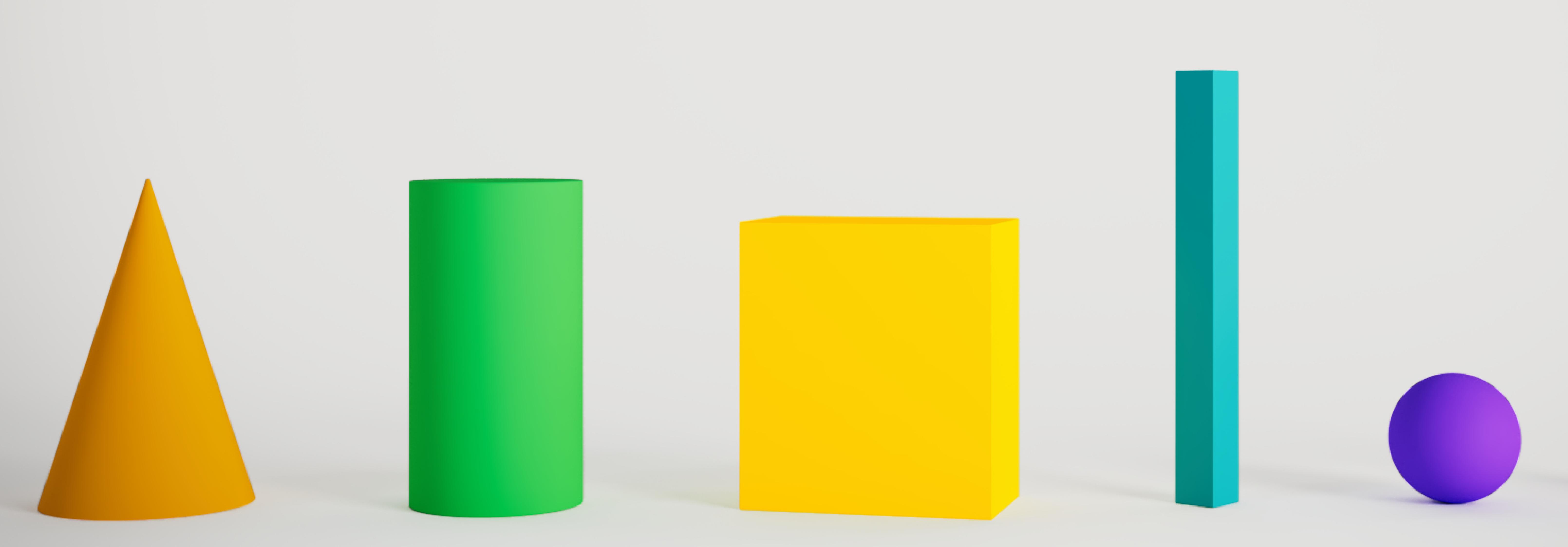


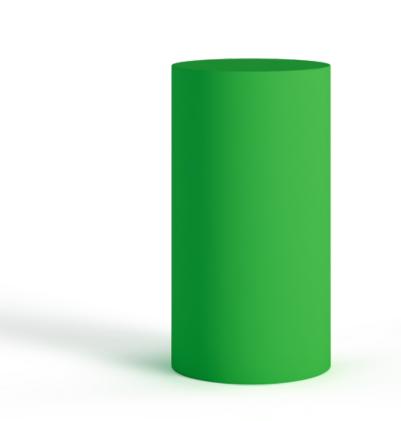
Neuroinclusivity in the Workplace

Part One | Why Companies Need to Plan Now



For neurodivergent individuals, typical work environments can pose challenges most people do not experience to the same degree - or at all. With increasing diagnoses, recognition, and acceptance, neurodiversity is impacting workplace planning now and will for years to come. In this blog series, we will explore essential strategies and considerations for companies to use in workplace planning, design, and change management - creating more inclusive work settings for all employees.

Why Companies Need to Plan for Neurodiversity Now



As organizations ponder new ways to appeal to the office user postpandemic, neurodiversity deserves a place in the conversation.

User experience metrics – productivity, comfort, and well-being, to name a few – are reshaping how we assess workplace effectiveness. Neurodivergent individuals naturally experience and interact with their work environments differently. Understanding the broad diversity of people's experiences and needs at work is the beginning of developing a more efficient and productive workplace.

Companies that fail to plan for neurodiversity now may find themselves in a position similar to those who missed opportunities to launch timely ESG (environmental, social, and governance) or DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) initiatives. A 2021 survey revealed that 59% of businesses lost out on work due to weak ESG commitments. Another study found that 68% of workers would consider switching jobs if their employer lacked an effective DEI policy. Planning for neurodiversity is a fundamental piece of DEI, and it will give employers a strong competitive advantage in both recruitment and business performance.

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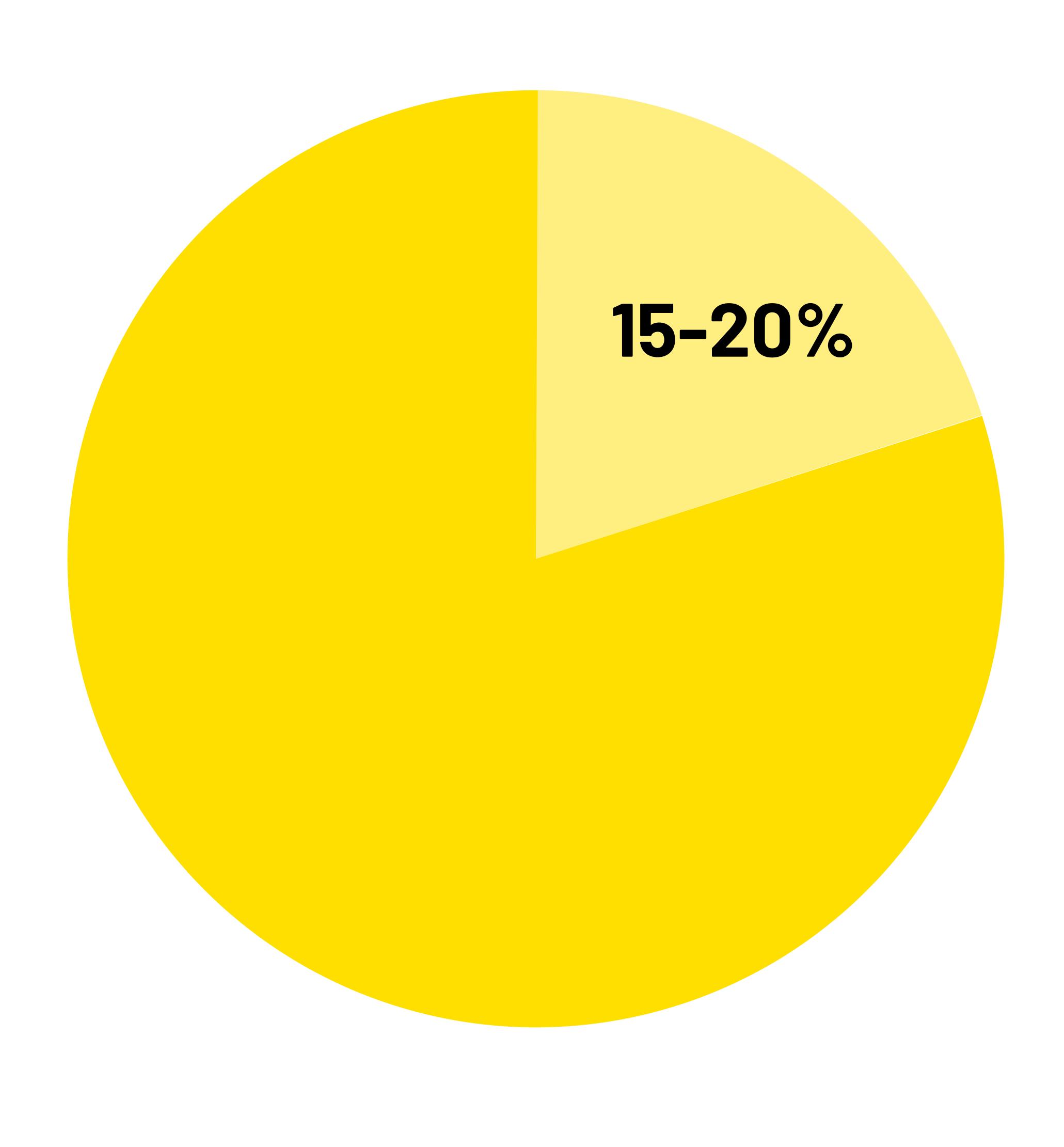
Source: CDC | Data & Statistics on Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Source: ADP | People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View

What is Neurodiversity?



As many as 15 to 20% of the U.S. population are thought to be neurodiverse.

Neurodiversity, or neurodivergence, refers to differences in human cognition that affect functions such as sociability, learning, or attention. It encompasses the autism spectrum, dyslexia, dyspraxia (difficulty with movement and coordination), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and Tourette syndrome, among other types. With as many as 15 to 20% of the U.S. population thought to be neurodiverse, employers have a strong impetus to understand what it means, who it impacts, and how the workplace can evolve to serve neurodivergent people more effectively.



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Understanding Neurodiverse Talent

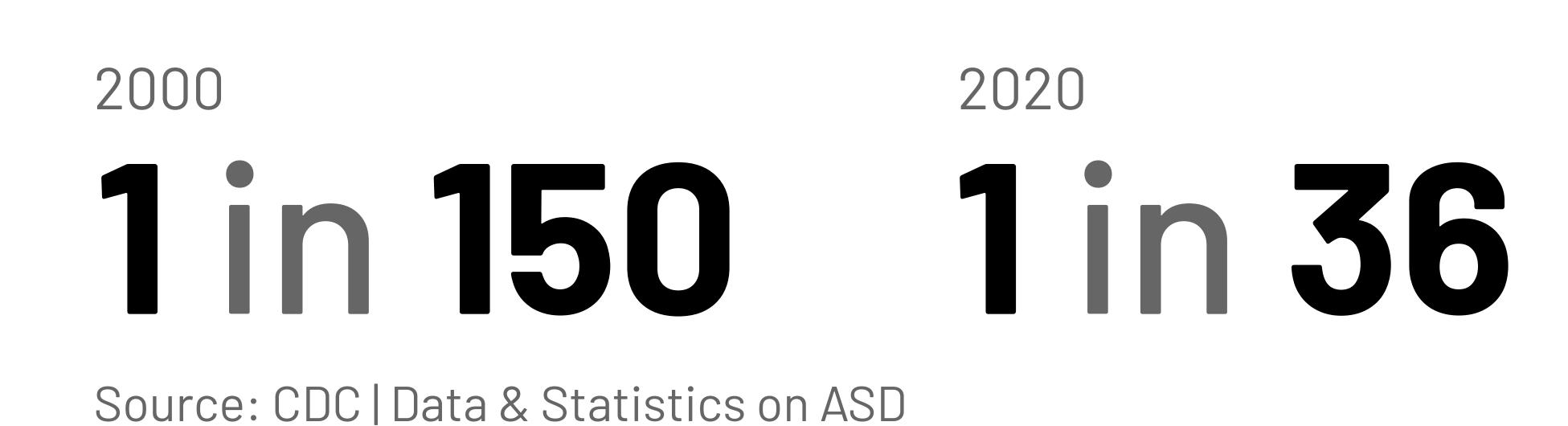


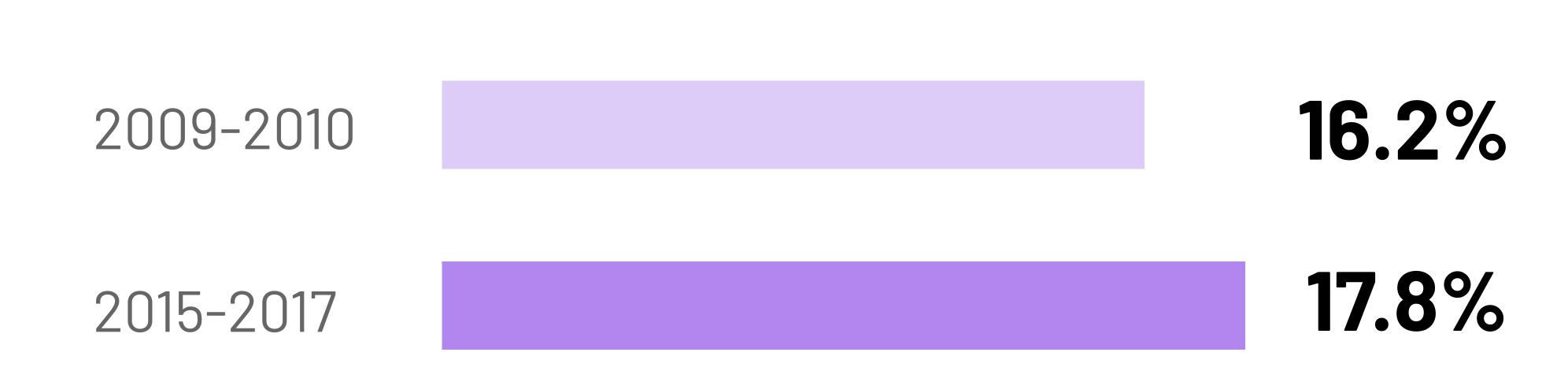
Medical, social, and cultural trends around neurodiversity are converging in ways that should capture employers' attention. Data reveals steadily increasing diagnoses of a range of neurodiverse conditions, such as autism (from 1 in 150 children in 2000 to 1 in 36 in 2020, according to the CDC) and developmental disabilities (of children aged 3 to 17, an increase from 16.2% in 2009-2011 to 17.8% in 2015-2017). As diagnoses rise, social acceptance increases. Having grown up in this context, today's teenagers and young adults are far more comfortable with openly discussing and advocating for their needs than previous generations, which will carry through to their working lives.

Companies that plan well will benefit from what is likely to be an influx of neurodivergent employees in the coming years. While autism spectrum and other disorders create obstacles in some areas, they confer exceptional skills and functioning in others, such as attention to detail, concentration levels, memory, creative skills, and mathematical comprehension. Specialist recruitment agencies and other advocacy organizations now promote the untapped skills and talents of neurodivergent employees. Case studies of employers who have found success with recruiting neurodivergent employees are multiplying. In one example, JPMorgan reported that "autistic workers were doing the work of people who took three years to ramp up – and were even 50 percent more productive" after three to six months serving in the bank's Mortgage Banking Technology group.

Despite the talents they offer, neurodivergent individuals face significant barriers in getting hired. Eighty-five percent of college graduates with autism spectrum disorders were unemployed as of 2019. This gap in the labor market is an unprecedented opportunity for employers. To seize that opportunity, companies can get ahead of the curve by positioning their workplace policies, strategies, and environments for the future now.

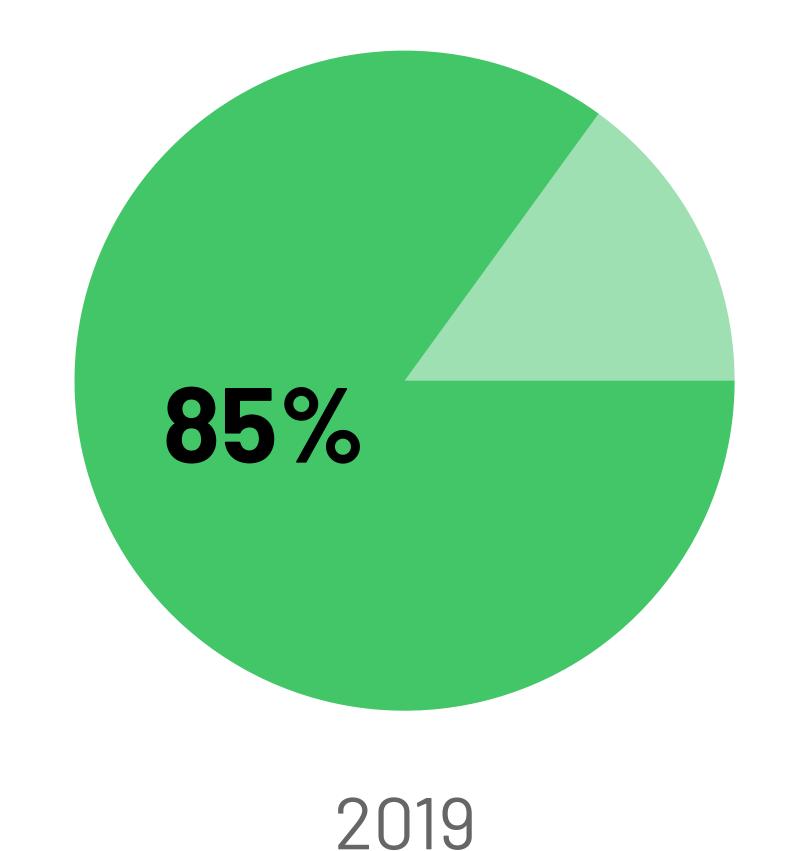
Number of children that has been diagnosed with a range of neurodiverse conditions





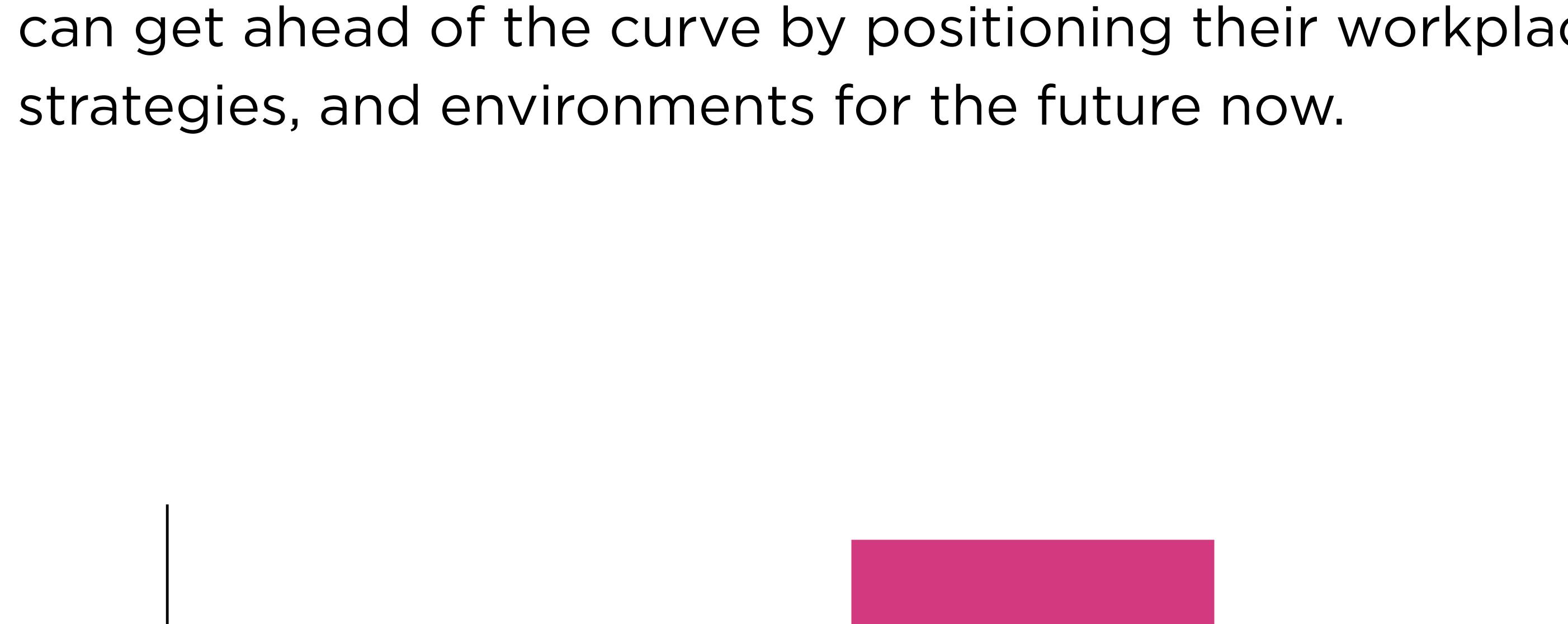
From 2009 to 2011 and 2015 to 2017, there were overall significant increases in the prevalence of any developmental disability.

Source: CDC | Increase in Developmental Disabilities Among Children in the United States



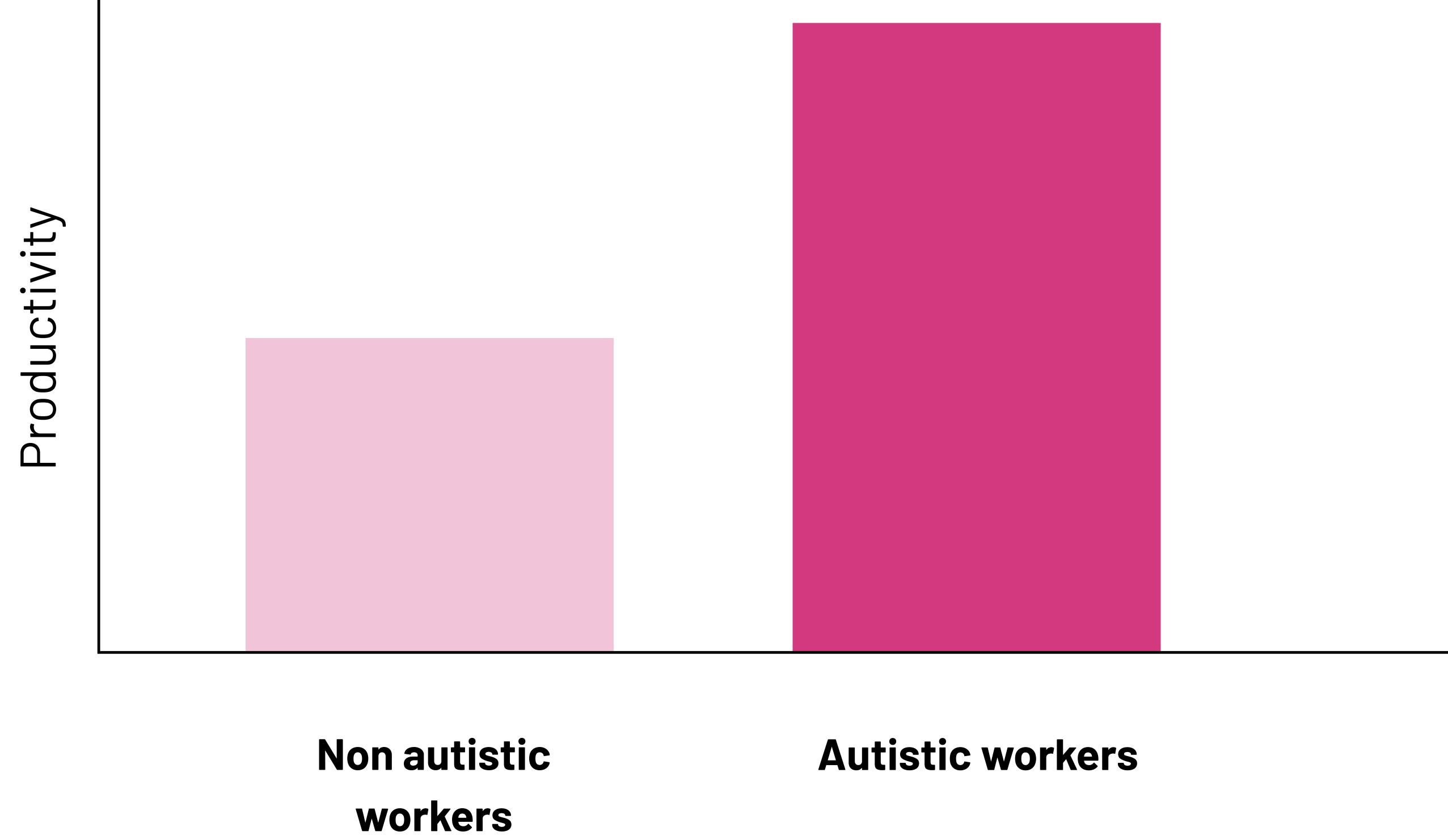
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Source: Moneyish | Most college grads can't find jobs. This group is fixing that.

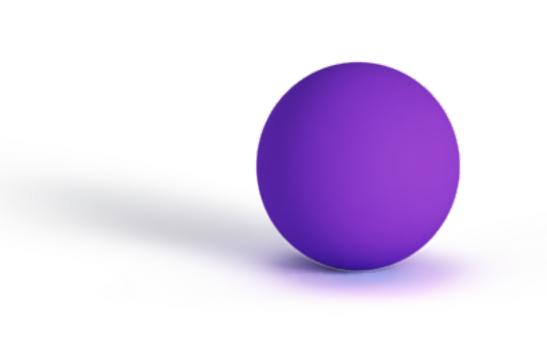


Autistic workers were doing the work of people who took three years to ramp up – and were even **50 percent more**productive after three to six months serving in the bank's Mortgage Banking Technology group.

Source: CIPD | Neurodiversity at Work



What's Going on in Your Workplace?



Macrotrends are a compelling reason to act, but some companies may already have an internal need regarding neurodiversity. Organizations across the board are thinking more deeply about what makes people work at their best and are making changes to their work environments to encourage it. Accommodating the needs of neurodivergent employees is an exercise in better understanding your overall workforce. Many needs that neurodivergent people have - sensitivities to light or sound, for example - intersect at some level with those of neurotypical employees. Planning and design strategies for one group can improve the experiences of a diverse range of employees - and give people a useful alternative to the home office.

Perhaps your company is looking to invest in a DEI program with broad reach and real impact. Or, your company already employs neurodivergent individuals who are not getting what they need from an office culture or environment that hasn't changed since before the pandemic. If either of these scenarios ring true, it's time to start thinking more seriously about planning for a more neuroinclusive workplace.

What are your workplace preferences? Click here to take a survey on neuroinclusivity in the workplace. Responses are anonymous and will help us gather data and have a better understanding of neuroinclusivity today.



Benay Josselson Executive Vice President



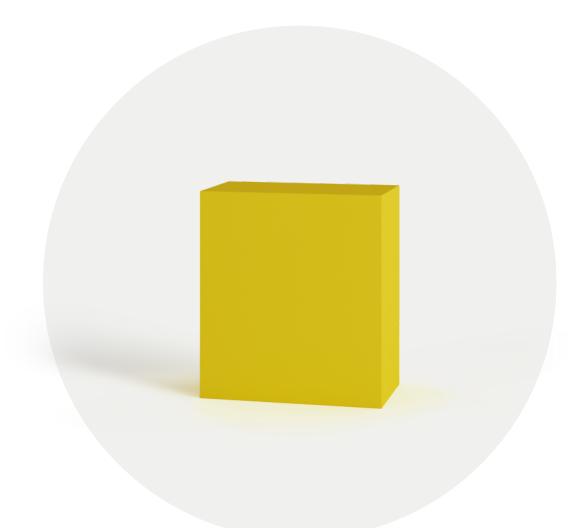
Tonya M. Williams Managing Director



Alli Hochberg Senior Program Manager

How to Strategize for Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Savills believes that planning and designing for neurodiversity is leaning into the future of the workplace and the workforce, and thus good for business. Neurodiversity is a concept that may be new for many organizations. In this blog series, we will share insights on planning, design, and change management concepts that will help companies understand, anticipate, and navigate a necessary shift in the corporate world. In the coming weeks, we will explore:

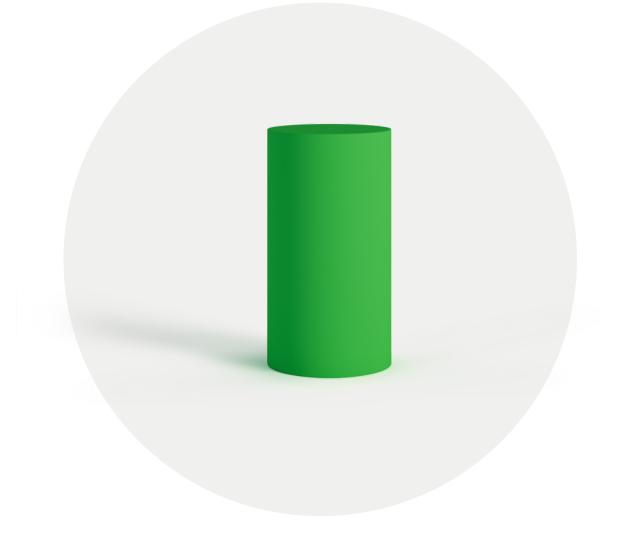


Strategic Planning

Before any spatial or policy changes take place, what does the strategic planning and engagement process look like? How can companies plan for near-term and longer-term changes and how can they test specific design strategies before investing in them? We will delve into essential questions and considerations.

Design

Everyday elements of office design can create obstacles to productivity for neurodiverse talent. What steps should a company take to determine the right design approach for neuroinclusivity? We will discuss common areas of concern and strategies for adopting effective solutions.



Change Management

Once you've decided on the changes to make how do you introduce them successfully? Supporting a shift toward neuroinclusivity is an exercise in cultural change. We will explain vital considerations that will help companies achieve buy-in.

Learn more about

neurodiversity at

