Empowering Inclusive Work

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Abstract

Can AI improve workplace outcomes for workers with disabilities? We examine the relative performance of hearing-impaired workers on one of China's largest food-delivery platforms. Pre-AI, disabled workers are slightly slower than non-disabled workers and have worse customer ratings, although they supply more hours to the platform and are much less likely to quit. Midway through our data, the platform suddenly introduces an AI-based intelligent outbound call system designed to improve communication for hearing-impaired workers. AI significantly increases the productivity of disabled workers, especially on tasks involving interaction with customers; reduces late deliveries and negative customer reviews; and increases labor supply and retention. AI eliminates over half of the disability hourly pay gap and substantially increases the profitability of disabled workers for the platform.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Disability, Productivity, Gig workers
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