



Autism Succession Plan Template

As an organisation if you are at this stage of your journey the chances are that you have a sustainable, successful autism at work programme that has lasted for a significant period of time. No doubt over the development of your autism at work programme there have been significant hurdles and challenges to overcome. An autism at work programme will differ significantly from organisation to organisation and no two programmes in this space will be the same. As an organisation the chances are that when identifying where to acquire autistic talent from, you will have looked at multiple routes to market to acquire autistic talent for your programme. Perhaps this talent came from universities, maybe it was graduates who had been previously unsuccessful on industrial programmes where the support for autistic talent had been lacking, perhaps the autistic talent came from apprenticeship schemes, the long-term unemployed or from other organisations etc.

With a successful autism at work programme the chances are that your organisation has avoided hiring autistic talent on fixed term contracts. Fixed term contracts for autistic talent creates the risk of unemployment at the end of the contract of employment with your organisation and are not seen as a good test of whether your organisation can support, sustain, and develop autistic talent in the workplace. Furthermore, fixed term contracts can create a sense of stress, uncertainty, and anxiety for an autistic person, particularly if there is no guarantee of employment at the end of the contract and they have been unemployed before.

Typically, a successful autism at work programme will have increased resources and costs for each year of the programme. Furthermore, each year of the programme will have larger cohorts of

autistic talent hired into the organisation as more and more suitable roles are filled by talented autistic people from outside your organisation. The chances are that after 3-5 years your programme will have grown successfully for your organisation to start thinking about succession planning for the autistic talent you have within your organisation. Perhaps you have hard to fill roles that you know autistic talent within the autism at work programme can fill. Perhaps, you have identified future leaders within your organisation from your autism at work programme who can progress to higher roles within the business. As an organisation once you have a successful 3–5-year programme that is growing and developing year on year. The next stage is to identify autistic talent that can progress to senior and technical level roles within your organisation. See the below table:

Succession Planning Requirements	What do we need to create?
<p>With successful succession planning for autistic talent in your organisation it is important to consider the following:</p> <p>What position is being filled? Is this a role with long term career development opportunities for the autistic individual. Is there a logical route to further progression for them if they are given this initial role? What skills are needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have autistic talent within our organisation that already meet the criteria required? • If, not do we need to look outside of our organisation to fill these role(s) • What are our route to markets to attract autistic talent externally into higher roles within our organisation? • Do the teams involved in the need for autistic talent in their function have the right level of training and knowledge to support and develop autistic talent? • As an organisation have we had autism beliefs, values and attitudes training to better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an organisation have you got a successful, sustainable autism at work programme? This programme should have demonstrable year on year growth. It should have been in existence for at least three years to grow, embed and develop within your organisation. • Ensure that your retention rates of autistic talent are consistently high for each cohort year. • Have all HR/Recruitment teams had detailed and specialist training on supporting autistic talent on your autism at work programme? • Has your organisation got an executive sponsor that works with the organisation and the programme to justify the commercial viability and business case for the programme year on year? • Are you constantly identifying and expanding the list of roles that autistic talent can fill as part of your autism at work programme? Note that not all

<p>understand how we can become autism confident?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we got a continuous autism talent pipeline strategy for promoting and developing autistic talent throughout the organisation? • If so what does this look like? <p>Do we have a job description?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember with succession planning that the same principles apply that would for when you launched your autism at work programme. • Avoid jargon and generic terms which might confuse or dissuade autistic employees from applying. • Ensure that there are clear parameters and a structure in place for what the expectation of the role looks like. • Do they have a workplace buddy to help manage the change for them? • Has their personal development plan being updated? • Have they had the opportunity to manage neurotypical people as well as those with autism? This is important to see how well they integrate with neurotypical employees in their organisation and how successful they are at managing them. • Is there a realistic timeframe for them to grow and develop into the role? Factoring in possible slower processing speeds for those with autism. • Is the role remote based or office based? Be clear on what the level of direct engagement is. Sudden change can be hard to process for a person with autism so it is important to 	<p>autistic people are good at STEM subject so avoid making this generalisation when expanding your programme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all leaders working on your autism at work programme got a personal development plan to review their performance with delivering a successful year on year programme of growth? • Are you actively identifying autistic talent on your programme who can be promoted to other roles within your organisation as part of your autism talent pipeline strategy? • Are you utilising the same route to market strategies for your autism at work programme for succession planning of autistic talent in your organisation? • Are you ensuring that any roles created for autistic talent to progress, have a logical route for progression? • Avoid creating fixed term contracts or OTE contracts of employment which increase the risk of unemployment or reduced retention rates for autistic talent on your programme. • Constantly review and update reasonable adjustments for autistic employees during the entire, tenure of their employment with your organisation. • Constantly review and update personal development plans for autistic employees as they progress through your organisation. • Ensure that your HR/Recruitment teams keep up to date with current employment trends in the autism space.
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<p>factor this in when defining the parameters of the role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that promotion is not a fixed term contract as this may cause anxiety or stress for an autistic person. Remember that autistic people thrive of structure, routine, and certainty. • How are they seen by their peers in the organisation? Has their diagnosis of autism being shared with the wider team/organisation? If so could there be any issues/challenges with line managing other employees? • Have they worked within a matrix structure? If so where there any challenges or difficulties that had to be overcome? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all employees in your organisation have quarterly/yearly autism training. • If there is a matrix structure in your organisation, be clear on the social rules and expectations for autistic talent in your organisation. • Regularly acquire feedback from neurotypical employees in your organisation on how they feel working with autistic employees and what as an organisation you need to do differently to become more autism confident. • Utilise your autism ERG to work closely with allies in the organisation and key central services functions to ensure that autistic employees have access to support and guidance during their employment with your organisation. • Ensure that you have dedicated autism buddies in the organisation who can support and guide autistic talent during the course of their employment with your organisation. • How well do autistic employees work with neurotypical employees in your organisation? Have there been any issues or challenges? • Do autistic leaders in your organisation, have the respect and trust of their neurotypical peers to lead teams in your organisation? Have their been any issues or challenges?
<p>Planning for future succession needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational expertise – What level of knowledge and skills do we currently have for this role or business function? • Is it a role where only a limited proportion of our 	

<p>autistic community are suited for? Factor in that just because multiple autistic candidates have applied for this role, it does not mean that they are the right candidate for this role. Remember, that succession planning is still about recruitment and the process should always be based on skills, knowledge, and right fit for the team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we ensuring that as an organisation that our interviews, interview assessments and pre-interview assessments are all autism friendly and allowing autistic applicants to perform to the best of their abilities? • As an organisation are we committed to becoming an autism confident employer? • It is no good wanting to hire autistic talent into your organisation purely to tick a corporate social responsibility box or to look good in front of shareholders and key stakeholders within your organisation. • Hiring autistic talent for an organisation is a long term, sustained commitment to recognising neurodiverse talent, and giving them the opportunities to succeed in an organisation which recognises their talent. Succession planning for a good organisation in the autism space should be a natural progression and extension of the organisation's current autism at work programme. • As an organisation are you committed to a "top-down approach" whereby all employees within your organisation undergo 	
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<p>quarterly/yearly autism in the workplace training?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you listening to the needs of your current autistic employees and factoring in their suggestions and recommendations for improving your autism at work programme? If you are doing this then the chances are that succession planning in your organisation for autistic talent is more likely to be successful. 	
<p>Recruitment Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the launch of your autism at work programme has the programme had year on year cohort growth. • What is the retention rate of autistic talent from each year's cohort? • What are autistic employees on the scheme saying about your autism at work programme. Are you utilising interim and full year satisfaction surveys to best understand how autistic employees feel about working for your organisation? • Are you making changes and recommendations as part of that process to improve your autism at work programme? • Are you making full use of exit interviews with autistic employees who have left the organisation to take onboard their feedback and recommendations to improve the programme? • Is there a clear strategy for hard to fill roles where you have identified autistic talent to fill these roles? • How long is the average autistic employee working for your organisation? Look at the data, ask the questions and amend and review your 	

<p>processes in line with recommendations and feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a logical route to career progression for autistic talent in your organisation? Organisations will often develop their autism at work programmes around university graduates so many of the roles offered for their programme will often be base level roles. Although this is good in the short term, longer term you want to be progressing your autistic talent into mid and higher-level roles in your organisation.• What are the blockers or challenges to autistic talent developing a career in your organisation? Perhaps this could be a lack of training, lack of available roles, other more qualified employees in the organisation. Organisational cost-cutting, acquisitions, and mergers etc. As an organisation you do not want to lose autistic talent to other organisations. If a good succession plan and autism talent pipeline doesn't exist you may find a brain drain of autistic talent from your organisation arises.	
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