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*Pictured:*  
Personal development  
guru Jack Black, who spoke  
at a recent supported  
employment event in  
Hamilton to highlight the  
benefits of employing people  
with learning disabilities.

# People with Disabilities – **Great for Business**

**Jack Black**, the acclaimed personal development guru, has told employers that employing people with a disability is not just about being a good corporate citizen, but is also good for the bottom line, team morale and company success.

**B** LACK WAS SPEAKING RECENTLY AT A supported employment event in Hamilton, West Central Scotland, to highlight the benefits of employing people with learning disabilities. The event, which was organised by Momentum, Rehab's Scottish division, and South Lanarkshire Council, saw over 100 people in attendance.

As a leading authority on personal development, Black counts among those he has coached world champion athletes, premier footballers and company executives. He explained to *Rehab News* what the event was trying to achieve. "What we tried to do was to share inspiration about how people can improve their performance in life and open minds up to a positive viewpoint around the perceived risk of taking on someone with a disability. We shared stories in the room of people who have taken that risk and we set about getting other employers to put their hands up. People were really open to it and there was a lot of passion and support for the idea.

"I spend most of my time working with the corporate world and this was my first time engaging in an event specifically aimed at helping disabled people and we received very good feedback. At the end of the day, people are people with the same aspirations to be the best that they can be. The tools and techniques that I impart are relevant to anybody, in changing from ordinary performance to extraordinary performance and in giving people more confidence going forward."

He went on to say that employers can gain hugely from employing people with disabilities. "For employers, if they take on someone with a disability, that person can very often become a talisman for the team, bringing out the best in people. So it's not just a feelgood factor for the employer in taking on a disabled person but that person also brings benefits and adds value.

"Hopefully we will have been able to harness the energy and generosity of spirit at the event so that people not only consider what was said but go and do something about it and engage with the agencies."

Black was particularly impressed with the contribution of Caroline Roden, an employee with South Lanarkshire Council, who has Down's syndrome and who has

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become a valued and respected member of the social work service.

"There was genuine enthusiasm in the room, and a lot of pride particularly in hearing from Caroline Roden who was really impressive in telling her story. There was an understanding that it isn't an easy road for disabled people and Caroline told us of the various setbacks she had had but she never gave up. It's a bigger challenge for someone like Caroline to succeed than for a corporate executive who's aspiring to be CEO. Caroline is a genuine hero and an inspiration to me."

Ian Welsh, Director of UK Services, commented, "Those firms who have taken the initiative to employ people with learning disabilities often find these employees to be among their most dedicated staff. We were delighted that Jack Black agreed to back our drive to connect employers with a more diverse workforce and already we have seen the fruits of this truly inspirational event in the number of enquiries that we have received from employers since." ■