



Succession planning for Neurodivergent Employees in the workplace.

As an organisation if you are at this stage of your journey to becoming Neurodiversity Confident the chances are that you have a sustainable, successful framework in place for supporting Neurodivergent talent in your organisation. No doubt your journey to becoming Neurodiversity Confident has been full of challenges and pitfalls to overcome. Supporting Neurodivergent talent in the workplace will differ from organisation to organisation and there is no one set of guiding principles which will work in all organisations and different organisations will have different approaches to supporting Neurodivergent talent in their workplaces. As an organisation the chances are that when identifying where to acquire Neurodivergent talent from, you will have looked at multiple routes to market to acquire Neurodivergent talent into your organisation. Perhaps this talent came from universities, maybe it was graduates who had been previously unsuccessful on industrial programmes where the support for Neurodivergent talent had been lacking, perhaps the Neurodivergent talent came from apprenticeship schemes, the long-term unemployed or from other organisations etc.

With a successful Neurodivergent at work programme the chances are that your organisation has avoided hiring Neurodivergent talent on fixed term contracts. Fixed term contracts for Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent talent in the workplace. Furthermore, fixed term contracts can create a sense of stress, uncertainty, and anxiety for an Neurodivergent person, particularly if there is no guarantee of employment at the end of the contract and they have been unemployed before.

Typically, successful Neuroinclusive organisations will ensure that they have budgets and resources to hire more Neurodivergent talent into their workplaces on a year-on-year basis. As your organisation puts in the correct processes, policies and frameworks to attract Neurodivergent talent into your workplace. This is where succession planning ultimately becomes key as organisations must look at how they grow, sustain, and develop Neurodivergent talent in their workplaces.

Perhaps you have hard to fill roles that you know Neurodivergent talent within the Neurodivergent at work programme can fill. Perhaps, you have identified future leaders within your organisation who can progress to higher roles within the business. As an organisation once you have a successful 3–5-year programme of recruiting and supporting Neurodivergent talent in your organisation. The next stage is to identify Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent talent externally into higher roles within our organisation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an organisation have you got a successful, sustainable Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent talent are consistently high for each cohort year. • Have all HR/Recruitment teams had detailed and specialist training on supporting Neurodivergent talent on your Neurodivergent at work programme? • Has your organisation got an executive sponsor that works with the organisation and the programme to justify the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the teams involved in the need for Neurodivergent talent in their function have the right level of training and knowledge to support and develop Neurodivergent talent? • As an organisation have we had Neurodivergent beliefs, values and attitudes training to better understand how we can become Neurodivergent confident? • Have we got a continuous Neurodivergent talent pipeline strategy for promoting and developing Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent at work programme. • Avoid jargon and generic terms which might confuse or dissuade Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent? This is important to see how well they integrate with neurotypical employees in their organisation and how 	<p>commercial viability and business case for the programme year on year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you constantly identifying and expanding the list of roles that Neurodivergent talent can fill as part of your Neurodivergent at work programme? Note that not all Neurodivergent people are good at STEM subject so avoid making this generalisation when expanding your programme? • Have all leaders working on your Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent talent on your programme who can be promoted to other roles within your organisation as part of your Neurodivergent talent pipeline strategy? • Are you utilising the same route to market strategies for your Neurodivergent at work programme for succession planning of Neurodivergent talent in your organisation? • Are you ensuring that any roles created for Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent talent on your programme. • Constantly review and update reasonable adjustments for Neurodivergent employees during the entire, tenure of
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<p>successful they are at managing them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a realistic timeframe for them to grow and develop into the role? Factoring in possible slower processing speeds for those with Neurodivergent. • 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 Neurodivergent so it is important to factor this in when defining the parameters of the role. • Ensure that promotion is not a fixed term contract as this may cause anxiety or stress for an Neurodivergent person. Remember that Neurodivergent people thrive of structure, routine, and certainty. • How are they seen by their peers in the organisation? Has their diagnosis of Neurodivergent 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? 	<p>their employment with your organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly review and update personal development plans for Neurodivergent employees as they progress through your organisation. • Ensure that your HR/Recruitment teams keep up to date with current employment trends in the Neurodivergent space. • Ensure that all employees in your organisation have quarterly/yearly Neurodivergent training. • If there is a matrix structure in your organisation, be clear on the social rules and expectations for Neurodivergent talent in your organisation. • Regularly acquire feedback from neurotypical employees in your organisation on how they feel working with Neurodivergent employees and what as an organisation you need to do differently to become more Neurodivergent confident. • Utilise your Neurodivergent ERG to work closely with allies in the organisation and key central services functions to ensure that Neurodivergent employees have access to support and guidance during their employment with your organisation. • Ensure that you have dedicated Neurodivergent buddies in the organisation who can support and guide Neurodivergent talent during the course of their employment with your organisation. • How well do Neurodivergent employees work with neurotypical employees in
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	<p>your organisation? Have there been any issues or challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Neurodivergent leaders in your organisation, have the respect and trust of their neurotypical peers to lead teams in your organisation? Have there 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 Neurodivergent community are suited for? Factor in that just because multiple Neurodivergent 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. • Are we ensuring that as an organisation that our interviews, interview assessments and pre-interview assessments are all Neurodivergent friendly and allowing Neurodivergent applicants to perform to the best of their abilities? • As an organisation are we committed to becoming a Neurodivergent confident employer? • It is no good wanting to hire Neurodivergent 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we attract Neurodivergent talent to specific specialist roles in our organisation? • How can we ensure that we are not just recruiting those from conventional academic and professional backgrounds? • Ensure that at all hiring levels within the organisation. That the end-end employee lifecycle process is fully inclusive. • Why do we want to hire Neurodivergent talent in senior roles within our organisation? • Create Neurodiversity Employee Resource Groups and Networks. • Create Neurodiversity Listening Forum so that the views of Neurodivergent employees are considered to make the necessary changes. • Have we got a plan in place to ensure that all employees across the organisation receive yearly Neurodiversity Confident Training?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent space should be a natural progression and extension of the organisation’s current Neurodivergent at work programme. • As an organisation are you committed to a “top-down approach” whereby all employees within your organisation undergo quarterly/yearly Neurodivergent in the workplace training? • Are you listening to the needs of your current Neurodivergent employees and factoring in their suggestions and recommendations for improving your Neurodivergent at work programme? If you are doing this then the chances are that succession planning in your organisation for Neurodivergent talent is more likely to be successful. 	
<p>Recruitment Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the launch of your Neurodivergent at work programme has the programme had year on year cohort growth. • What are Neurodivergent employees on the scheme saying about your Neurodivergent at work programme. Are you utilising interim and full year satisfaction surveys to best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we utilising all possible talent pipelines to recruit Neurodivergent talent into our organisation? • Is the ATS process accessible and jargon free for all Neurodivergent applicants seeking employment in our organisation? • What do current Neurodivergent employees think of our recruitment processes?

<p>understand how Neurodivergent employees feel about working for your organisation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you making changes and recommendations as part of that process to improve your Neurodivergent at work programme? • Are you making full use of exit interviews with Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent talent to fill these roles? • How long is the average Neurodivergent employee working for your organisation? Look at the data, ask the questions and amend and review your processes in line with recommendations and feedback. • Is there a logical route to career progression for Neurodivergent talent in your organisation? Organisations will often develop their Neurodivergent 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 Neurodivergent talent into mid and higher-level roles in your organisation. • What are the blockers or challenges to Neurodivergent talent developing a career in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What processes do we need to put in place to “stress test” and remove blockers for Neurodivergent talent seeking employment in our organisation? • Do all line managers and HR/Recruitment teams have a good working knowledge of Neurodiversity to be able to support Neurodivergent employees through the onboarding process? • Are we canvassing the thoughts of Neurodivergent employees in the business on what we must do differently to ensure that our recruitment processes are Neuroinclusive?
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<p>your organisation? Perhaps this could be a lack of training, lack of available roles, other more qualified employees in the organisation.</p> <p>Organisational cost-cutting, acquisitions, and mergers etc.</p> <p>As an organisation you do not want to lose Neurodivergent talent to other organisations.</p> <p>If a good succession plan and Neurodivergent talent pipeline doesn't exist you may find a brain drain of Neurodivergent talent from your organisation arises.</p>	
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