

MEGA

Trends

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The Neurodiverse Talent Pool

An opportunity within hybrid working

The Neurodiverse

With DE&I (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) highlighting the importance of different perspectives, it's time to look at a group that is often overlooked.

Disclaimer

*“If you have met one person with autism,
you have met one person with autism.”*

Neurodiversity/Neurodiverse is a term describing the diversity in human cognition, from ADHD and Autism to Dyslexia and Tourette's. All neurodiverse people will exhibit different characteristics and experience different challenges.

The aim of this Mega Trends is to look at the common issues and solutions for employers. But everyone is different, so the first step should always be to ask the employee about their needs and how to support them.

Why care?

The benefits of diversity and inclusion

DE&I is no longer a "nice-to-have" for employers. 76% of jobseekers look at diversity and inclusivity when deciding whether to accept a job offer. And the next generation expect it, or will leave their organisation within two years if they are not satisfied with its DE&I efforts.

Harnessing diversity of thought leads to better business results. Diversity of thought is the idea that each of us exhibit different preferences over the way we think, due to acquiring knowledge and understanding in various and unique ways.

Diverse teams are more creative, diligent and harder-working.* And according to one study, decisions made and executed by diverse teams deliver 60% better results.*

Diversity and inclusion must go hand-in-hand. By providing everyone with room to voice their ideas, and by also representing different groups, you open up the opportunity for problems to be solved differently, for unique perspectives to be heard and for **meaningful collaboration** to happen.

A missed opportunity

“Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general. Who can say what form of wiring will be best at any given moment?”

Harvey Blume, The Atlantic, 1998

25% of CEOs are dyslexic* and research has shown that teams with neurodiverse colleagues in them can be **30% more productive*** than those without.

Yet many with neurodivergence find the workplace a daunting and difficult place to enter, with many finding barriers in their way right from the first hurdle. In the US 85%* of those with ASD are unemployed and a 2017 study showed that just 16%* of Autistic adults are employed.

Addressing the needs of this group and helping them get into work will not only improve the diversity and quality of your teams but also help with combating labour shortages by tapping into the economically inactive.

The Neurodiverse Talent Pool

*How hybrid is helping
the neurodiverse get
into work*

Hybrid working is expanding diversity of thought

An estimated 10-20% of the world's population is neurodiverse (Deloitte 2022), and the neurodiversity movement is gaining traction in the UK. So, now more than ever, we need to look at how the neurodiverse like to work and what makes work accessible to them.

The Future

The potential of hybrid for the neurodiverse

Stimulation Sensitivity

For some neurodiverse people, stimulation sensitivity is a difficult part of working life. It is often triggered by bright and noisy offices. Working from home allows neurodiverse people to control their sensory environment, reducing sensory stress and its resulting anxiety.

Emotional Regulation

Some neurodiverse people can be emotionally triggered in environments that they find stressful, or in which they feel they don't fit in. Stigma means that many people with disabilities do not feel like they belong in their workplaces. Hybrid working offers a way of avoiding these triggers, or at least minimising contact.

Masking

Masking is the process in which an individual camouflages their natural personality to conform to societal standards. For many neurodiverse people, it is all too familiar, and it increases the risk of burnout. Working from home can allow much needed breaks from office masking, reducing stress levels and decreasing burnout.

Flexibility

Overall, the main benefit of Hybrid working models for the neurodiverse community is that it provides flexibility and allows for adjustments to be made. Flexibility is key to feeling comfortable and empowered within the workplace.

What can you do? *How to be a better ally*

Hiring process

The first hurdle is often the hiring process, and it starts with the job ad itself. Asking for fantastic communication skills or being a good team player can be discouraging to those who can't easily identify with those attributes. A skills-based description is often preferred, as its factual criteria makes the application process more accessible.

It's also key that those conducting interviews are knowledgeable and sympathetic towards neurodiversity: this helps to eliminate bias or judgements. In the UK, you can sign up to the disability confidence scheme: this tells potential candidates that you are able and willing to adapt to their needs. There are many other resources to help improve the hiring process.



Communication

Providing clear and concise instructions in a written format, rather than verbally, can help people with processing delays (such as Dyslexia) understand what is expected of them.

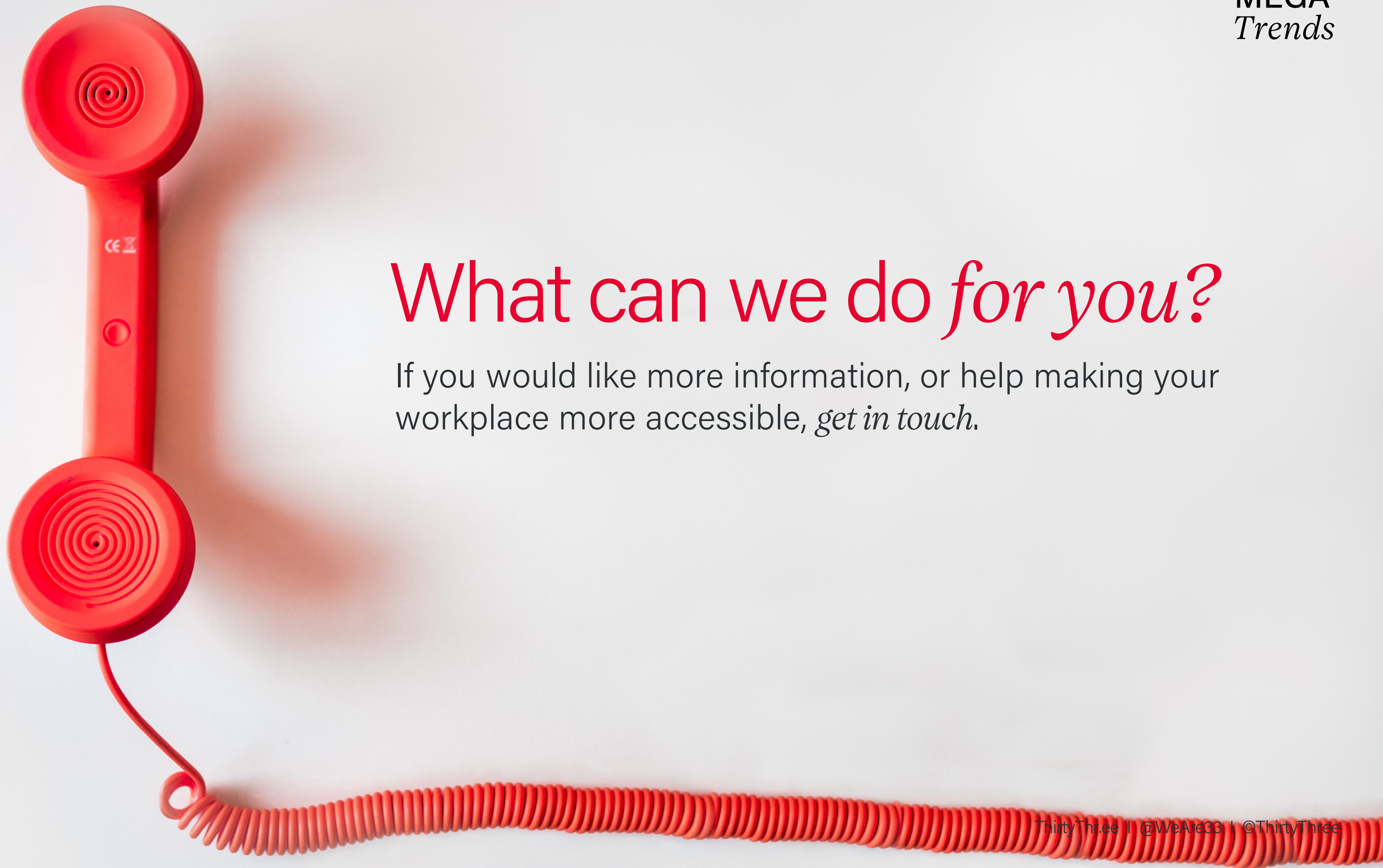
Guidance on workplace etiquette can also be useful to people whose social skills are impacted by neurodiversity.

Encouraging conversation about neurodiversity within your business can be empowering and can help neurodiverse colleagues feel comfortable disclosing their struggles.

Overall, communicating thoroughly and regularly with neurodiverse team members is critical. Remember, each individual's needs are different.

Flexibility

Supporting neurodiverse employees comes down to providing flexibility throughout their working experience. This could be flexibility in when and how they work, and even flexibility in the career paths they can follow. It's about being mindful that everyone thinks differently and does things differently.



What can we do *for you?*

If you would like more information, or help making your workplace more accessible, *get in touch.*

Educate yourself

Resources to help you get started with making your workplace more accessible...



Did you know?

1 in 7 adults in the UK are neurodiverse.

Made By Dyslexia promotes dyslexic thinking and champions its positives, as well as working to educate employers, family and friends about how dyslexic people process the world around them.

Value of Dyslexia film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3t3S3nDpQOg&t=223s>

CIPD offers resources on disability at work, covering topics from physical disabilities to adjustments for neurodiverse employees.

National Autistic Society raises awareness for people with Autism. They offer a comprehensive guide for employers on hiring an autistic employee, covering everything from the “why” to the “how.”

Neurodiversity Hub supports the untapped talent of neurodiverse people to shine through. They work with both employers and potential employees with a focus on work experience, placements and internships. They aim to create a pipeline of work for neurodiverse talent.

NIB: Neurodiversity In Business is a business-led forum. It is a collaborative space in which to promote best practice in business, to empower the neurodivergent, and to help employers improve conditions for their neurodivergent employees.

Thank you!

Any comments or questions?

Please get in touch with your **ThirtyThree** contact. We look forward to hearing from you!

We'll be back in Q2 2023 with another Mega Trends update.

