

# NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKFORCE

## Valuing different kinds of minds

Christine Puccio  
Director, Global Cloud Initiatives + Google Cloud Alliance  
Red Hat

Stu Shader  
Office 365 Solution Specialist - Global Accounts

Date

**Neurodiversity is a worldwide movement that maintains learning differences such as dyslexia, autism to be a variation of human brain wiring. To better understand the perspectives of those around us, we should not only try to see the world through their eyes, but understand it through their brains.**

# Agenda

Celebrating abilities in the culture of disability!



- The state of learning disabilities
- Value of a diverse workforce
- How High Tech is harnessing learning disabilities
- Other information to know

# The state of learning disabilities

Neurodiversity paradigm is multidimensional from a Neuroscientists view "But categories of intelligence may number more than 7 billion- roughly the population of the world."

John Medina, author of Brain Rules

# How did we get here?

- **Ninety percent of all disabilities in the workforce are invisible -- including learning disabilities, ADD, ADHD, Autism, Aspergers, medical conditions and more.**
- **When a disability is invisible, the fear of disclosure can be intimidating.**

# The State of Learning Disabilities

## Facts, Trends and Emerging Issues

**43M people**  
(15% of the U.S.  
population)  
have dyslexia

**1 in 65**  
children is  
diagnosed  
with ASD

**35% of students**  
labeled as  
“learning disabled”  
drop out of high  
school, twice the  
rate of their peers

**Roughly 60%**  
of children with  
ADHD become  
adults with ADHD;  
that's 4 % of the  
adult population

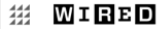
**~ 5M 4-17**  
year olds (11% of  
the age group) have  
been diagnosed with  
ADHD

**30%** of  
students have  
two LD's

**Between 30% and  
80%**  
of the prison  
population has a  
learning disability

# The State of Learning Disabilities

## Wired Magazine 2001 Article



The Geek Syndrome

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STEVE SILBERMAN MAGAZINE 12.01.01 12:00 PM

## THE GEEK SYNDROME

**Autism – and its milder cousin Asperger’s syndrome – is surging among the children of Silicon Valley. Are math-and-tech genes to blame?**

Nick is building a universe on his computer. He’s already mapped out his first planet: an anvil-shaped world called Denthaim that is home to gnomes and gods, along with a three-gendered race known as *kiman*. As he tells me about his universe, Nick looks up at the ceiling, humming fragments of a melody over and over. “I’m thinking of making magic a form of quantum physics, but I haven’t decided yet, actually,” he explains. The music of his speech is pitched high, alternately poetic and pedantic – as if the soul of an Oxford don has been awkwardly reincarnated in the body of a chubby, rosy-cheeked boy from Silicon Valley. Nick

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# The State of Learning Disabilities

## Estimated employment rates for the neurodiverse workforce

- Bureau of Labor Statistics includes “disabilities” as one of the categories for collection as part of the CPS of 60,000 households nationwide. BLS does not break down “disabilities” between neurological and physical disabilities or types of disabilities.
- Based on CPS data, BLS estimated that in May 2012, 15.4 million persons in the 16-64 age range, the prime employment range, had some work-related disability. Among this group only 28.2% were employed.
- California state government estimates the employment rate of workers with disabilities at 19.5—lower than before passage of the ADA.
- Among independent studies of adults with autism, estimates of employment are in the range of 30%-40%.



# The State of Learning Disabilities

## Just a bit about Autism

- A development disorder that impairs the ability to communicate and interact
- Impact: 1/42 Boys and 1/189 Girls according to CDC
- Costs

In the US - 250B per year

To families, a lifetime cost of 1.4M over lifetime in lost productivity and intervention

- Unemployment

85% of people diagnosed with ASD are unemployed

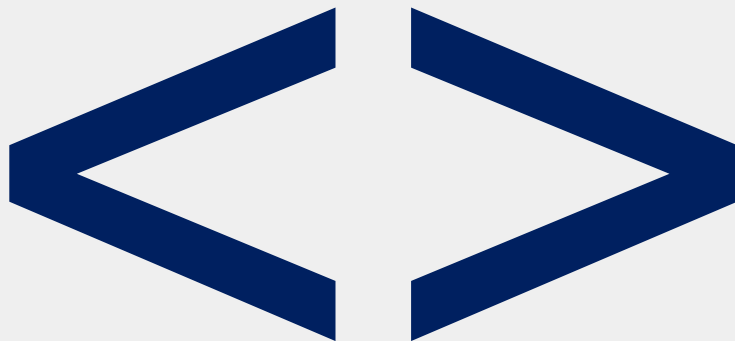
60% are above average cognitive abilities

Many that are employed are underemployed

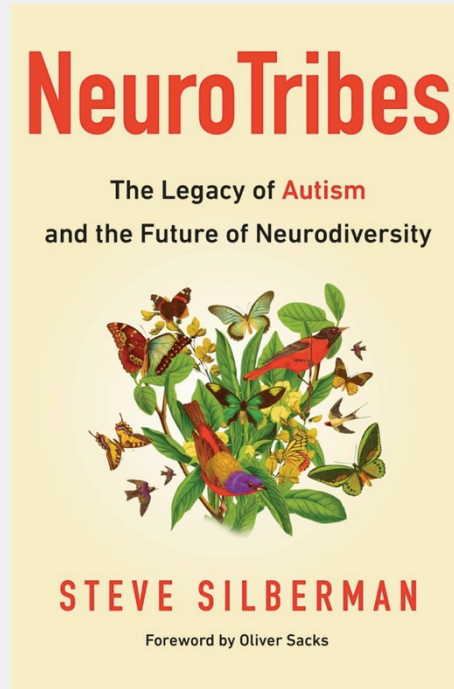
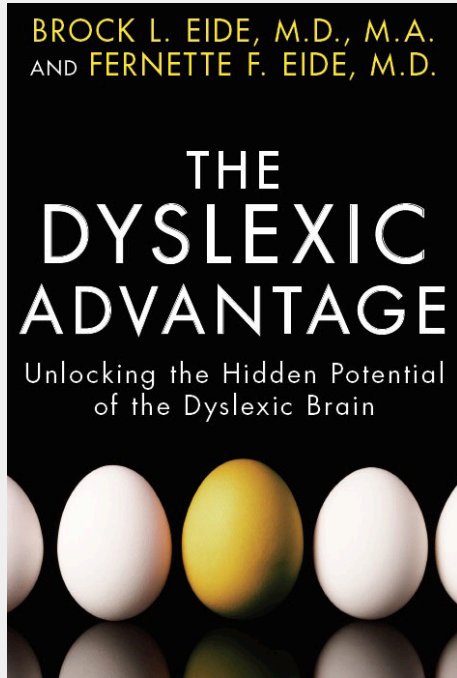
- Opportunity

50K unfulfilled STEM jobs in the Bay Area alone

# I am Dyslexic



# I am Dyslexic



# Value of a diverse workforce

“Not all the features of atypical human operating systems are bugs.”

– Steve Silberman, NeuroTribes

# Value of a diverse workforce

## Autism at Work

In May of 2013, SAP Announced its objective to have 1% its global workforce represented by employees in the autism spectrum. About 650 Jobs

## SAP Vision

Make the World Run Better and Improve People's Lives

# Value of a diverse workforce

## Why SAP hires people with Autism

Attract the Best Talent in Our Industry

Bring a Different Perspective to Our Creative Process

Tap into Underutilized Source of Talent

Capture Special Skills of People with ASD

Retention: Loyalty Works Both Ways



# Value of a diverse workforce

SAP Autism At Work



# 7 Countries 140+

Employees  
Contractors  
Interns





# How High Tech is harnessing learning disabilities

Who do you think made the first stone spears? The Asperger guy. If you were to get rid of all the autism genetics, there would be no more Silicon Valley.

Temple Grandin

# How high tech is harnessing learning differences

SAP - 18 roles

- Software Developer
- Information Developer/KM
- Software Tester
- Business Analyst
- IT Technical Support
- System Administrator
- Marketing Operations Associate
- Networking Specialist
- Procure-to-Pay Service Associate

- IT Project Management Associate
- Customer Support Associate
- Graphic Designer
- Multimedia Specialist
- Employee Communications Associate
- Data Analyst
- Associate Consultant
- Product Manager
- HR Service Associate

# How high tech is harnessing learning differences

Microsoft - Roles and Hiring teams

**Software Engineer / Service/Lab Engineer / Data Scientist / Content Writer**



# How high tech is harnessing learning differences

Microsoft - solving for the front door and on-boarding experience

## Plan & Recruit

**Source candidates with skills and experience requirements**

Microsoft Autism Program v-team identifies roles & hiring teams

Microsoft Global Talent Acquisition to identify candidates with skills and experience

## Pre-Screen

**Outreach to gauge interest in Microsoft, Autism Hiring Program**

Pre-screening phone/email chat with Global Talent Acquisition

Technical skills assessment exercise reviewed by interviewers

## Skills Evaluation

**5-day in-person recruitment event hosted on Microsoft Redmond Campus**

Workability and Professional Readiness

Team introductions, Interview preparation and Skills assessment

*Note: Travel expenses paid by Microsoft for out-of-town candidates*

## Hire & On-Board

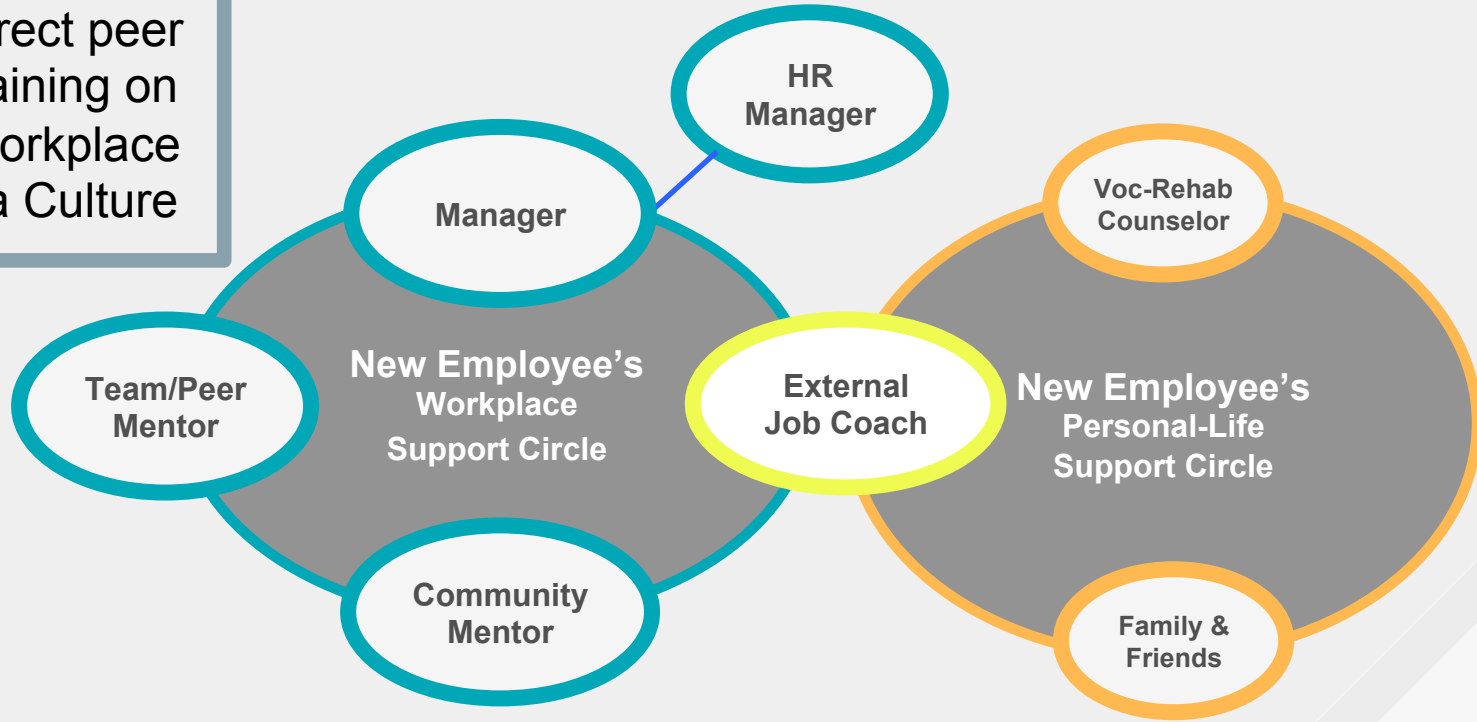
**Training on *Autism in the Workplace* and 90-day onboarding support via mentorships**

- Hiring Manager
- Team/Peer Mentor
- Autism Community Mentor
- Job Coach
- HR Manager

# How high tech is harnessing learning differences

Microsoft - on-boarding support circle

Manager and direct peer team receive training on Autism in the Workplace and Autism as a Culture



# How high tech is harnessing learning differences

## Microsoft - Neurodiversity in High Tech



Hewlett Packard, GE, Intel, Bloomberg, UCSF, Salesforce, Flextronics, Spansion, Dell, Oracle, Cisco, Wells Fargo, Apple, Intel SAP and Google.

Stanford, Berkeley, UCSF, Mills College, De Anza and Foothill College

"The value of diverse minds in the workplace? Creating teams of people with different skills, strengths, and challenges that can work together is as effective in the workplace as it is the right thing to do. We are all specialists of one kind or another, whether we know it or not."

[Laura Shumaker](#), SF Gate

# How high tech is harnessing learning differences

## Start Up - Coding Autism

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## About Coding Autism

Coding Autism is a full-service professional coaching and training company that trains adults on the autism spectrum in professional skills such as software engineering, quality assurance, and web development. We also assist our graduates in finding employment within the software and technology industries. We do so by providing services such as immersive programs and bootcamps, resume workshops, career counseling, interview preparation, and coaching/mentorship, all of which is designed around providing an environment where people on the spectrum can thrive.

# Other Information to know

**“I don't really understand why it's considered normal to stare at someone's eyeballs”**

**– John Elder Robison, Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's**



# Other Info

## Autism accommodations in the workplace

### Late Diagnosis:

Many people born in 1950, 1960 were never diagnosed.

### Things that may challenge you:

- **Phone:** Anxiety/movement, Processing
- **Sensory needs:** Perfume, Lotions, Hair products, noise

# Other Info

## Diversity and Inclusion at Red Hat

### OPEN ORGANIZATION FRAMEWORK

Developing Diversity and Inclusion communities at Red Hat leverages transparency and inclusion

### LGBTQA

The LGBTQA Leadership Community is a group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and asexual/androgynous Red Hat associates and their allies who are working together to make Red Hat a more diverse, inclusive meritocracy.

### NEURODIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Coming soon :)

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

Provide a forum for our members to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences, networking opportunities, educational and cultural programs, enhance the growth of our members as leaders and decision makers and make a positive contribution to the next generation of women leaders in open source.

### BUILD

Blacks United in Leadership + Diversity

### MILITARY VETERANS

Coming soon

# Other Info

What is Microsoft doing to help?



Internal Communities:

Distribution lists:

Disability all (superset), Autism, Autism Parents, ADD, PTSD, Blind, etc.

Conferences:

Ability Summit (Internal)

Sponsorship of various conferences

WW Supplier Conference (Neurodiversity Conference)

# Other Info

## Additional Information

- [Fast Company: Microsoft wants autistic coders. Can it find them and keep them?](#)
- Microsoft Jobs Blog: [Unique hiring approach leads to “awesome” HoloLens job](#)
- Microsoft Story:  
[Kyle Schwaneke; Unique Microsoft hiring program opens more doors to people with autism](#)
- SAP Press Link: <https://www.sap.com/corporate/en/company/diversity/differently-abled.html>
- HP Press Lnk: <http://www8.hp.com/us/en/hpe/hp-information/livingprogress/dandelion.html>
- Specialsterne: <http://usa.specialisterne.com/>
- Thinking person's guide to Autism: <http://www.thinkingautismguide.com>
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