



Safely Integrating Alternate Populations from a Shrinking Employment Pool

April 2025

Your Speaker: Ellen Gallo



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Ellen Gallo, CSP, CPE, MBA



- Senior Consultant, Aon Global Risk Consulting
- 25+ years of Safety/Ergonomics experience
 - ✓Former Corporate Safety and Risk Manager
 - ✓Former Health & Safety Director
 - ✓Former Global Ergonomics Manager, Motorola
- Education: BS Ind. Engineering; MS. Envir. Mgmt.; MBA Project Mgmt.
- Certifications: ARM, CSP, CPE
- Contact Information:
 - ✓ellen.gallo@aon.com






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Introduction

- ✓ As the candidate pool continues to shrink, primarily due to retirements, we need to rethink recruiting individuals outside the "normal" sources
- ✓ The neuro-diverse, veteran, and 2nd chance populations are underemployed and could fill roles left open, due to a lack of outreach to alternate populations
- ✓ Using basic safety knowledge, we can prepare our workforces to utilize and embrace these candidate pools
- ✓ Improvements may result from re-energizing existing workers and gaining a committed, loyal new team

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Current State of the Candidate Pool – How is it Working?

2005 Leadership Survey

- o 46% of hires fail within 18 months
- o "I can tell by my gut feeling"; "Not trustworthy due to lack of eye contact"



Physical and Cognitive Requirements

- o Are requirements and other disqualifiers limiting our pool?
- o Are we overwhelming our candidates with "wish" lists or true job aspects?
- o Are the requirements truly essential or are we using the same wording for every job position, regardless of task simplicity?

Under Utilizing Differently Abled persons

- o Neurodiversity – what it is and how to accommodate
- o Veterans and others with mobility challenges

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Neurodiverse Populations



Neurodiversity defined

- o Nonmedical term referring to persons whose brains develop or work differently
- o Research has shown both benefits and obstacles
- o Enthusiasm and loyalty can spread to others

Unexpected issues:

- o Incorrect workplace perceptions – wear a trench coat – could be WPV issue
- o Lack of eye contact can create intimidation perception
- o Need for space – claustrophobic outbursts
- o Need for specific direction – frustration and outlashing

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Neurodiverse Advantages



Dyslexics – better at processing or mentally picturing 3D objects

- ✓ Better at identifying optical illusions
- ✓ Natural talent for design, engineering
- ✓ Master planning, global thinking, and storytelling
- ✓ Entrepreneurship

Tourette's – innovative thinking, hyperfocus

ADHD – creative thinking, energy, passion

Autism spectrum

- ✓ Long term detailed memory
- ✓ Detail oriented and focused

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Neurodiverse Workforce Planning



Fear of the unknown

- > Lack of eye contact – intimidation?
- > Wears a trench coat – hiding a weapon?
- > "I can tell from looking at them, they are untrustworthy"
- > Body language

Triggering events

- > Bells, alarms, lights, claustrophobic rooms
- > Confrontation, loud voices, chaos
- > Adderall and Ritalin can increase sensitivity to heat stress

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The Neurodiverse – Preparing the Workforce

Training

- o Explanation of autism spectrum
- o Discuss triggering events and why it occurs
- o Don't expect eye contact when conversing
- o Expect brutal honesty and don't take it personally
- o May have nervous tics, tapping
- o Don't disturb their workstations without discussing first or asking them to assist
- o May suggest better methods or organization of the workplace
- o Pro – enthusiasm may become contagious!



Embracing the Change

- o Ask and address workforce concerns or misperceptions
- o Ask those impacted for advice on designing neuro-friendly environments
- o Pair neurodiverse together to create allyship

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The Neurodiverse - Friendly Workstation



Do we design overstimulating or triggering atmospheres?

- Horns, alarms, flashing lights
- Choose other notifications – think bird chirps from airport mobility carts/crosswalks

Are workstations claustrophobic or perceived as threatening?

- Are we placing the worker in the corner where someone could approach unseen?
- Workers positioned to see if anyone enters the workstation and prevent outbursts from surprise
- Open workstations are one of the keys to success
- Avoid tapping on the shoulder, arm, or back as that can surprise and threaten the worker




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Alternative Populations
Unique Transitional Challenges

Commonalities

- Nervous tics – repetitive tapping of fingers, feet, or objects/pens
- Potential for latent paranoia
- Odd offhand comments
 - Joking may be taken as offensive – attempt to fit in?
 - Over-reactions to statements
 - Painfully honest – “You look terrible” “Why is your hair a different color?”
- Perceived lack of empathy



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Neurodiverse - Friendly Work Practices

Provide clear, detailed instructions

- ✓ Be very specific about what to do
- ✓ No either/or instructions
- ✓ Follow logical progression –
 - If not logical, can create frustration
 - The neurodiverse may provide insight!

Learning to fail

- ✓ Root cause analysis is framed like a puzzle to encourage logic and innovation to resolve
- ✓ Expect continuous improvement, especially during rollout
- ✓ Outline benefits to failing early – less costly changes at initial setup stages

Structured discussions

- ✓ Step-by-step logic allows the perception of puzzle-building
- ✓ Avoid vague, open-ended questions that creates lack of structure and increasing frustration

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Neurodiversity Case Study
Rising Tide Car Wash

Objective: Hire persons on autism spectrum

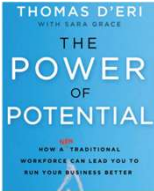
- Paid from day one to show workers and care takers commitment
- Realized instructions were too vague and workers experienced significant frustration
- Detail was key to training
- As cycle time decreased, success was celebrated
- Provided dedicated training room as stress-free work environment while learning

Working in Pairs

- Discovered workers thrived when working in teams; especially during training
- This provides a welcoming, team environment

Hiring is considered “job auditions”, creating performance pride

- Show joy when workers are hired and arrive
- After 7 years, only three failed performance goals and now three car washes in operation



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Rising Tide's Unique Candidate Hiring Process

Interviews were greatly reduced with a few clear, logical questions asked

- > Avoid asking multiple-part questions; ask them one at a time
- > Ask logical questions about what they like to do for fun
- > Ignore silence and provide ample time to respond – this also eliminates leading the answer
- > Provided dedicated training room as stress-free work environment while learning
- > Candidates were paid from day one of training, even if they weren't hired
- > Paying from day one shows care providers you are serious



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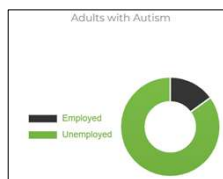
Next Steps – Resources and Grants

Interagency Autism Coordination Committee – iaac.hhs.gov
Provides employment information as well as SSDI and SSI

Autism Speaks / Workplace Inclusion Now (WIN) – autismspeaks.org
Assists states and local governments

Autism Employment Network autismemploymentnetwork.com
Hire Autism job board

Spectrum Works – www.spectrumworks.org
NGO that provides job training and employment to build inclusive workforces



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Recidivism vs. Rehabilitation – 2nd Chance Hiring

Recidivism – having a criminal history and tendency to lack options leading back to crime

77 million adults (1 in every 3 adults) have a criminal record

- ✓ They may have needed skills, especially in the trades
- ✓ Work-release may provide a glimpse of skills and future performance
- ✓ May need to assist in returning to society
 - > A lack of resources, including housing
 - > May not understand banking and financial responsibilities
 - > Computers, internet, and likely basic app training




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Recidivism vs. Rehabilitation - A Case Study
Dave's Killer Bread


- Company created by family where one was a convicted criminal who could not find a job
- 30-40% of employees have criminal history
 - ✓ May have skills in the trades or machining
 - ✓ Are used to structure so likely to follow instructions
- Loyalty and dedication is key attribute
 - ✓ Employees will return the favor of 2nd chances
 - ✓ Work harder and don't take work for granted
 - ✓ Include potential stressors to provide an honest depiction of the work



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Rehabilitation - Next Steps
Resources and Grants



Bureau of Justice Assistance - bja.ojp.gov
 Funding to reduce recidivism

Second Chance Act Grant Program - csgjusticecenter.org
 Assists states and local governments and NGOs

National Reentry Resource Center - nationalreentryresourcecenter.org
 Assists with grant applications


Dave's Killer Bread Foundation
 Creates employment opportunities for people with a criminal record

Jobs for the Future - jff.org

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Alternative Populations
Workstation and Process Considerations



Neurodivergent, Rehabilitated Workers, Veterans, First Responders

- All four may suffer from loud alarms, flashing lights
- Critical to provide alternate alarming and warning schemes to integrate them safely
- Open workstations so approaching undetected is avoided
- Physical touch can be triggering event
- Unique transitional challenges


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Alternative Populations
Unique Transitional Challenges

Training and Addressing Issues

- Awareness training for workforce
 - Prepare workers by explaining some of the workstation changes and why
 - Have an open dialogue to discuss and dismiss stereotypes
 - Provide an open office to allow persons to discuss concerns privately
 - Example - The Trench Coat
- Consider work-release
 - Allows gradual introduction to the workplace and ensures culture fit
 - Make sure criteria for working is clear and objective
 - Consult with work-release administrators for guidance



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Alternative Populations
Unique Transitional Challenges

Integration into the Workplace

- Consider Pairing and Mentoring
 - Pairing those in alternate populations - allows sharing/resolving concerns
 - Creates allyship and a team environment
 - Can help communications and engagement with workforce
- Gradual Introduction
 - May want a non-production site to train and encourage new workers
 - Allows errors and learning without the stress of new surroundings
 - Can gain confidence, enthusiasm, and positive anticipation
 - Enthusiasm is contagious!




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Safely Integrating Alternate Populations from a Shrinking Employment Pool
Summary


Alternate Populations can Stem Worker Shortages

- Challenges
 - Defeating doubt of candidates and fear of existing workforce
 - Are skills too complex or stressful?
- Benefits
 - Can reduce overtime, stress, and feelings of being overworked
 - Creating pairs can help reduce doubt and nervousness
 - Gradual introduction allows tangible successes and celebration
 - Everyone has sense of involvement and shares successes
 - Enthusiasm is contagious!



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Thank You for Your Time

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