

Could Neurodiversity supercharge your productivity?

Neurodivergent individuals have traditionally been seen as strange, socially awkward or having little or no empathy, Yemi Askisanya explains the positive effects that neurodivergent employees can have in helping to build better teams.

Somewhat misconstrued, the concept of neurodiversity perpetuates a misunderstanding of it being a disability, which is often misinterpreted as a difficulty or inability to perform in a corporate setting.

Individuals with neurodivergent traits may meet a diagnostic threshold for conditions such as autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and ADHD to list a few. These have been seen as developmental disorders that need to be managed, and even cured, for a very long time.

In fact, neurodiversity is a competitive advantage. By harnessing the strengths of neurodivergent employees, such as problem solving to creative insights and visual special thinking, we can put the pieces together to be more efficient and drive productivity.

The starting point is the recruitment process. It is thought that about ten per cent of the population is neurodivergent, so, passing over on what is easily a very large pool, is missing out on untapped potential. Neurodivergent individuals bring unique qualities to a role such as determination to solve problems, attention to detail, pattern recognition and are able to create thinking to help develop new solutions and problem solving techniques.

As a manager, harnessing these strengths enables you to put big ideas into action which, ultimately, will have a positive impact on your staff's daily experience. This is even truer when talking about utilising talent through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Encourage your managers to find an effective I&D toolkit online that they can use to help them educate, support and navigate the complex and sometimes intimidating area of diversity.

'We cannot allow the natural fear of getting it wrong hold us back in pushing for more equitable and diverse teams.'

