative practice.

There is a substantial risk for disabling situations to occur in the games industry.

25%
of professional game developers are disabled.

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Assumptions

Disabled people can experience ableism from human resources and recruitment.

Obvious

A candidate is obviously able-bodied.

Disclose

A candidate would disclose being disabled.

Productive

A candidate will be perceived as productive by coworkers.

Separate

A candidate will not be perceived as a separate category of worker by coworkers.

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Problem

Inaccessible recruitment practices will prevent more and more people from succeeding in the games industry.

- How we hire should iterate in the pursuit of success.

- Limited information flows interfere with prospective developer success.

Methodology

Taglines

Mission or vision statements.

Equal Opportunity Disclosures

Culture Statements

Core Values

Closers

We're on a quest: bring our dreams to life and craft the most epic entertainment experiences, ever. Hard work, iteration and polish go into the Blizzard "secret recipe," but the most important ingredients come from talented people who share our vision. If that sounds like you, join us.

Tagline, Blizzard Entertainment (https://careers.blizzard.com/global/en)

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Methodology

Equal Opportunity Disclosures

Legal employment notices.

Taglines	Culture Statements
Core Values	Closers

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Activision Blizzard is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, protected veteran status, or any other basis protected by applicable law, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of disability. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

EOD, Activision Blizzard (https://careers.activisionblizzard.com/)

Methodology

Culture Statements

"We" action statements.

Taglines

Equal Opportunity Disclosures

Core Values

Closers

We are seriously playful: we balance art and science, we are supportive but demanding in everything we do.

As a result, we are building a company where everyone can thrive, are proud to belong, hold each other accountable and where we manage our business for sustainable growth.

Core Values, King (https://careers.king.com/)

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Methodology

Culture Statements

Taglines which emphasize recruitment.

Taglines

Equal Opportunity Disclosures

Core Values

Closers

We believe in the potential of every human being

We celebrate diversity of thought, cultural differences, lifestyle, age, background, experience, religion, economic and social status, gender identity, and marital status among other aspects.

We invest in DEI across our business to empower our people, actively foster inclusion in our communities and shape the future of Electronic Arts.

Culture Statement, Electronic Arts (https://www.ea.com/)

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Methodology

Closers

Information near job listings.

Taglines

Equal Opportunity Disclosures

Core Values

Culture Statements

BE EPIC

Contribute to the unrelenting focus on innovation, quality and community that defines us.

Closer, Epic Games (https://www.epicgames.com/site/en-US/about)
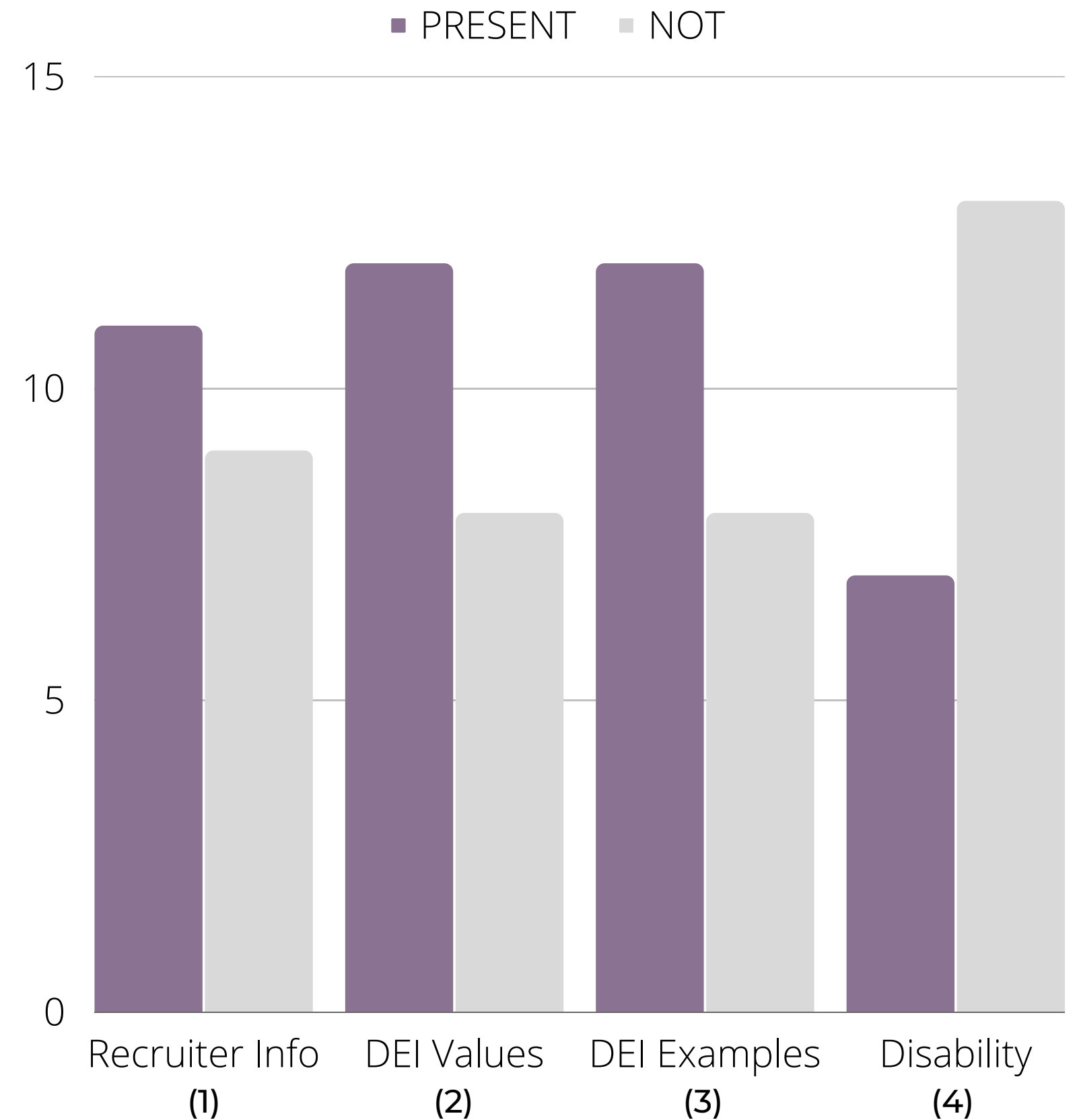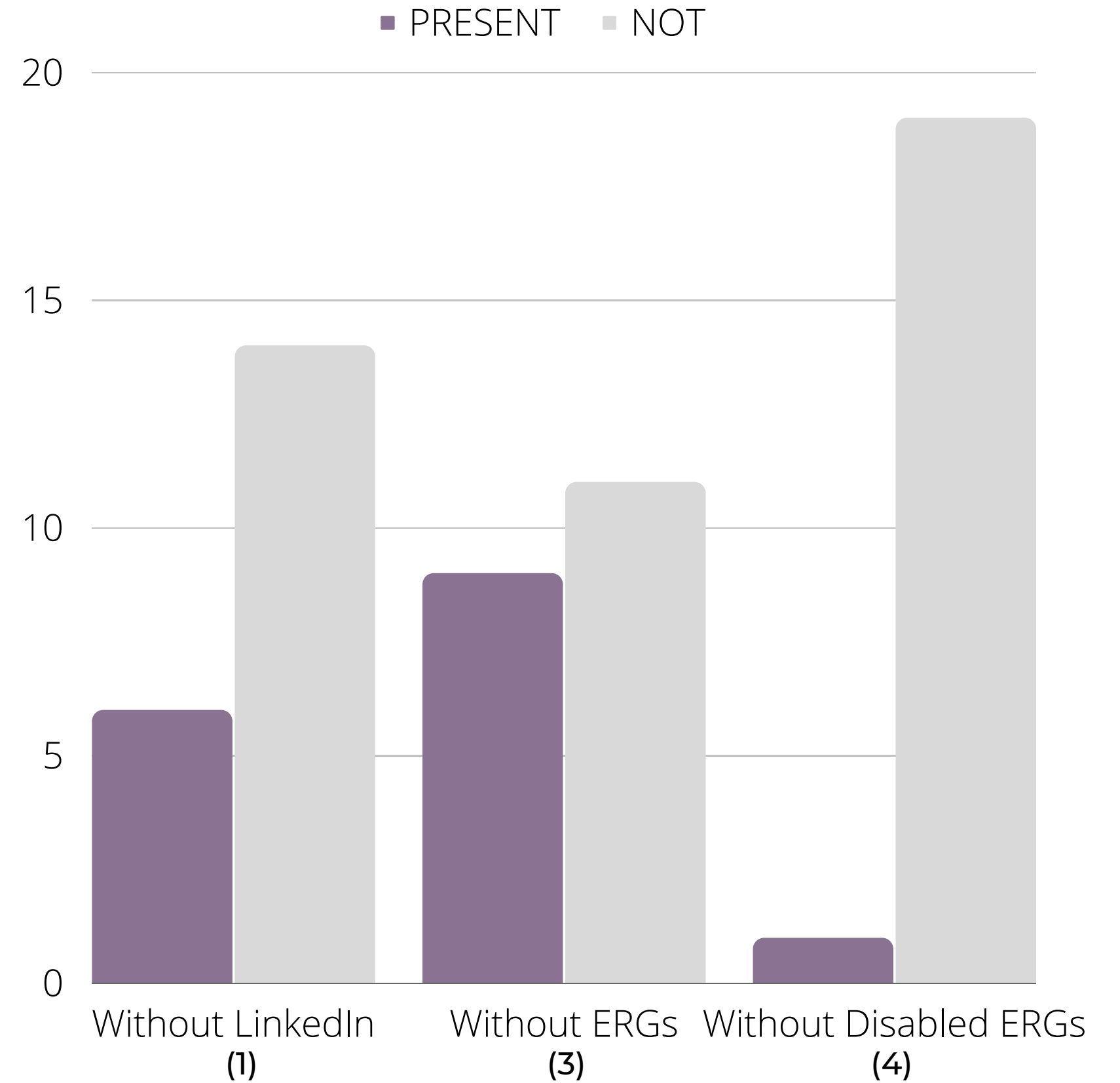
Results

Through thematic document analysis, there were four prevailing themes.

All themes were present for only two game company websites.

Legend: ■ PRESENT ■ NOT

	Recruiter Info (1)	DEI Values (2)	DEI Examples (3)	Disability (4)

Discussion

If we ignore disability-focused employee resource groups, only one game company provided examples of support for disabled candidates.

Legend: PRESENT, NOT

Categories:
- Without LinkedIn (1)
- Without ERGs (3)
- Without Disabled ERGs (4)

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Discussion

Activision Blizzard King (ABK) can serve as a case study.

	Activision	Activision Blizzard	Blizzard Entertainment	King
(1)	✓		✓	✓
(2)	✓	✓		✓
(3)	✓	✓		✓
(4)	✓	✓		

Conclusion

Company values surrounding developer accessibility do not seem to be prioritized. And as a result, **disabled developers do not seem welcome in the industry**.

We believe in the potential of every human being

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