Expand your Talent Pool

UNDERSTANDING ASD IN THE WORKPLACE

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Itineris Employment Partnerships
Who Are We?

- Itineris is a non-profit that seeks meaningful employment and community engagement for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Itineris was founded in 2010 by a group of parents.
  
  “As the number of autistic children grows, so does the number of autistic adults. Their needs remain much the same as they age, yet the support they once received fades.”
  
  – USA Today, 2016

- We are an Autism-specific agency in Baltimore City.
We build partnerships with businesses and organizations to connect our job seekers with opportunities.
Why We Do It

**Employer Wins**
- Hardworking, dependable employee, hand picked to fill a need and help bottom line
- Neurodiversity is a competitive advantage

**Job Seeker Wins**
- Engaged in competitive, meaningful employment
- Contributing to the workforce and to the economy

**Community Wins**
- Creation of jobs
- Reducing the dependence of tax payer support for adults with autism

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Objectives:

- Participants will learn the current employment statistics for adults with autism and understand the importance of incorporating this untapped talent pool into their workforce.
- Participants will develop an understanding of the topography of ASD and how it may present in the workplace.
- Presenters will review a work-ready checklist that can be used for a wide variety of people.
- Participants will understand the different types of accommodations that we have found to be most helpful to those with ASD.
Statistics

data
collection
interpretation
inference
organization
descriptive
analysis
scientific
samples
parameters
mathematics
also
provides
data
theory
experiments
pertainings
discipline
mathematical
branch
wide
design
Recent Disability Statistics from 2018

- 8% unemployment rate among people with disabilities
- Across different levels of education, unemployment rates are higher for people with disabilities than those without disabilities
- 31% of workers with disabilities were employed part time, compared to 17% of workers without disabilities.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics - PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2018
Percent ever worked after high school

- Autism
- Intellectual Disability
- Emotional Disturbance
- Speech/language impairment
- Learning Disability

Source: National Longitudinal Transition Study-2
Transitioning Youth Statistics

More than 500,001 Learners and Counting

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“The neurologically different represent a new addition to the familiar political categories of class/gender/race and will augment the insights of the social model of disability.” - Judy Singer
What is Neurodiversity?

- Neurological differences are recognized and respected as any other human variation.
- Do not require a cure or need to be “fixed”
- Recognize unique skills, capabilities, and perspectives that should be embraced and supported
Neurodiversity

Dyspraxia/DCD
Visual Composition, Divergent thought, Creativity, Writing, Innovative

Dyslexia
3D thought, Visual thought, Creativity, Non-linear thought,

Asperger’s (ASD)
Sequencing, Concentration, Visual thought, Different Imagination, Logical

ADHD
Quick witted, Intuitive, Creative, Energetic, Ability to Hyper-Focus, Empathetic, Good talker, Gregarious

Neurodiversity
STRENGTHS: creativity, originality, determination, imaginative, empathetic, intuitive, energetic

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Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What does the autism spectrum look like?

Circular spectrum by Rebecca Burgess
Montage @sciencebase
Typical Characteristics of ASD

Difficulty with using (typical) communication
  - Verbal and nonverbal
  - Expressive and receptive communication
  - Delay or inability in speech
  - Atypical use of speech

Difficulty with engaging in (typical) social interactions
  - Limited initiation/responses during social interactions
  - Inconsistent eye contact or use of body language
  - Difficulty understanding hidden “social rules”
Typical Characteristics of ASD

Different sensory experiences
- Hypersensitive/ hyposensitive
- Visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, vestibular, or proprioceptive needs

Difficulty with executive functioning skills
- Flexibility
- Organization/Planning
- Self-Regulation

Repetitive patterns of behavior
- Self-Stimulation (“Stimming”): hand flapping, rocking
- Need for consistency and routine
- Passionate for specific subjects
"What would happen if the autism gene was eliminated from the gene pool? You would have a bunch of people standing around in a cave, chatting and socializing and not getting anything done."

- Dr. Temple Grandin
ASD in the workplace

Differences
- Social initiation
- Generalization
- Routine-based
- Communication
- Sensory needs

Strengths
- Rote memory
- Focus
- Excited to be at work
- Attention to detail
- Consistent work ethic

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Expand your talent pool

The Hiring Process

- Identify a hiring need
- Create Job Description
- Recruiting
- Screening
- Interviewing
- Hiring
- Onboarding
- Ongoing Feedback and Development
Step 1: Identify a Hiring Need

Reduce Costs
Can we find one worker who enjoys a consistent routine?
A recruiting firm needed mass emails sent weekly. A team of 4 interns was replaced by 1 employee whose focus allows them to send over 700 emails per day, error-free.

Increase Efficiency
How can a process or group function operate more efficiently?
The legal department’s administrative assistants needed more time to focus on essential tasks. An employee was hired to complete clerical tasks.

Fill Employment Gap
How important is attention to detail?
The maintenance department kept getting fined by the recycling collection agency. An employee was hired who has a unique interest in trash collection and skilled in differentiating plastics.
Steps 2, 3, 4

Create Job Description

Recruiting

Screening
Step 5: Interviewing
Steps 6, 7, 8

- Hiring
- Onboarding
- Ongoing Feedback and Development
Training
- Clear, honest communication
- Opportunities for growth
- Timely Feedback
- Mentoring/coaching
- Professional development

May need customized employment plan, including accommodations

Utilize typical onboarding process
Accommodations

https://askjan.org/disabilities/Autism-Spectrum.cfm

- Social skills
- Speaking/Communicating
- Executive Functioning
- Noise Sensitivity
Steps 6, 7, 8

Hiring

Onboarding

Ongoing Feedback and Development
Work – Ready Checklist

Job Seeker, Support Network, Employer
The first secret of getting what you want is knowing what you want
- Albert D. Hlavaty

Step 1: Ideal Conditions of Employment, Vocational Themes, and Identifying Gaps
Job Seeker/Support Network

**Ideal Conditions of Employment**
- Interests
- Ideal environment
- Proficient tasks
- Transportation
- Understanding of benefits
- Location/Shift length
- Suggested Accommodations

**Vocational Themes**
- Broad idea of an industry
- 3 – 5 are ideal

John’s Ideal Conditions of Employment

Interests:
Reading, philosophy, science, law, history, and sports

Vocational Area:
History, Organization, Curiosity/Problem-solving

Ideal Environment:
Office environment with engaging coworkers

Proficient Tasks:
Excel, PowerPoint, typing, filing

Location/Shift Length:
Towson/Timonium area, 4-8 hours

Suggested Accommodation:
Written task list for new tasks

q What are the areas for growth or potential growth for the business?
q Are there tasks for which the employer typically uses temporary or student employees?
q Are there services the business would like to offer or could offer that are not in place presently?
q What kind of work atmosphere and culture does the company have?
q Are there tasks that could be done more efficiently or more often?
q Are there tasks that aren't getting done because no one has the time?
Case Study

John
Male, 25 years old
Looking for part-time work
Additional Resources

- https://askjan.org/
Thank you - Let’s make a job!

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