



Unit 1: Strengths / Advantages of people with ASD

People with autism as potential employees have both their undoubted advantages and easy-to-define disadvantages. At the same time, their specific competencies can bring a lot of benefits to employers, while noticeable behavioural rigidities or motivational deficits will pose challenges that can nevertheless be overcome without exerting excessive efforts.

The nature of the work that autistic people are capable of undertaking depends largely on their individual abilities and interests. However, it is possible to distinguish certain common - very positive - characteristics in them. These include, in particular, **great attention to detail and meticulousness in action and following rules**. These traits, which are useful in activities that require accuracy and meticulousness, concentration and patience, or memory for facts and figures, predispose people with a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome to work in at least some areas. They can excel in data entry (from spreadsheets to more complex databases), word processing (including catching small, hard-to-see errors), cataloging or filing. Autistic people excel at routine and repetitive activities for long periods of time, which are a heavy burden for people who get tired of routine, such as copying, scanning, sorting, distributing information. They also **enjoy activities involving numbers and statistics and compiling facts as part of analytical work**. People with an Asperger's syndrome diagnosis can therefore try their hand at office work, more or less complex IT work (from database building to programming), accounting and finance activities, and even complex analytical work. A potential employer should, of course, keep in mind the individual characteristics (different nature of traits and different competencies) of autistic people, and to entrust them with activities with clear procedures for handling and a well-defined structure. It must be clear to an employee on the autism spectrum which of his activities will be defined as correct



and which not. It is also worth remembering that people with a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome perform less well in tasks that require quick decision-making decisions, multitasking and high interpersonal skills.

The common traits listed above, as well as possible individual competencies and preferences should give potential employers an idea of the specifics of work and the possibility of using a person autistic person on the labor market. The image, the final shape of which is conditioned is also conditioned by factors outside the labor market, but should be enriched by a description of the financial and image benefits that employers are usually unable to achieve from employment of autistic people, employers are usually unaware of.

STRENGTHS OF PEOPLE WITH ASD

Autistic people may display a range of strengths and abilities that can be directly related to their diagnosis, including:

- Learning to read at a very early age (known as hyperlexia).
- Memorising and learning information quickly.
- Thinking and learning in a visual way.
- Logical thinking ability.
- May excel (if able) in academic areas such as science, engineering and mathematics as they are technical and logical subjects that do not heavily rely on social interaction.
- Having an extraordinarily good memory (being able to remember facts for a long period of time).



- Being precise and detail orientated.
- Exceptional honesty and reliability.
- Being dependable in regards to schedules and routines.
- Having an excellent sense of direction.
- Be very punctual.
- Strong adherence to rules.
- Able to concentrate for long periods of time when motivated.
- A drive for perfection and order.
- A capability for alternate problem solving.
- A rare freshness and sense of wonderment.

CHALLENGES OF AUTISM AT WORKPLACE

People with autism sometimes face some difficulties in the workplace, below is a list of those that without proper support from the employer can make it difficult for a person with ASD to work:

- Hard time motivating
- Difficulty of focusing on something other than interest
- Following unwritten social rules; these rules can be learned through instructions
- Getting the big picture



- Unbalanced set of skills
- Difficulty with generalization concepts
- Having trouble expressing feelings in a way that other people would understand or expect
- Trouble with functioning, hence difficulties in planning long-term activities
- Perceiving emotions of other people
- Having trouble with summarizing information to include in speech
- Deficits in social interactions: This can include discomfort with eye contact, lack of reciprocal conversation, and difficulty with non-verbal communication such as understanding body language and social cues. They may also have a harder time making friends due to these challenges.
- Dislike of change: Those with HFA like predictability and routine and tend to develop repetitive habits. Consequently, they can become very upset when unexpected change happens, or something interferes with their preferred set pattern of behavior.
- Restricted areas of interest: They tend to be very focused—even fixated—on specific ideas or subjects. While the narrowness of their interests can be limiting, their ability to focus on a particular topic can be extraordinary.
- Sensory sensitivities: It's not unusual for people with any form of ASD to be sensitive to sensory input. They may find certain smells, noises, tastes, light, and touch to be overwhelming or uncomfortable. When exposed to them, it can be very stressful and upsetting.



EMPLOYMENT DILEMMA FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ASD

Obstacles: verbal and nonverbal communication, social relationships, social behaviours, special interests, heightened or subdued response to sensory stimulation

Assets: accuracy in visual perception, concentration, long term memory, special interests, tolerance for repetitive activities

Employing people with autism: untapped talent - People with autism have a great deal to offer the world of business and may have unique skills and abilities that will help an organization thrive. As well as their individual strengths and talents, candidates with autism may demonstrate above-average skills in some or all of the following area:

- Peer relationships characterized by absolute loyalty and impeccable dependability
- Bias free and able to take others at face value
- Determined to seek the truth
- Hold conversations free of hidden meaning or agenda
- Advanced vocabulary and interest in words
- Fascination with word based humor, such as puns
- Original perspective on problem solving
- Exceptional memory and recollection of details
- Encyclopaedic knowledge of one or more topics
- Knowledge of routines and a focused desire to maintain order and accuracy
- Clarity of values and decision making
- Listening without continual judgement or assumption
- Enthusiasm for unique interests and topics
- Increased probability over general population of attending university after high school
- Often caring and helpful to people outside the range of typical development



- Full of trusting optimism and the belief in genuine friendship

JOBS SUITABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

Great jobs for people with autism

1. Computer programmer

Great solution for visual thinker with a curiosity about coding. Computer programmers can work as freelancers or as part of a larger company.

2. Equipment engineer

Equipment engineers help create, monitor and improve equipment for a wide range of industries. This is a great career opportunity for visual thinkers who are good at problem solving and decision making.

3. Laboratory technician

Lab technicians run tests and record data accurately. If person with ASD pays attention to details and is good with scientific thinking, this might be a fulfilling role for he/she.

4. Mechanic

Mechanics build and repair different types of machinery such as cars, air conditioning or bicycles. If person with ASD is good at problem solving and likes to have a clear end point for your work, a job as a mechanic might interest him.



5. Factory assembly

If the person with ASD thrives with repetition and clearly defined tasks she/he might be a great factory worker. In this role he/she could do tasks such as assembling parts, sorting and packing products and operating machinery.

6. Taxi driver

If person with ASD is great at memorising things and have a good sense of space, taxi driving might be a rewarding job for him. Taxi drivers who have excellent knowledge of the local area can choose the most efficient way to bring people to their destination.

7. Appliance repairer

Appliance repairers help fix and install appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines and ovens. Person with ASD might enjoy this role if she/he likes tasks with a clear end point and are good at problem solving.

8. Statistician or data scientist

Statisticians look closely at data and apply mathematical techniques to help solve real-world problems. Person with ASD might find this a fulfilling career choice if she/he is good with numbers and can work methodically.

9. Shelf stocker

Stocking shelves in a department store or grocery store could be a good job if person with ASD works best with repetitive tasks. He/she be able to lift and carry boxes as well as organise products on the shelf.

10. Researcher



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OPPORTUNITIES 4
AUTISM

If person with ASD has a special passion or interest, he/she could turn that into a career as a researcher. Researchers work in all sorts of fields from mathematics to literature, physics and history. Their job involves collecting and analysing data, information and facts.



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