

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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## Employers, Give the Blind a Chance

*I know what it is like to be overlooked because of my disability.*

In “Blind Software Engineer Expanded Access to Braille” (Obituaries, February 8), we reflect on John Boyer’s life as a computer scientist, legendary programmer, and inventor of technology to empower the blind to compete in industry.

Boyer told the Wall Street Journal in 1984 that “to be respected in this society, you have to have a job, and that’s as it should be, but I know what it’s like to be labeled unemployable, and I really want to see other handicapped people gainfully employed.”

As a totally blind CEO, I could not agree more.

I know firsthand what it is like to be overlooked because of my disability. I also know firsthand what extraordinary talent corporate America is missing out on by overlooking the blind and visually impaired in their hiring efforts. A blind person can do anything their sighted peers can if given the right opportunity and reasonable accommodation – and yet half of the 12 million blind and visually impaired Americans are not a part of the workforce.

I hope employers reading Boyer’s obituary are inspired and motivated to evaluate their current websites and accessibility protocols, disregard misconceptions about hiring blind and visually impaired employees, and tap into a pool of often overlooked yet loyal talent. Not doing so would be a grave disservice to his legacy.

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Photo credit: Boyer Family

*John J. Boyer – seen here in the 1970s – said he had trouble finding a suitable job after college.*

  
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