Neurodiversity@IBM

The Next Chapter in IBM's Diversity Story

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Global Neurodiversity Advancement Leader
Inventory Transformation Lead, IBM Systems
At IBM, For over 100 years, we have embraced diversity.

Diversity of race, of ethnicity, of gender, of ability...
At IBM, For over 100 years, we have embraced diversity.

...of sexual orientation and identity, genetics, and many other factors.
How else can we improve diversity?
What about diversity of the mind?
What is Neurodiversity (ND)?

A concept where neurological differences are to be accepted and respected as any other human variation.

Includes:
• Autism
• Attention Deficit Hyperactivity
• Dyslexia
• and beyond...

It is not something to be cured or masked.

It is part of IBM’s Be Equal Campaign.
Think of a bird

Where and how it lives
# Neurodivergent Friendly Language/Icons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empowering</th>
<th>Microaggressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity First: Person is.. Or is a..</td>
<td>Person First: Person with... has... on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognized</td>
<td>Diagnosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High/Low Support Needs</td>
<td>High/Low Functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance, Pride</td>
<td>Awareness (though need to start here!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>Disorder/Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Needs</td>
<td>Special Needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These are defaults, always ask what the individual prefers
Why hire neurodivergent people?
Neurodiversity is at the HEART of IBM

Herman Hollerith
Neurodivergent, Cognitive Processing Disability
1879 – Engineering Degree at age 19, Columbia University
1886 – Inventor of the Punched Card Tabulator
1890 – Used as part of US Census, saves $5M
1890 – Attains PhD from Columbia University
1896 – Founded Tabulating Machine Company
1911 – Merged with CTR that evolved into IBM
Strengths of a Neurodivergent Workforce

Original thinking
Attention to detail
Pattern recognition
Deep interest and skills
Passionate, honest, fair
Creative problem solving
Intense focus and persistence

Note: This is not a full list nor representative of all neurodivergents
Outcomes of a Neurodivergent Workforce

Innovation
Loyal employees
Increased value
Improved managers
Corporate reputation
Employee morale and pride
ND hires achieve independence

Note: This is not a full list nor representative of all neurodivergents
Neurodivergent Challenges

Different communication styles
- May be perceived as rude
- Too honest, Too literal, Prolix, Interrupt, Eye Contact

Social Interactions
- Misunderstandings and lack of radical candor

Sensory sensitivities
- Discomfort / pain to environmental stimuli

Recruiting & Interview Bias
- Acceptance Training is paramount

Note: This is not a full list nor representative of all neurodivergents
Neurodiversity@IBM Goals

• Ensure representation from the Neurodivergent Community
• Drive global ND initiatives across all business units
  • Hiring, Retention, Enablement, Celebration
• Fill Skills Gaps in all roles and bands
• Integrate ND friendly practices into standard processes
  • ND Friendly = Human Friendly
• Increase Brand Reputation, Market Presence
Neurodiversity@IBM

“Nothing About Us, Without Us.”

New Collar Jobs

Objective
To establish a global Neurodiversity Program that includes neurodivergent friendly hiring, development opportunities and ND training for all employees.

Vision
Incorporate neurodivergent friendly hiring strategies into the mainstream so that it becomes the way everyone is hired, not just ND-specific talent.

ND@IBM BRG’s

Neurodiversity Communities
#neurodiversity-at-ibm
#nd-families-and-caregivers

Neurodivergent Task Forces (Safe Space)
#actually-autistic
#actually-neurodivergent

ND@IBM Education
Formal Your Learning Bundle
ND Speaker Series
ND Presentation Squad - Lunch and Learns
W3 ND Publisher Pages
IBM was not the first company to start a neurodivergent program, but we are doing things differently.

- **We are Global!**
  Neurodivergent enablement and hiring around the world

- **We are led by neurodivergents!**
  “Nothing about us, Without us.”

- **Providing a safe space for neurodivergent employees!**
  #Actually-autistic & #Actually-neurodivergent
11 Countries hiring

Argentina, Japan
Australia, Mexico
Brazil, Philippines
Canada, UK
India, United States
Ireland

>8700 in 64 Countries
Completed ND101 training

5 ND-Out Executives

150M reach
Forbes

"IBM Explains what works in Neurodiversity" by Dr Nancy Doyle with Nat Lyckowski, IBM
What are companies doing to help?

Neurodiversity @ Work Employer Roundtable

We are a collection of innovative leaders who spearhead neurodiversity-focused hiring initiatives. As a collection of cross industry employers, we lead field-specific recruitment efforts. The results have been significant for our culture development and for neurodivergent individuals.

https://disabilityin.org/what-we-do/committees/neurodiversity-at-work-roundtable/
How to help neurodivergents succeed in workplace?

**Sensory Experience**
- Choice of Office Location
- Dedicated Quiet Spaces
- Work from Home
- Active NC Headphones
- Flexible Schedule
- Include in Social Distancing Redesign

**Communication Styles**
- Social Contracting
- Open Dialogue
- Clear Expectations
- Expect Honesty
- Written/Verbal/Visual learning styles
- Burnout/Fatigue Strategies
- Stimming/Brain Buffering

**Support**
- Culture Change
- ND Safe Spaces
- Mentor/Coaching
- Friendly HR Practices
  - Recruiting & Interview
  - Career Development
  - Retention
Thought Experiment

Windows

Mac
Neurodivergents run on a different operating system
Thank You!

Be Equal
Neurodiversity