



## "Tapping The Hidden Talent Pool"

### **Prioritising Work**

Planning efficiently depends on the ability to set priorities for investing time and effort. The demands of the workplace are constantly shifting, so employees need to be able to prioritise what is important and complete that work first as a result. No doubt you have heard of the "80/20 Rule": 20% of your activities will account for 80% of your success. Determining which will account for 80% of your success. Determining which tasks fall into the "20%" category involves stepping back and seeing the work that you need to do within the context of your department's goals, as well as the time and resources available.

However, some Neurodivergent individuals will typically focus on details at the expense of the bigger picture. As a consequence, some Neurodivergent employees might be good at analysing a project and laying out the details of what needs to be done but have difficulty pinpointing those steps that are the most critical, because they view each one being of equal importance. They may also not recognise that the order in which they complete these elements may have an impact on other parts of the project, which might affect the work carried out by other colleagues. On the other hand, an employee might set the proper priorities, but fail to follow up on the less important items or have difficulty maintaining attention to the more mundane aspects of the project. When given a list of tasks to complete, an employee may not be aware of their relative importance, and instead work through the list in sequence.

Explaining to a Neurodivergent employee why a task or procedure is important will help them learn to prioritise and stay on track. However, some Neurodivergent individuals can adhere to rules rigidly, and may resist adjusting because a priority has changed. They may be confused when asked to do a less important task first to get it out of the way, when there is not enough time to tackle one with a higher priority.

## Our Advice

- Explain why a task or process is important to help the employee learn to prioritise and stay on track.
- Provide the Neurodivergent employee with a series of “mini-decisions” to determine if one thing is more important than another.
- If people assigning tasks are at different levels within the organisation, the manager should determine whose request the employee will satisfy first.
- Check in with the employee for a few minutes at the beginning of each day to prioritise their schedule, carve out time for a last-minute task, or timetable a project that spans multiple days.
- When assigning a task, always check for understanding. Rather than just asking the employee what they are going to do first, ask what is more important, what information they may need, and in what order they are going to proceed.