Autism at Work Pilot Program

Tanya Regli
The Arc of Philadelphia
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The Demand

- 48,000 unfilled STEM Jobs in the NYC Metro Area alone (Forbes, 2013)

- Following the trend of the increasing need of businesses to meet EOE goals

- Increased business demand for diverse and highly skilled individuals

- A large segment of individuals on the autism spectrum are unemployed or underemployed
• Very strong visual learning skills and ability to recognize patterns extremely valuable in the IT/Software Industry

• Many individuals affected by ASD enjoy software due to its structured nature, unambiguous, precise and predictable outcome.

• Attention to details – amazing ability to spot deviations in data, information and systems concentration and perseverance over long periods of time

Source: SAP, Autism At Work Program
SAP, AG a Germany based global leader in enterprise
software made a worldwide pledge in 2013, to have 1% of
their 65,000 person workforce to be individuals on the
autism spectrum by 2020.

The Arc of Philadelphia, part of The SpArc Philadelphia
family of organizations, has been working for the last 60
years advocating and empowering individuals with
disabilities to obtain community employment.

Specialisterne founded 10 years ago in Denmark by
Thorkil Sonne to facilitate career opportunities for
individuals on the autism spectrum with a focus on the
tech field.

Challenge:
Meet the business needs of the world’s
3rd largest software company.
Collaboration is Key

- SAP: Business Partner
- SpecialistE: Training Partner
- SpArc Services: Training Providers (SpArc)
- Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry: Funders (OVR)
- The Arc of Philadelphia: Advocacy Guidance
Focus on Skills

**Recruitment**

- Expand HR hiring assessment beyond standard cover letter/resume/interview models.

- Shift focus from traditional social indicators such as eye contact and handshakes toward valuable tech skills such as problem solving.
Recruitment and Selection

Focus on high potential individuals

• Some advanced education or potential to complete bachelors level coursework or higher

• Willingness to learn within the tech field
Preparing Candidates for Professional Careers

- Identifying skills and potential
- Long term goal setting
- Early Identification
- Knowing individuals in a broader context than a typical interview provides
- Finding a suitable work culture and job fit
Path to Professional Employment

“Hangout” (Assessment) → Referral to Training

OR

Employment Advocacy from The Arc, and OVR

OR

Referral to other services

20 day on-site Training

Referral to other services

Offer of employment

Employment at SAP

Hiring process may take several months from the offer of employment
LEGO MindStorm© Assessment and Training

Why LEGO®s?

• Assembling and programming the robot requires a high attention to detail
• Enables novice or first time programmers to learn basic programming concepts
• Used in STEM labs in schools and universities
• It’s fun!
## Pilot Demographics

**Winter 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Age:</th>
<th>26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Range:</td>
<td>22-32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Years Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Employed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Internship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Highest Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Information Technology</th>
<th>Fine Art</th>
<th>Programing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X,X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hangout A</th>
<th>Hangout B</th>
<th>Invited to Training</th>
<th>Individuals Trained and Hired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment Supports

- 90 days of OVR funded Job Coaching
- Advocacy support as needed from The Arc of Philadelphia
- OVR and SpArc Services tapers support while enabling ongoing supports at SAP
- “Care Circles”
  - New hires are assigned a team buddy who has been selected based on their favorable personal and professional attributes
  - Includes HR, Managers, and Mentor groups
Despite individual variances requiring added attention the need for coaching has followed a downward trend over time.

Spikes in support hours are explained by either a work event such as training or minor instances.
## Accommodation Variances

### Accommodations by Type and Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL ACCOMODATIONS:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM ACCOMODATIONS:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Cultural</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Specific</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SAP Internal Categories and Data, SAP North America, AaW Program
Accommodation Variances

**TEAM WORK ADAPATION**
Is the new employee integrating into the team flow (assignments and methodology)?

**ENDURANCE AND PACE ADAPTATION**
Is the new employee able to sustain his/her work load throughout the day?
Is the new employee “keeping up” with the pace of the team and its work?

**WORK-STYLE ACCOMMODATIONS**
Is the new employee in need of learning, communications or other work-style specific accommodations?

**DUTY ACCOMMODATIONS**
Is the new employee a good fit for some or all of their duties?
Is there a need to alter job responsibilities?

**DOMAIN SPECIFIC ADAPTATION**
Are the skills of the new employee filling the pre-identified role needs or are there gaps?
Does he/she understand his/her objectives?

**COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE ADAPTATION**
Is the team culture (communication and meeting styles) being embraced by the new employee?
Is the team adapting to the new colleague’s style?

Source: SAP Internal Categories and Data, SAP North America, AaW Program
### Examples of Accommodations

#### Specific Accommodations Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Note Taking</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Test Adaptations</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Individual Counseling</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Extra One to One Attention</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Job Coaching</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Buddy/Care Circles</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Study Groups/Focused Instruction</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- All individuals used at least one accommodation
- The majority of accommodations had been used at least once before according to human resources
- Many accommodations were done on an ad hoc basis, demonstrating SAP’s flexibility in accommodations
A Special Thanks, to all of the hardworking and bright individuals that participated in the program and their loving families!
If interested in finding out more contact:

Tanya Regli
Executive Director
The Arc of Philadelphia
Office: (215) 229-4550 X 118
Cell: (267) 847-1167
http://arcphiladelphia.org