

SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE

EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

Strategies from Autistic Employees

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES



“An inclusive workplace is a working environment that values the individual and group differences within its workforce. It enables a company to embrace the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives of the employees, which in turn increases their talent, innovation, creativity and contributions.”¹



In the case of autism, an inclusive workplace is one that meets the unique physical, sensory, social, communication and emotional needs of an autistic employee.

What is an inclusive workspace?

“To me, an inclusive workspace is a space where I am free to be me. I don’t have to hide my autism, and in fact, my autism can serve as an advantage because I can help my employer better serve the autism community. I can engage with other autistics more easily than a neurotypical person can.”

Corey, autistic self-advocate

Why have an inclusive workforce?

More businesses than ever are becoming aware of the strong business case for hiring inclusively. There is specific research showing the business benefits of employing autistic people.



The Global Impact Sourcing Coalition (GISC) reports that “In fact, research and employer experience indicate that using autistic employees in roles for which they are well-suited can lead to greater productivity, fewer errors, and lower costs. When successfully matched with jobs that align with their interests, autistic employees can often hyper-focus on the task at hand, which enhances performance, workflow and productivity for the business.”²

2017
Canadian
Survey on
Disability
Reports

1 IN 5 people 15
and over
have at
least one
disability³

or nearly 6.2 million Canadians, many of whom are able and willing to work. This is a large talent pool to leave untapped, especially when there is a labour shortage in Canada.⁴



According to Sinneave's employer survey, the most common motivation to create an autistic-inclusive workplace was to increase talent in the workforce by tapping into an untapped labour pool.

3 important ways workplace inclusion benefits business:

1

Inclusive workplaces value all their employees and the unique talents and contributions each one makes to the organization. This creates **happier employees**, bringing out the best in everybody, thereby increasing productivity and profits.

2

Inclusive workforces allow employers to access valuable and overlooked talent pools, giving employers a **larger labour pool** to choose from, thus ensuring they are hiring the best candidate for each job.

3

Hiring inclusively is good for a company's image and supports the business by attracting **broader customer and client markets**.

"The more inclusive my employer is, the less stressed I am at work, allowing me to devote more energy to my job tasks than I can in a non-inclusive environment."

Corey, autistic self-advocate

How does an inclusive workspace help?

Culture - acceptance, not awareness

As companies become more interested in diversity and inclusion, they embrace the idea of autism awareness or disability awareness.

While awareness is important, it's even more critical to create a culture of acceptance.

Building an inclusive culture and understanding the value of hiring from a diverse candidate pool, including autistic individuals, requires a full commitment from an organization's senior leadership. Disability awareness and, more specifically, autism awareness means you know of autism's existence.

Autism acceptance means your organization understands the business advantage of a diverse workforce and has openly embraced the unique characteristics and challenges of autism, which is far more inclusive than merely practicing awareness.

By practicing autism acceptance, your business is more likely to get the best performance from your autistic employees. Looking at this from a strictly business perspective, higher-performing employees contribute more to your company's bottom line.



Are you running a non-profit organization? Inclusive employers are generally viewed more favourably by granting agencies.

Awareness thinking:

- Autism is a condition
- Autism is very common
- Autistic employees require supports
- Autistic employees exhibit challenging behaviours

Acceptance thinking:

- Autistic employees are valued team members that bring a unique perspective

How does an inclusive workplace help?

"It (Autism acceptance) enables me to be accepted and appreciated as I am; for my fidgety, solutions-focused, analytical self – without asking me to compromise or hide who I am."

Krys, autistic person



Not sure how to move from awareness to a culture of acceptance at your company? Use [Section 5.1 - Acceptance Check-In Tool](#) to reflect on where you and your organization are in the journey to hiring autistic individuals.



RESOURCES

If your organization is still discovering the benefits of hiring inclusively, the resources below can help support your journey from awareness to acceptance.

The Business Case for Hiring Autistic Team Members

Auticon is an international IT and compliance consulting business.

Benefits of Ready Willing and Able

Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) is a national partnership of Inclusion Canada (formerly the Canadian Association for Community Living), the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA) and their member organizations.

Business Case

The President's Group is a network of 25 change-driven British Columbia business leaders who are champions for more accessible, inclusive workplaces.



REFERENCES

- 1 **Characteristics of an Inclusive Workplace**
Siyana Sokolova
- 2 **Impact Sourcing in Action - Autism Empowerment Kit**
Global Impact Sourcing Coalition
- 3 **Canadian Survey on Disability Reports**
A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017
- 4 **Labour Shortage: Here to Stay**
Business Development Bank of Canada, 2018