

Companies that hire neurodiverse

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**IN TODAY'S WORKFORCE, MANY COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS ARE
LEARNING THE VALUE OF NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK.**

Neurodiversity is a concept and a movement which recognizes that those with various neurological conditions resulting from a natural variation in the human genome are not defective, but different.

The word is used in particular to describe the skills and abilities that these individuals possess in contrast to their neuro- 'typical' counterparts.

I want to make it clear that neurodiversity is a spectrum with multiple dimensions, and there are those of us who seem to struggle less, and others whose diversity is more obvious. It is the latter of whom can struggle in the area of employment. Being a neurodiverse person myself, I have experienced these difficulties.

While being a neurodiverse person means I face challenges and need to work hard on myself to fix errors or presenting problems at work, I also note that there are certain qualities we can bring to a workplace.

Another article explores this more readily, but consider these points:

- **Many dyslexic people pursue jobs in writing or editing**, using their ability to see things “wrong” as means to notice spelling errors and develop creative narratives.
- **Autistics are generally good at organizational tasks** that involve ordering or repetitive actions, but equally can excel in creative spheres where their left-of-field thinking gives them the innovative edge.
- **A person with anxiety may be able to empathize better** with someone in a panic or having a bad day.
- **An employee with depression can also be a good mentor** to those who have just been diagnosed.

I will now present a list of corporations and small businesses who hire neurodiverse employees. If you are neurodiverse and looking for work, you might be able to contact these organizations.

**IF YOU ARE A BUSINESS HOPING TO TRANSITION TO A NEURODIVERSE
WORKPLACE, YOU MAY FIND THIS ARTICLE HELPFUL TO GAIN INSIGHTS
ON HOW TO START YOUR OWN HIRING AND RETENTION PROGRAM OF
NEURODIVERSE PERSONS.**

Australian companies that hire people with neurodiversity:

As somebody who has worked in several fields, I will be using a few of my own personal experiences to give examples of companies in my area that hire people with a range of neurodiversities, then I will list other organizations that have publicly announced their willingness to hire neurodiverse.

1. The Cuckoo Restaurant, Olinda, VIC – Hospitality

Whilst working here, I mentioned to management that I was struggling with depression. The Head Chef showed me compassion and gave me space to share my feelings. Over time I learned that Cuckoo management actively employed young people who suffered from depression and anxiety, as well as those with learning difficulties and autism.

- The Cuckoo Restaurant’s motivation behind hiring neurodiverse workers was to encourage community, as well as to provide learning opportunities for young people to accept responsibility.

2. National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA), Melbourne, VIC – Entertainment

I was hired as a lighting operator at NICA and was pleased to learn that they had a very enthusiastic attitude towards providing work experience to people with learning disabilities. The local college ran a theatre course specifically aimed for people with special needs and these students were given the opportunity to work in both front-of-house and back-of-house at NICA. The welcoming attitude of both the staff and the performers provided a perfect environment for everybody involved to learn and thrive at what they were doing.

- NICA’s motivation to hire neurodiverse workers was to be inclusive, and they hired based on merit in theatre, which I found very uplifting.

3. Paragon Martial Arts Academy, Melbourne, VIC – Sports

For about 4 years I was hired as an assistant instructor. Whilst the school taught all ages, there was a strong focus on teaching children with a wide variety of learning styles and needs. During my time at Paragon, I learned that my own experience of depression and anxiety allowed me to better empathize with my students and colleagues. For example, one young girl had anxiety which would play up on occasion, resulting in panic attacks. It was important that staff gave her the space she needed to calm herself. I noticed that everyone at Paragon encouraged the safe and structured environment which allowed grounding and regulating of overwhelming emotions. For me, Paragon was a place that encouraged self-discipline and physicality which helped the students focus and set boundaries. In speaking with the parents of our students I discovered that they had noticed an increase in their child's positive emotional states and attentiveness at home as well as in the Dojo.

- Paragon's motivation to hire neurodiverse workers was personal. Our late Sensei was a paediatric physiotherapist for special needs children and had a passion for helping them. As such he believed that not only was it appropriate, but important, to hire instructors and assistants who, themselves, had fell on the spectrum of neurodiversity.
- I believe that having a team of people with such diversity was imperative to our ability to teach our students with compassion and empathy to ensure that they felt safe and happy at the martial arts school.

More Australian companies that hire people with neurodiversity:

1. [DXC.Technology](#) – Technology

The Dandelion program by DXC gives autistic adults across the major cities in Australia opportunities in technology, coding and robotics. They have developed an alternate recruitment process which involves assessment centres and hands-on approaches in place of traditional behavioural interviews. Successful applicants join a 3-year program which develops job awareness, self-advocacy and supports transition into the workplace.

2. [SAP](#) – Technology

The SAP Autism at Work Program employs university students on the autism spectrum to work as interns, developing key industry skills and experience. As of 2019, there are job openings in Canberra and Sydney.

3. [IBM Australia](#) – Technology

The IBM Ignite Program seeks autistic adults for employment in application testing and quality assurance roles. IBM seeks to employ adults in both regional and city areas.

4. [XCeptional](#) – Technology

Based in Sydney, XCeptional are a techie company that seeks autistic individuals who are *exceptional* to join in technical roles, including data analytics, software development, software testing and cyber security. The recruitment process focuses on gamification instead of the standard behavioural interview. If you are interested in having a go, they have some games on their website.

5. [ANZ](#) – Banking

The Spectrum Program at ANZ welcomes autistic adults' opportunities to explore cyber security, testing and other banking roles.

6. [JP Morgan and Chase](#) – Banking

With their Autism at Work Program, JP Morgan and Chase invite autistic adults to get involved in cyber security and banking roles.

7. [Untapped Group](#) – Human Resources

The Be Your Best Program at Untapped welcomes *all neurodiversities* across employment roles as writers, designers, artists and web developers, to assist on a variety of projects that promote neurodiversity and wellbeing.

8. [Sun Pork Farms](#) – Agriculture

The Autism and Agriculture Program by SunPork Farms supports autistic skills development and employment in Queensland and South Australia.

9. [AMAZE](#) – Not for profit

This autism advocacy organization has changed its traditional hiring program to be inclusive of autistic individuals, offering tailored changes to the recruitment process to allow and welcome autistics to feel comfortable and interested in joining AMAZE.

Global companies that hire people with neurodiversity:

1. [Ernst and Young](#) – Accounting, Global

Ernst and Young employ over 270,000 staff over 150 countries word wide. As part of their recruitment service they have collaborated with several other major global companies to initiate educational programs targeted at people with autism to teach them life skills and provide on-the-job training in order to set them up with the necessary skills for future employment.

2. [Microsoft](#) – Technology, Global

The Autism Program and the Ability Program by Microsoft welcomes varied neurodiversities and disability into a range of roles across the company, across the globe. As one of the leaders in hiring neurodiverse for technology roles, Microsoft has a hiring program that inspires and connects people.

3. [Auticon](#) – Technology, UK | Scotland

Auticon hires *exclusively* autistics for all roles in their organization in London and Edinburgh.

4. [Freddie Mac](#) – Mortgage/ Loans, VA, USA

The Autism Internship Program by Freddie Mac welcomes autistic individuals into a range of junior and senior roles within the mortgage/ loans/ banking arena.

5. [AMC Theatres](#) – Film and TV, Across USA

The FOCUS (Furthering Opportunities, Cultivating Untapped Strengths) is an employment outreach program that partners with local, state, and national support agencies to employ qualified people with disabilities at AMC Theatres across the States.

6. [Platinum Bay Technologies](#) – Technology, Across USA

Another small software testing company that offers jobs for autistic adults, Platinum Bay has a range of roles available including technical jobs, project management jobs and customer service positions. They hire verbal and non-verbal autistics and welcome disability as *diversity*.

7. [Computer Aid Inc](#) – Technology/ Consulting, Across USA

This technology firm has the Autism Initiative Program which now operates in Metropolitan demographics, including Chicago, Columbus, Harrisburg, New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. They welcome autistic applicants for technical, project management and customer service roles.

8. [Rising Tide Car Wash](#) – Automotive Services, FL, USA

Rising Tide hires autistic individuals in car detailing roles and helps both verbal and non-verbal autistics feel valued with meaningful employment. They also support 'DiffAbility', where they see disability as difference and diversity.

9. [Iterators](#) – Technology, MA, USA

Iterators is a small software testing company based in Boston, Massachusetts. As of 2019, Iterators employs nine staff of whom all are neurodiverse in some way. They largely focus on utilizing their staff's abilities to see patterns and sequencing along with their other unique skills. Jill founded the company with this

employment strategy in mind after her son (who is diagnosed with autism) found it hard to gain employment considering his neurodiversity. Jill, along with the rest of Iterators staff, are extremely passionate about seeing that all people are given a fair go when it comes to finding work.

10. [Ultra Testing](#) – Technology, NY, USA

Ultra Testing hires autistic individuals in a range of roles including technical, engineering, production and customer service positions.

11. [Google](#) – Technology, CA, USA

Google also hires autistic and neurodiverse individuals. They do not have a dedicated program for autistics, but they say “we hire everyone” – and this is to be believed, with Paulette, a [keynote speaker of Autism at Work](#) (2018 Australia) being autistic, dyslexic and holding a senior role at Google USA.

I think all these companies are doing a great job, but more can be done. It would be great to see more job roles in arts, music, design, film and other creative professions.

Are you a Company looking for ways to improve?

One aspect that seems noteworthy is the lack of organizations offering creative roles to the neurodiverse population. It would be great to see more job roles in arts, music, design, film and other creative professions. While some people might think neurodiverse people are not good at these things- I beg to differ. Plus, there are a great many of creatives in our history who had dyslexia, depression, anxiety, autism and other neurodiversities.

Also, the knowledge and understanding of neurodiversity are still rather limited in the corporate world. I have noticed that many people are confusing autism with neurodiversity; the words are *not* interchangeable.

Many are very quick to judge and 'write off' neurodiverse people as incapable or limited in performance capability instead of seeing their enormous potential to offer unique skills and insight.

I do see the value in helping autistics, but I also think we need to be mindful of all the other neurodiverse peoples who can equally contribute their skills in the workplace. From what I've experienced during my years of employment is that many employers are very quick to judge and 'write off' neurodiverse people as incapable or limited in performance capability instead of seeing their enormous potential to offer unique skills and insight. This can often be attributed to a lack of education about neurodiversity, the reliance on mass-media to educate, and/ or lack of experience in socializing or working with neurodiverse people.

I have come to strongly believe that further education and awareness of neurodiversity will help to educate employers and other people in the employment industries see why it's not only fair but invaluable to hire neurodiverse people.

**BY INCREASING THE NUMBERS OF NEURODIVERSE HIRES, EVERYONE CAN
BENEFIT; WE CAN INCREASE GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AND GAIN DEEP
APPRECIATION OF THOSE WITH A NEURODIVERSITY.**

THAT'S A WIN-WIN!

About the Author:

Ned Kolmos is a neurodiverse person with depression. He is a writer and gardener (small business owner) who is extremely passionate about martial arts and nature conservation. He also likes to study history and languages in his spare time.
