

# Recommendations

## How employers can implement a neurodiverse talent strategy in the workplace for dyslexics.



**The changing world of work requires a transformational approach to how skills and abilities are recognised. A significant change in demand for the balance in skills and abilities means that those who work collaboratively and across disciplines will be required for the future. The pace at which this change is occurring is significant. For employers, it is a strategic imperative to be able to attract and retain a diverse pool of talent in an increasingly disrupted work environment.**

Dyslexic strengths can help meet this business requirement and provide a significant opportunity to harness a different and widely untapped pool of talent. Dyslexic individuals can perform 'strong', 'very strong' and 'exceptional' across a range of Cognitive Abilities; System Skills; Complex Problem Solving Skills; Content Skills; Process Skills and Technical Skills. This is matched by a demand led requirement for dyslexic strengths in the workplace.

However, dyslexia is commonly viewed for its challenges, rather than its strengths. In education, there can be a negative perception of dyslexia as a result. Generalised approaches to testing, alongside the limited understanding of dyslexia and access to dyslexia related resources, can accentuate this perception. This is similar to employment, where a limited awareness of dyslexic abilities and the generalisation of hiring processes, can also accentuate this negative perception. Overall, a focus solely on challenges can influence dyslexic individuals' confidence, undermining the ability for them to reach their full potential. This can also influence some organisations from realising the full value of dyslexic strengths.

Focusing on strengths, but not ignoring the challenges, making dyslexia-related resources available and creating a more inclusive environment can greatly contribute to building dyslexic confidence; promote better conversations about dyslexia; and enable dyslexic individuals to reach their full potential in both education and employment. Benefits follow from recognising the value that dyslexic strengths can bring to the changing world of work, whilst simultaneously improving the well-being of dyslexic individuals.

To mitigate negative perceptions and to influence a positive association with dyslexia, a transformation of actions and views is required across the board.

Our recommendations provide a starting point for capturing the strengths of dyslexia for both educators and employers by:

- ▶ **Recognising the value of dyslexic strengths.**
- ▶ **Improving the journey to employment for dyslexic individuals**, by equipping educators with the knowledge and training to recognise dyslexic strengths at the earliest opportunity.
- ▶ **Improving the management of dyslexic abilities in the workplace** through targeting and focusing dyslexic strengths to harness greater organisational and individual productivity.

## 1. Embrace a strengths-based culture

Implement a committed leadership strategy that embraces a strengths-based culture, and a psychologically safe<sup>31</sup> environment. Leaders should acknowledge dyslexic abilities, both the challenges and strengths and more broadly neurodiverse abilities, to inform cultural behaviours and the perception of dyslexia.

As part of this approach, ability should be measured in a way that enables dyslexic individuals to reach their full potential.



## 2. Democratise access to dyslexia screeners, assessments and information resources

Create a greater understanding of dyslexia by removing barriers and improving the management of dyslexic challenges and strengths.

- ▶ Create better access to dyslexia screeners and Assessments Dyslexia screeners and assessments are key for individuals to understand how they work, and are particularly important for the early recognition of dyslexia in education, and for those who could even remain unassessed in the workplace, to access targeted support. The ability for individuals to access a screener or assessment should not be determined by their financial position — greater equality towards accessing screeners and assessments can help dyslexic individuals reach their full potential, levelling the playing field.
- ▶ Create better access to information resources Knowledge can enable and empower dyslexic individuals who are seeking to understand their own abilities, and more broadly for parents, teachers and managers alike to be proactive, to bring the best out of those with dyslexia. By creating easily accessible online resources both privately and in the public domain, the challenges and strengths of dyslexia can be recognised, understood and supported for the individual, providing a useful training resource.

<sup>31</sup> *The Two Traits of the Best Problem-Solving Teams, Reynolds, A and Lewis, D. 2018*

### 3. For employers, implement a neuro-diverse talent strategy

To attain dyslexic strengths, adopt a strengths-based approach to hiring, talent, and work on a day-to-day basis.

#### Focus on four levels:

- ▶ **Build capability** — Align with a strengths-based leadership strategy to build dyslexic talent and determine how dyslexic strengths can help meet business objectives. This includes talent alignment to roles based on a greater harmonisation and understanding of dyslexic strengths and their deployment in the organisation.
- ▶ **Target performance** — Use assistive technologies, tailored processes and a specific strengths-based performance criteria that aligns to a strengths-based strategy and more broadly, neuro-diverse talent strategy to enable dyslexic individuals to perform exceptionally in roles.
- ▶ **Drive motivation** — Motivate and empower dyslexic individuals to reach their full potential, through adjusting workplace design and providing the support, coaching and mentoring schemes to build dyslexic confidence in the workplace. Dyslexic individuals at all levels of the organization can assist with driving greater inclusiveness through networking and building better working relationships, to improve organizational well-being.
- ▶ **Enhance efficiency** — Train managers to optimise dyslexic performance through recognising, facilitating and accompanying dyslexic strengths at work. Consistent and tailored feedback sessions can assist with achieving greater individual productivity.



#### Reference:

*The Value of Dyslexia-Dyslexic Strengths and the Changing World of Work*  
In association with *Made by Dyslexia* and *Ernst and Young*  
Adapted for a global audience by *Get into Neurodiversity*