

MANAGING

A

MISSION

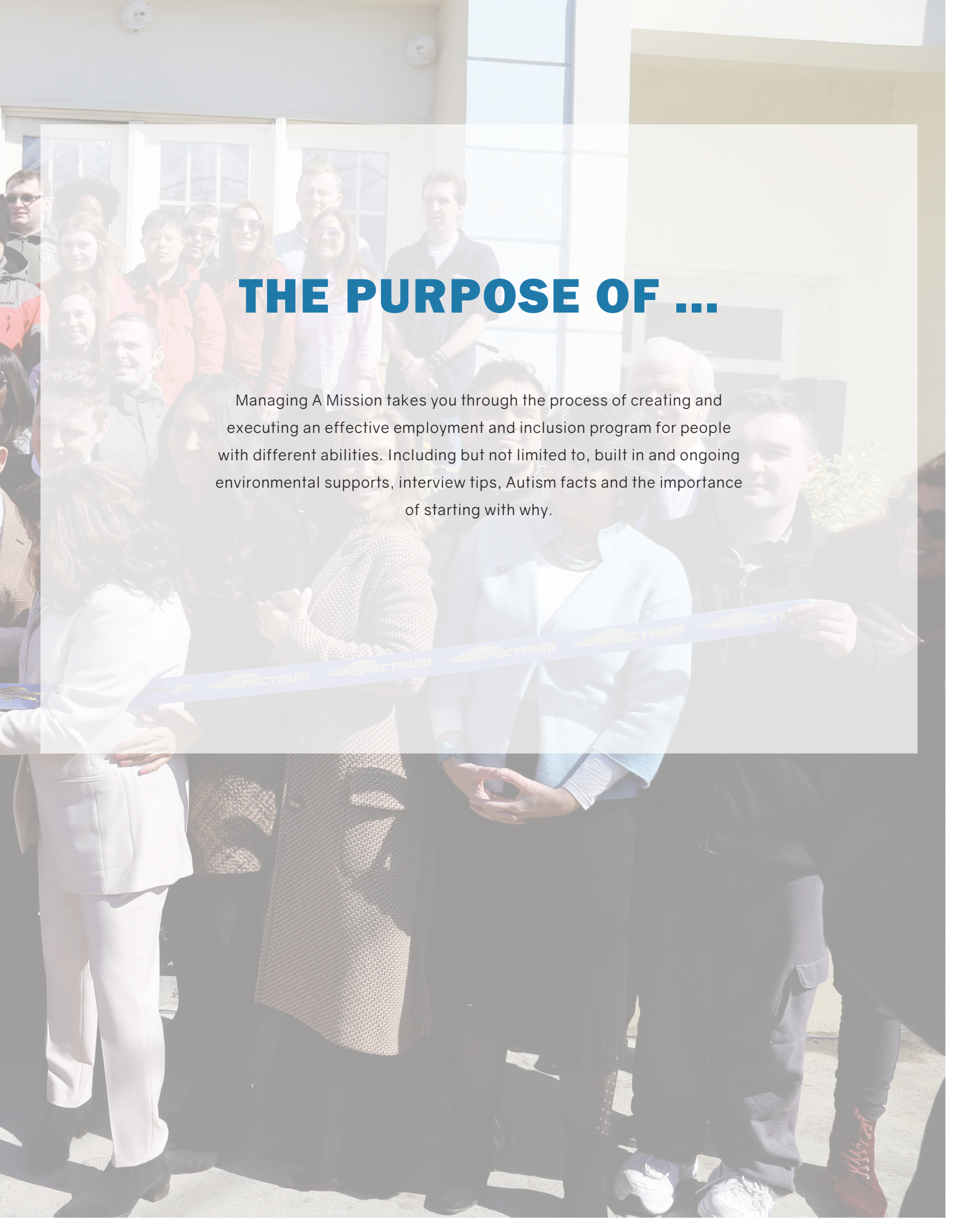


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THE PURPOSE OF ...

Managing A Mission takes you through the process of creating and executing an effective employment and inclusion program for people with different abilities. Including but not limited to, built in and ongoing environmental supports, interview tips, Autism facts and the importance of starting with why.



STARTING WITH WHY

WHY

- Over the next decade, an estimated 500,000 teens with Autism will enter adulthood and age out of school based services.*
- More than 50% of young adults with Autism remain unemployed or un-enrolled in higher education in the 2 years after high school.**
- The 3rd largest market segment in the USA is people with disabilities.
- Characteristically focused, reliable, dedicated and honest with a preference for work over all.
- A tolerance of repetition and routine unlike non-disabled peers.
- Traditionally, a high retention rate with over 90% at Spectrum Designs Foundation (SDF).
- Low turnover rate - 5% at SDF versus national average of approximately 45%.
- Social and economic boost.
- Diversity and inclusion benefits a community as does increasing the number of tax payers who support the local economy with their purchases.

WHAT

Spectrum Designs Foundation ("SDF" or "Spectrum Designs") is a group of social enterprises with the mission of providing authentic employment and vocational opportunities to young adults on the Autism Spectrum. Spectrum Designs, Spectrum Bakes and Spectrum Suds are businesses in industries that were selected due to their unique characteristics of requiring multi-step processes, repetitious and concrete in nature however, varied and creative to prevent monotony.

- Spectrum Designs is a custom apparel and promotional products business.
- Spectrum Bakes is a gourmet, all natural baked goods company.
- Spectrum Suds is a boutique, customer focused laundry facility.

HOW

For social enterprises to succeed in the modern day, it must place equal emphasis on the enterprise side of the balance. For if there is no enterprise, its social impact is limited or worse, non-existent. As such, SDF enterprises have as firm a commitment to market pricing, customer service and quality of output as it does to social impact. SDF enterprises firmly believe in the power of neurodiversity and the commitment of creating opportunities for those with moderate to higher support needs as well as those without. To fulfill this mission, it engages with a single partner, human service agency, The Nicholas Center (TNC) who provide the necessary supports. TNC is a non-profit organization with the mission of supporting individuals on the Autism Spectrum in leading full and productive lives within the community. Fulfilling community experiences are offered in tandem with employment support and vocational training opportunities. These opportunities to gain valuable skills and experiences make for a happier, healthier and more productive employee.

AUTISM: THE FACTS

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior*

1 IN 54

Prevalence: 1 in 37 individuals are born with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

57 MILLION

People with disabilities are the third largest market segment in the United States with the population size of 57 Million**

50-75%

70-90% are un- or underemployed****

500,000

500,000 will become working age adults in the next decade**

\$2,000,000

Societal cost for each unemployed individual estimated at \$2,000,000 over their lifetime****

ALL GROUPS

Autism affects all ethnic and socioeconomic groups**

EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention affords the best opportunity to support healthy development**


GENETICS

Research indicates that genetics are involved in the vast majority of cases**

1 IN 5

Developmental regression, or loss of skills, such as language and social interests, affects around 1 in 5 children who will go on to be diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum and typically occurs between ages 1 and 3**

(National Institute of Mental Health)*, (Autism Speaks)**, (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC)***, (Office of Disability Employment Policy)****, (United Nations) *****

A man with dark, wavy hair and a beard is shown in profile, looking towards the left. He is wearing a maroon polo shirt with a "SPECTRUM" logo on the chest. He is in a factory or workshop environment, with various pieces of machinery and equipment visible in the background. The lighting is bright and even.

"It's one thing to work at your dream job, it's another to work at a job with a great environment. I feel supported in my role and both staff and my peers are respectful to one another. Due to the support I received early on, I'm now more confident in my role and am able to independently complete my tasks."

- Spencer Pusey, Lead Production Assistant, Spectrum Designs

TURNING TRAINEES

If a partner agency/ trainee approach does not apply to you, please skip to the interview process on the next page.

THE LEARNER JOURNEY

Part of SDF's mission is to create authentic vocational opportunities for people of different intellectual abilities. SDF's trainees start at 16 years plus and often begin their vocational journey at any of SDF's enterprises. Once a trainee graduates High School or reaches employment age, they are assessed from an observational standpoint by the partner agency (if applicable,) who identify individuals who they believe are ideal candidates for hire. The partner agency also works closely with the employer to ensure that when the enterprises are ready to hire, they have supporting data to support the recommendation of hire.

THE ASSESSMENT

The partner agency advises what level of support the employee needs. This includes, a carefully crafted intake form to measure strengths in tasks specific to the enterprises and "soft skills" relating to SDF's Core Values. See example assessment attached.

INTO EMPLOYEES

NEXT STEPS

Should the individual meet the required benchmarks and a position is available, the parent/ guardian or individual (wherever appropriate) are approached to determine if they are interested in paid employment. As the individual is being hired from a trainee position, the employer and employee are already familiar with one another and therefore, a traditional interview is not always required.

Depending on your use of partner agencies and the way they operate, some or all of the pre-screening process may be carried out by the agency. Generally speaking, screening should be focused on three broad categories: consideration of the requirements/ qualifications of the job, physical ability of the candidate to perform specific functions and adherence to company Core Values and culture.

TRADITIONAL INTERVIEWS VERSUS THE SDF OUTLOOK

Increasingly, the traditional "meeting style" interview process is being replaced by a more modern approach. To better assess on-the-job skills in a realistic work environment, we carry out practical assessments in the specific departments and positions being hired for.

Employees who are new to the organization receive a 2-day orientation consisting of the following:

- Review of the Employee Handbook and Core Values
- Review of the organizational history/ organizational chart
- An overview of the various sites
- Shadowing each department
- Autism 101 and Autism at Work training from the partner agency
- Departmental training and specific training modules- process ma[s and skills based weekly self assessments

ONGOING LEVELS OF SUPPORT

Ratio of job coach-to-employee support fluctuate depending on the behavioral and educational needs of the individual, as well as the task at hand. This is essential not only for ongoing skill development, but to provide a "safety net of support" with regards to emotional, organizational, and professional competence.



1:1's need a close safety net of support at all times, whether for behavioral or vocational needs. Goals are prescribed formally and progress is tracked daily. Whenever possible, supports are faded to assess independence on the shop floor.



2:1 requires constant supervision but can operate in a small group. Small groups encourage collaboration, teamwork, and communication between participants. Safety nets remain close




3:1 Intensity and proximity of supervision can be faded in and out depending on the circumstance. Has functional communication and is able to report on issues both vocational and personal accurately.

3:1's can generally perform most tasks required of them with minimal assistance and can remain productive and professional without frequent prompts. Most participants receive 3:1 support.



4:1 Requires only minimal oversight behaviorally and professionally. While they meet with education staff and have them as a constant safety net of support, 4:1's are able to take initiative and transition *between multiple tasks independently*

In addition to in vivo support from job coaches, the partner agencies ensure that employees are set up for success by presenting and even augmenting the workflow to accommodate a wide variety of learners. These changes are small, of little or no cost to the enterprise and a result is a more happy and productive employee and successful employer.

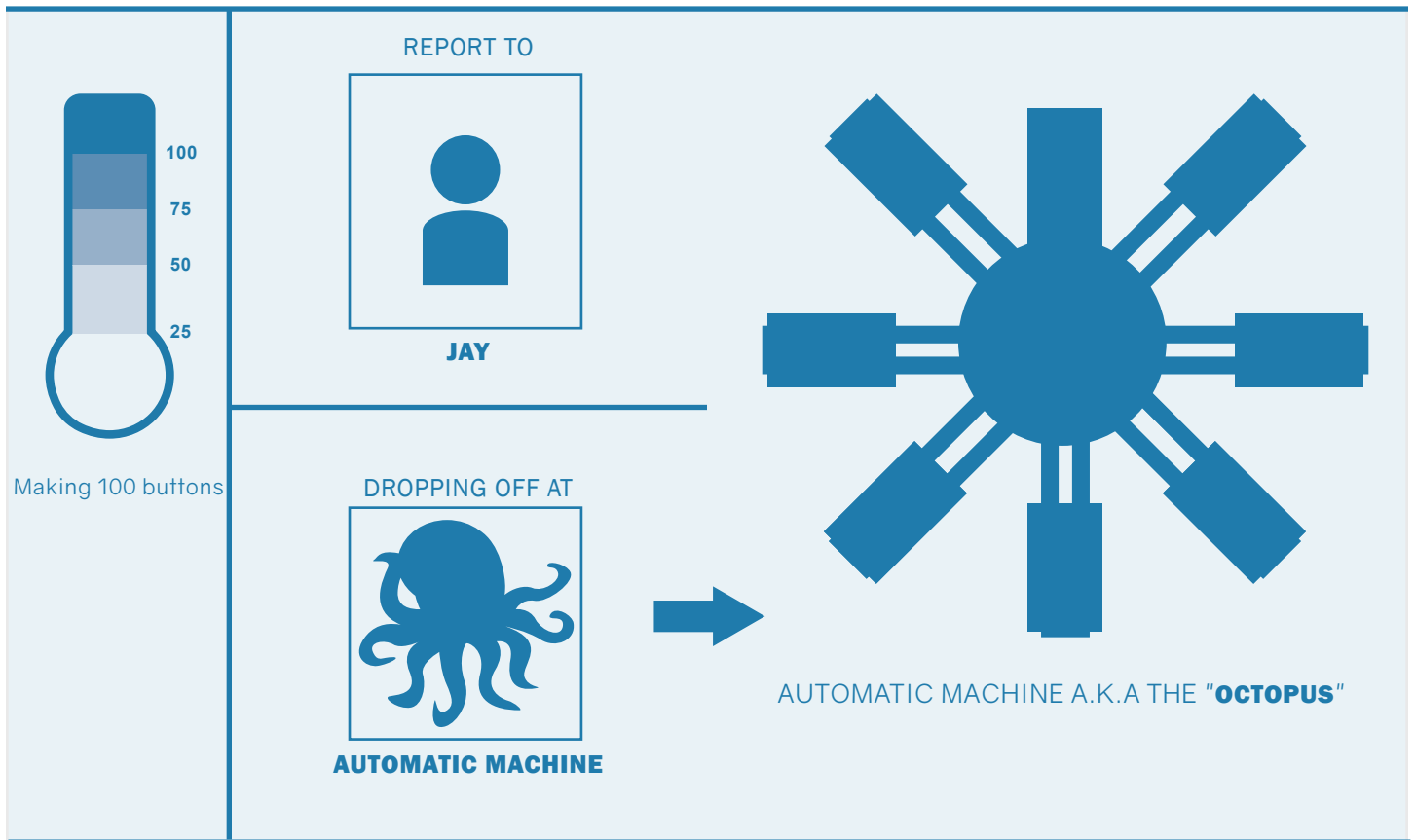
A man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue t-shirt, is focused on his work at a machine in a factory. He is looking down at a light blue t-shirt with a logo on it, which is laid out on a workbench. The background shows industrial equipment and a bright, well-lit environment.

"Before Spectrum Designs, my life was like a car without gas. I was just sitting home jobless. Thanks to the job coaching and visual supports at Spectrum I now have the fuel, I've hit the gas and I'm rising through the ranks!"

- Josh Mirsky, Lead Production Assistant, Spectrum Designs

ASSISTIVE TECH X WORKPLACE INFRASTRUCTURE

"Upon implementing the digital task system, there was a 30% increase in employees' ability to begin working and manage their time independently. Efficiency & staff morale also went through the roof"

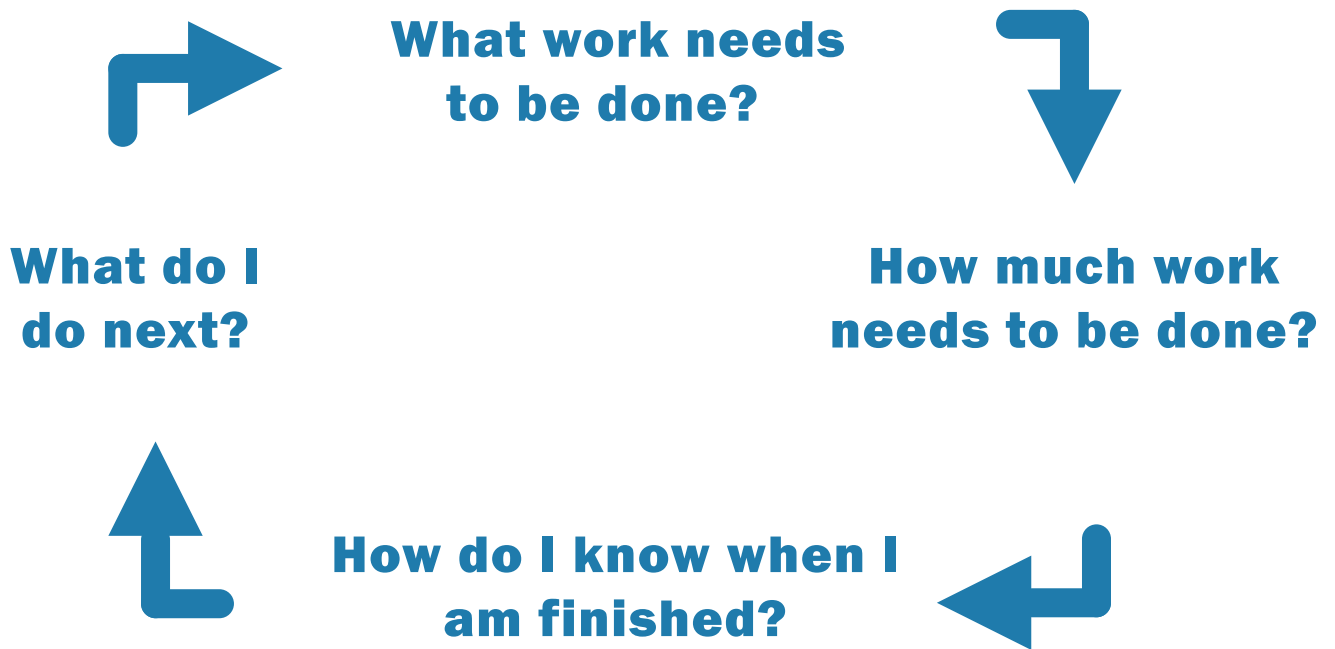


TASK SPECIFIC VISUAL AIDS

CAN THESE
ITEMS DROP?



WORK SYSTEMS FOR INDEPENDENCE



“A work system is a strategy that addresses independence as an essential outcome for students with ASD. A work system, an element of structured teaching, is defined by Division TEACCH® as a systematic and organized presentation of tasks and materials that visually communicates at least four pieces of information to the student.”

RETENTION

The power of a neurodiverse workforce lies in structuring the environment and communication in such a way that accounts for all kinds of learners. These environmental and internal ongoing supports are fundamental to the retention advancement of the employee.

EXAMPLES OF ONGOING SUPPORT AN EMPLOYER CAN PROVIDE

- A clear and structured work schedule.
- Flexibility of schedules regarding a new hire- working closely with HR or supervisor, allowing for shorter shifts, if necessary.
- Variety of communication- written, verbal, visual, etc.
- Minimizing figurative language and using clear verbiage in the workplace, in emails and company documents.
- Be prepared to explain or clarify any unspoken rules of the workplace.
- Meetings with HR or supervisor as needed surrounding professional and personal development to provide techniques to self manage anxiety, stress, etc.
- Availing a supportive and dedicated person, allows time for an employee to identify which workplace accommodations will enhance performance and increase engagement as well as create a safe space for employees to express themselves away from their direct supervisor.
- Continued development of technical skills via annual department specific in-house inclusive trainings hosted by supervisors.
- Allocating experts to consult with all staff.

Experts: The Human Resource Representative of employer and the partner agency act as consultants for the neurodiverse population at SDF specifically. SDF employees who do not qualify or are not in receipt of partner agency support are 100% supported by the employer's HR Representative and their direct supervisors.

SPECTRUM DESIGNS FOUNDATION'S CORE VALUES



PEOPLE

Our employees the greatest resource of our organization



PROFESSIONALISM

Positive workplace practices are the foundations of our productive, efficient and successful business



HEALTH

We commit to products, training and operations that *promote safety and emotional well-being* and minimize our environmental impact



INNOVATION

We adapt, innovate, and evoke to provide the best quality products and workplace.



MISSION

To provide employment opportunities to people on the Autism Spectrum, we focus on *unique strengths, unsurpassed client relations and quality products.*

Core Values are held to a high standard to ensure mutual respect, preserve the culture of the organization, promote neurodiversity and ultimately recognize that good business practices and sustainability are the key to ensuring we maintain and expand our mission.

LEVEL OF RISK & CASE STUDIES

Numerous studies suggest an association between people of different abilities and internalizing symptoms including, Depression, Bipolar Disorder and Anxiety. Please refer to "Level of Risk" table below.

LOW	SYMPTOMS	SUPPORT PROVIDED	FREQUENCY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euthymic mood majority of time • No history of aggression • No history of depression or anxiety • History of prior employment • Has good ability to take feedback/ constructive criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent preventative meetings • Performance Reviews/ Goal Setting • Make employee aware of Employee Assistance Program and services offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly scheduled meetings • Every 6 months 	

John has been employed in a supermarket for the past 2 years, bagging groceries and stocking the shelves. John is social and has a number of friends which he hangs out with on the weekends. John's hobbies including drawing, reading and collecting comic books. John is happy but sometimes experiences anxiety symptoms which include, frequent worrying, feeling nervous or restless and rapid breathing. John is aware of his struggles, is open to feedback and is constantly working, utilizing tools and mechanisms to improve.

MEDIUM

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depressive symptoms or history of Depression. Depending on severity of symptoms and history, employee could meet criteria for high-risk • Fatigue/ feeling lethargic/ effects of medications/ frequent changes in dosage of medications • Anxiety Disorders • Poor ability to take feedback/ constructive criticism • Little experience in the workplace • Difficulty with authoritative figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent meetings • Adjustments/ changes in schedule • HR & Direct Supervisor work closely regarding best feedback style • Communication with parent/ guardian • Performance Reviews/ Goal Setting • Make employee aware of Employee Assistance Program and services offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly scheduled meetings or as needed • Weekly or as needed • Monthly or as needed • When needed/ if applicable • Every 6 months
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John has applied for a number of jobs and has difficulty retaining employment for more than 6 months at a time. John is not receptive of constructive feedback and has a challenging time relating the feedback to himself. John needs frequent reminders regarding the tenets of professionalism and often struggles with building rapport with authoritative figures. John suffers from depressive symptoms which include, sadness, at times- hopelessness, fatigue and irritability. He can be impatient and abrupt but is hardworking and extremely competent with tasks given to him.

HIGH	SYMPTOMS	SUPPORT PROVIDED	FREQUENCY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of aggression or displaying aggressive behaviors while at work (verbal/ physical) History of suicidal ideation (active versus passive) The following if in conjunction with the first two points Poor ability to take feedback/ constructive criticisms Little experience in the workplace Difficulty with authoritative figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis intervention/ meetings Adjustments/ changes in schedule If ideation is passive HR Representative to refer employee for outpatient treatment (therapy/ medication management, if applicable) Make employee aware of Employee Assistance Program and services offered. with employee If thoughts are active and person is an imminent threat to self, HR Representative should activate Suicide Hotline or 911 Constant communication via text, email or phone call with individual Communication with parent or guardian Performance Reviews/ Goal Setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily or as needed Monthly scheduled meetings Daily communication, when needed/ if applicable Every 6 months

John has little work experience and employment history. He has a history of aggression and difficulty expressing his feelings. John suffers from depressive symptoms which include, extreme sadness, feelings of hopelessness, low energy, lack of focus/ concentration, fluctuations in sleep/ appetite and at times passive suicidal ideations. John stays to himself while at work and has difficulty when in social situations. John is often unreceptive to feedback and his own self improvement. John likes his job and is hardworking and competent when in a positive frame of mind.

SPELLING

S

HARE

your vision. This includes top executives, shareholders, coworkers and your customers. Everyone needs to be aware and on board with your mission of employing people with disabilities and supporting an inclusive workforce.

P

REPARE

your course of action. Develop procedure and training manuals, job descriptions, training/intern agreements, employee handbook and policies. Have clearly stated vision, mission and company values.

E

VALUATE

levels of performance. Expectations should be clearly stated of what constitutes “ready for hire”, what defines “training” versus opportunities for employment. Performance standards should be measurable where ever possible (with enough flexibility to manage the mission, and keep business successful). Measure and correct performance standards in a systematic fashion.

C

COLLABORATE

Collaborate with a partner agency (or agencies) who provides support services through state and federal funded programs. Be independent from the agency, but set clear expectations of what you need from them. They are responsible for recruitment and training. Work together with them to develop “ready for hire” criteria that suit your needs and vision, as well as what you’d expect from their job coaches.

IT OUT

T

RAIN

everyone on your vision, mission and values. Be sure all employees in all departments are trained on your business operations and your goals of full inclusivity. This includes your partner agency. Teach them to “assume less and ask more!” A knowledgeable staff is a productive and efficient one. Everyone should be on the same page at all times.

R

E-ADJUST

procedures and policies that aren't working. You want to be guided by principles and not policies. Be flexible and have strong managers who have good judgement. They should be firmly rooted in your mission to employ those with barriers to employment, while simultaneously being able to make decisions that can move the business forward.

U

NIFY

your organization. Everyone has an important role to fill in your endeavor. Have regular meetings that keep employees and stakeholders engaged and invested in the good work you are all setting out to accomplish.

M

EASURE

the progress toward of your goals methodically and conspicuously. Share your results with all of your employees. Build trust and morale.

TEAMWORK MAKES

Spectrum Designs Foundation's Chief Executive Officer likes to compare the relationship between SDF and our partner agency to that of Disney.

Disneyland and Disney World have been spreading happiness and mesmerizing children and families alike for over 120 years collectively. They have been able to adapt and thrive through numerous economic downturns and dramatic changes in information technology, and have kept their gates wide open to smiling children for generations. So, what is it that makes the "Happiest" or "Most Magical" Place on Earth so successful? The reality is, tension. There exists an ongoing tension, healthy though it may be, between the 'Disney Imagineers' and the 'Disney Financiers'. And it's that tension that fuels the whole Disney machine.

The Disney Imagineers are the ones who 'make the magic happen'. They are the "fairy dust" and the memory creators. They insist on large daily parades, mesmerizing firework shows and elaborately themed hotels. They have become masters of making sure the magic never stops, no matter the cost. This is illustrated by the building of an intricate network of underground tunnels that allow costumed characters to "pop up" in different parts of the park, much to the delight and amazement of their guests. These tunnels also ensure that no character ever been seen without full costume, for to do so would remove that mystique, no matter the age of the guest. The Imagineers would contend that without them, there would be no Disney theme parks.

The Disney Financiers are tasked with making sure that the famous gates can afford to stay open for generations to come. They do not concern themselves with the "magic" but focus on selling tickets, merchandise, food and hotel rooms. They make sure their staff and bills are paid and answer directly to the board and shareholders. They must adapt to economic changes, focus on income and expenses and constantly monitor different areas of strength and weakness in terms of profitability. The financiers would contend that without them, there would be no Disney theme parks.

THE MISSION

This is precisely the healthy tension that makes the partnership of SDF & TNC so successful. TNC are the Imagineers who at every turn focus on providing the best possible experience to trainees and employees with different abilities at SDF's enterprises. TNC staff sprinkle that magic all over and in doing so bring the mission to life. SDF on the other hand, must act as the Financiers and recognize that they must be profitable to survive. A strong focus on sales, monitoring income and expenses and managing costs is imperative to longevity. Good business practices are paramount to growth and with growth SDF is able to increase its impact, grow its neurodiverse team and in doing so bring the mission to life.

Without each other TNC and SDF would not be where they are today. This healthy tension at either end of the tightrope creates the balance required for success. Much like Disney, the respect and understanding of this from both sides is bred out of recognition that they are part of something bigger. That ultimately the mission can only be achieved when both sides hold tight and support the other as they walk the 'Magical Business Tightrope' for years to come.

SPECIAL THANKS

This program has been made possible through a grant from NEXT for AUTISM from the proceeds of *Night of Too Many Stars*.

Jonathan Bravo, *A Designer on the Autism Spectrum*

Nicole Sugrue, *Co-Founder & Executive Director, The Nicholas Center*

Patrick Bardsley, *Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Spectrum Designs Foundation*

Dave Thompson, *Senior Director Employment & Inclusion, The Nicholas Center*

Mackenzie Jameson, *Chief of Staff, Spectrum Designs Foundation*

SUGGESTED READING

No Greatness without Goodness

By Randy Lewis, Former Senior Vice-President at US Retailer, Walgreens

Ready and Able: Addressing Labor Market Needs and Building Productive Careers for People with Disabilities Through Collaborative Approaches, April 2011, NTAR Leadership Center

By Robert Nicholas, Ph.D., Ronnie Kauder, Kathy Krepcio, Daniel Baker, Ph.D.

Start With Why, By Simon Sinek

Managing a Mission is meant to be used to one's own discretion

ABOUT SPECTRUM DESIGNS FOUNDATION

To learn more about Spectrum Designs Foundation and its mission, please see below or visit our website at:

www.spectrumenterprises.org

**<https://www.relias.com/>*

** <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3416662/>*

Our mission is to create a more inclusive workplace and employment for people on the Autism Spectrum.

