



LANDMARK COLLEGE PRESENTS

HIRING AND WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS THAT LEARN DIFFERENTLY

UNDERSTANDING THE
STRENGTHS IN OUR
DIFFERENCES



LANDMARK COLLEGE

PREMIERE COLLEGE FOR STUDENTS
THAT LEARN DIFFERENTLY



- Established in 1985 to serve students with dyslexia
- Small liberal arts college, 400 students
- Neurodiversity, capacity and growth of an educational model
- Methodology, research, and innovation on the state and national level
- Baccalaureate, associate, and professional credentialing
- Universal Design for Learning
- 33% of enrolled students have disclosed an ASD diagnosis

Neurodiversity

"Nature Variations"

The concept that neurological differences are a natural part of the human genome and to be recognized and respected as normal variations in the population. Commonly used in the context of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Although the term has typically been used in reference to individuals with autism, it broadly refers to learning differences (e.g. Dyslexia, ADHD, ASD) and mental disorders (e.g. anxiety, mood disorders, depression, bi-polar).



LEARNING

DIFFERENCES

Dyslexia/Language-based

- **Disparity between basic language skills and higher-level cognition:** reasoning, analogy, problem-solving, creativity
- **Challenges with reading,** language, writing and spelling,

ADD/ADHD

- Issues with **time management and organization**
- Inattention
- Impulsivity
- Hyperactivity
- Mental effort depletion
- Performance inconsistency
- **Difficulty with Executive Functions**

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- **Impairment in social communication** and interaction, including difficulty interpreting nonverbal communication. This can look like: **literal** interpretation of language, **being too honest** or direct, **difficulty with eye contact.**
- **Repetitive** patterns of behavior, interests, or activities (routines can be very important).
- **Hyper or Hypo-reactivity to environment**—e.g. light and sound sensitivity, indifference to temperature, issues with textures/clothing

Neurotypicals orient towards people, individuals on the spectrum oriented towards facts and information.

Super Powers

Dyslexia/Language-based

- Spatial Reasoning and global visual processing
- Seeing the '**bigger picture**'
- Pattern recognition
- Strong visual thinking
- **Highly creative**
- **Strong problem solving** ability

ADD/ADHD

- Creative and **highly inventive**
- Ability to **hyper-focus** on areas of interest, and can have a **high level of productivity**
- Energetic
- Emotional expression
- Being **perceptive and noticing changes**

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- **Deep passions** and interests, may be particularly skilled in one area
- Very **honest** and **loyal**
- Very **detail-oriented**
- Can engage in repetitive tasks
- **Punctual** and rarely miss work
- Strong visual thinking
- **Logical**
- Pattern recognition



"I learned to sell my work and not my myself."



-Temple Grandin

HIRING PRACTICES

Do your practices bring out the strengths of ALL applicants?

“Behaviors in many neurodiverse people run counter to the common notion of what makes a good employee- solid communication skills, being a team player, emotional intelligence, persuasiveness, sales person type personalities, the ability to network, the ability to conform to standard practices without special accommodations. These criteria systematically screen out neurodiverse people”.

“Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage”
Austin and Pisano, 2017
The Harvard Business Review

- What are your current hiring practices? How do you screen applicants?
- Does the hiring process reflect the type of work they will be doing?
- Do you feel there is support in your organization to developing more inclusive hiring practices?
- What would more inclusive hiring practices look like at your organization?

SUPERVISING INDIVIDUALS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES

PRACTICES THAT MAKE YOU A STRONGER SUPERVISOR



BE CLEAR ABOUT EXPECTATIONS



INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD BE SPECIFIC AND PROVIDED IN A WRITTEN FORMAT



PROVIDE DETAILED FEEDBACK AND FOCUS ON BEHAVIORS THAT CAN BE MEASURED



BE DIRECT, YET KIND

RECOGNIZING THE STRENGTH OF NEURODIVERSITY

Fortune 500 companies with hiring practices that include neurodiversity



ACCOMMODATIONS AND RESOURCES

Workplace accommodations are a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

What they are:

- For qualified individuals that meet the job requirements (e.g. edu, skills, experience)
- Reasonable accommodations allow an employee to complete the essential functions of the job
- Can range from simple seating and office arrangements to technology that will allow an individual to do their job more effectively
- Apply to all stages of an employee's employment from interviewing to firing

What they are NOT:

- 'Special' treatment
- Always costly
- Apply only after you have hired an individual





Free advice for
employers, employees
and job seekers

Examples of
Accommodations for
Individuals with ASD



ASK JAN

If you have a question about workplace accommodations or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related legislation, we can help.



- Providing interview questions prior to interview
- Provide topics prior to meetings to help facilitate communication
- Noise canceling headphones
- Allow employee to use "fridgets" to provide sensory input
- Divide larger projects into smaller tasks and provide a checklist



WHAT NOW?

What are two practices you can implement to your hiring or management style this summer that will be more inclusive of neurodiverse individuals?



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