



DIVERSITY PROJECT

WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

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It is well documented that a diverse workforce is crucial to driving business growth and innovative thinking.

But so far, most corporate diversity efforts have missed a rapidly emerging area with huge potential to increase diversity of thought and reduce groupthink: Neurological diversity or 'neurodiversity'.

The term neurodiversity describes a concept where differences in neurological make-up, or brain-wiring, are considered and respected as a natural variation in humans. It includes people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ADHD, dyslexia, and others. The different neurological set-up results in many special qualities that accompany the very real challenges.

Neurodiversity provides access to a new set of skills and perspectives and often comes with very distinct talents, ranging from creative thinking to process structuring. When we understand and value this potential, we can access a world of opportunities.

In his book 'Neurodiversity' Dr Thomas Armstrong writes "Instead of pretending that there is hidden away somewhere a perfectly 'normal' brain to which all other brains must be compared, we need to admit that there is no such brain, just as there is no standard flower, or standard cultural or racial group, and that, in fact, diversity among brains is just as wonderfully enriching as biodiversity and the diversity among cultures and races."

Business benefits

Neurodiversity has only recently been recognised as another aspect of overall diversity. Therefore, there still seems to be a lack of awareness of neurodiversity in society as a whole, and as a result, in many workplaces. This does not exclude the investment industry. Most of our hiring processes, management practices and workplace procedures have been created for neurotypical brains, without taking the neurodivergent into account.

However, more recently, firms have started to recognise the importance of neurodiversity in the workplace. Teams that include neurotypical and neurodivergent thinkers maximise diversity of thought and reduce groupthink by taking into account different thinking styles, viewpoints and perspectives. This unique potential can make neurodiversity one of the most powerful contributors to overall workplace diversity.

Neurodivergent employees can enhance overall performance by:

- Introducing unique skills
- Questioning existing processes and structures, and hence improve efficiency and risk management
- Increasing innovation, productivity, creativity

In addition, an increased focus on neurodiversity enriches the wider company culture, helps break up existing assumptions and beliefs within teams, and improves communication throughout the firm. These aspects are to the benefit of all employees, and can therefore make an important contribution to a firm's business performance and growth potential.

Source: neurodiversitynow.com

