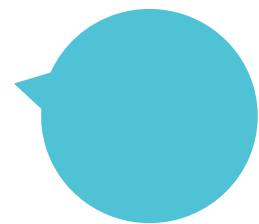




The Autism Advantage



E-Resource Kit • Unlock The Autism Advantage •
Hiring and Supporting People with Autism at the Workplace

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Dear Reader,

Beyond providing for an individual's most basic financial needs, meaningful employment is an important avenue for integration and gives people a sense of identity, purpose and social connectedness. However, the global unemployment rate for people with autism is approximately 85%, with only 22% reporting in paid work. Despite their skill sets, people with autism face limited employment opportunities due to a myriad of reasons including lack of awareness and prevalent misconceptions.

The Autism Advantage is a communications campaign project that seeks to advocate for more holistic support for the employment of people on the autism spectrum in Singapore. In collaboration with SG Enable and Autism Resource Centre (Singapore), we have created this resource kit as a playbook to guide business leaders like yourself in taking the first step in hiring and supporting people with autism in your company.

In this playbook, you will find useful resources that can help you through this new journey into inclusive hiring. We hope that you will gain a greater understanding of autism as well as find the confidence to start providing employment opportunities for people with autism in your company, with the combined efforts from the government, non-profit organisations and like-minded businesses supporting you every step of the way.

In the grand scheme of things, The Autism Advantage is but just one piece of the puzzle, all of which assemble to make the untapped value of people with autism known and leveraged in our society.

Here's to tapping on The Autism Advantage.

Cheers,

The Autism Advantage Team
Chloe, Shaun, Shernyce, Shermaine

About SG Enable and Autism Resource Centre

ABOUT SG ENABLE

SG Enable seeks to enable persons with disabilities to live, learn, work and play in an inclusive society. The focal agency for disability in Singapore, it raises awareness on disability issues and facilitates access to disability schemes and services. It brings partners together to share knowledge, collaborate and innovate, striving towards a common goal of building an inclusive Singapore and enabling lives. Set up by the Ministry of Social and Family Development in 2013, it is a registered charity and an Institution of Public Charter.



ABOUT AUTISM RESOURCE CENTRE (ARC)

Autism Resource Centre (Singapore) is a not-for-profit charity based in Singapore dedicated to serving children and adults on the autism spectrum to help these individuals lead meaningful and independent lives in society.

To ensure individuals on the autism spectrum realise their maximum potential with the support of their caregivers and professional team, ARC(S) provides a wide range of core services: Early Intervention, Pathlight School, Autism Training, Student Enrichment, Employability & Employment Centre, Library and Information Services.

ABOUT EMPLOYABILITY & EMPLOYMENT CENTRE (E2C)

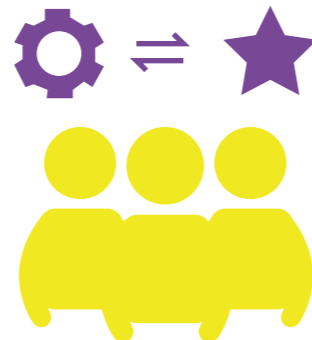
The Employability and Employment Centre (E2C) is the first autism-focused centre that offers services to enable people with autism to perform successfully in the workplace. It also offers services for employers who are interested in hiring people with autism in their companies.

Why Hire?

What are some business benefits to hiring people with autism?

Leveraging an untapped talent pool to fulfil your business needs

By hiring inclusively and making simple and reasonable accommodations to your workplace, your company gains access to a wider pool of talented, loyal and hardworking employees that bring value to your business and fulfil your business needs ([SG Enable, 2020](#)).



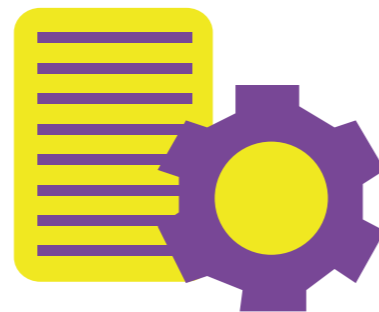
Gaining competitive advantage

Hiring people with autism allows you to tap into the unique professional strengths of these individuals, such as boosts in innovative capabilities. People with autism bring about more diversity in perspectives and new points of view to your company's efforts to create and recognise value ([Forbes, 2017](#)).



Increasing employee engagement through Improving capabilities of your managers

Improve the ability of your managers to become better managers to not just people with autism, but *all* employees. They are trained to leverage the talents of employees through greater sensitivity to individual needs, becoming more inclusive, giving better feedback and setting clear expectations ([Forbes, 2017](#)).



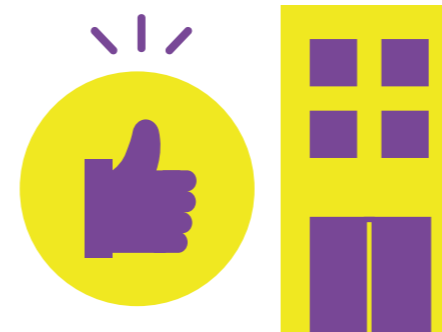
Improving workplace culture

As employees interact with colleagues with autism, they become more accepting of one another's differences and strengths, develop more empathy and have a deeper appreciation of how everyone can contribute to the organisation's success ([SG Enable, 2020](#)).



Enhancing company's image

Hiring people with autism demonstrates your company's genuine commitment to diversity, enhancing your company's brand as an inclusive employer and attracting top talents. Existing employees may also feel more proud and committed to companies with strong corporate social responsibility efforts ([SG Enable, 2020](#)).



Empowering and enabling lives

Not only does employment provide persons with autism a stable income and more financial independence, it boosts their confidence and contributes to their sense of identity, purpose and social connectedness ([SG Enable, 2020](#)).



Hear Their Stories



Jesselin Ong
Tech Consultant

"Hiring us is not a "charity" act or just corporate social responsibility, it is a legitimate business decision that can be right for you - financially, morally, and socially."

Get a glimpse of their work experiences [here!](#) Keep a lookout for them on our socials.



Jan Wai Yeoh
Data Analyst

"Don't prejudge or assume. Seek to understand."



Wesley Loh
Tax Analyst

"It all starts with a paradigm shift. If you don't bring in autistics to your team and make your workplace autism-friendly, you are missing out!"



Kelvin Tan
Waiter

"Treat them not just as staff but also seek to empower them with skillsets and knowledge. Take time to know them, every individual is different."

- Kelvin's Supervisor

Inclusive Hiring Roadmap

For general enquiries on employer support

01 Reaching Out



SG ENABLE

Hiring and employment

✉ opendoor@sgenable.sg
<https://www.sgenable.sg/get-in-touch>

☎ 1800-8585-885

For Autism Spectrum Disorder-specific enquiries



Employability and Employment Centre (E2C)
 by Autism Resource Centre (ARC)

✉ E2C@autism.org.sg

☎ +65 6592 0426

02 Getting Started

Enable

Register for the Open Door Programme (ODP)
 Take the Enabling Employment Pledge



Pre-Assessment of Candidates

Determine suitable jobs and candidates with E2C.



03 Training & Job Placement

Equip

Attend Talks, HIRE Workshops and work with in-house Job Coaches

Engage & Employ

Still unsure? Try Job Shadowing, Internships and Mentorship Programmes

Training & Job Placement

Make adjustments to your workplace while candidates are trained for the job

04 Employment Onwards

Grants, Support and Accreditation

Apply for Grants
 Get that Enabling Mark!



Job Support

Post-employment reviews, education and training for your staff

Understanding Each Stage

01 Reaching Out

Contact these organisations via these channels:



Organisations



Email



Contact Form



Hotline

Get in touch with SG Enable, the focal agency for disability and inclusion in Singapore to learn more about how you can kick-start your hiring journey with their consultancy services.



opendoor@sgenable.sg

<https://www.sgenable.sg/get-in-touch>

1800-8585-885

To understand more on employment support of persons with autism, reach out to E2C by ARC, a Social Service Agency (SSA) that can support you in starting your inclusive hiring journey.



E2C@autism.org.sg

-

+65 6592 0426

Things you can do before Reaching Out

- Read up on autism, and what organisations are doing to improve the employment landscape!
- Check out other companies who have already embarked on hiring people with autism
- Learn about the benefits of disability-inclusive hiring through a [commissioned study by SG Enable](#)

02 Getting Started

You've taken the first step! What's next?

Aligning expectations between your company, the organisation and your potential new hires is a crucial next step to your journey. Approach representatives from SG Enable and ARC to help you build a strong understanding of the expectations and steps to hiring people with autism, as well as establish your company's job requirements.

Start on the following to ease the process and get the necessary support:



Get Support

Register for the Open Door Programme, a government funded initiative that encourages inclusive hiring through grants and employment support services.



[Find out more about the Open Door Programme](#)

To register, complete the registration form and email it to opendoor@sgenable.sg to be registered as an ODP employer.

Assess your Readiness

Sign the President's Challenge Enabling Employment Pledge and affirm your commitment to adopt an inclusive mindset towards employees with disabilities, create barrier-free workplace environments and implement supportive employment policies for employers with disabilities.



[Find out more about the President's Challenge Enabling Employment Pledge](#)

Assess your Readiness

Look into the existing job roles within your company and identify a variety of suitable jobs. Don't stop at one, more options increase the chances for job matching and successful hires.

JOB CARVING

Perhaps you could look into Job Carving, a supported employment strategy that refers to making small customisations to roles and responsibilities in a way that taps on your employee's specific skills to maximise time and productivity.

This win-win solution is based on:

- Relationship of beneficial reciprocity
- Built on matching needs, strengths, conditions
- Interests of a business and its employees

Identify potential job adjustments that might need to be made within your company. This can come in the form of educating existing employees on autism or making necessary accommodations to the physical workspace.

Remember that hiring is not a one-size-fits-all process!



Consult your respective partners on the different considerations to be made, and the available actions to be taken!

03 Training and Job Placement

Set yourself up for success! Preparation and adjustments start here.

Representatives from the SSAs will learn more about the job role at your company through job shadowing to thoroughly identify the requirements, processes and compatibility of the task with potential new hires. This will ensure that the training programmes they subsequently implement for potential hires are effective.

While this is ongoing, prepare your workplace by equipping it with the necessary accessibility and accommodations. Beyond executive leadership, bottom-up enthusiasm also plays a key role in the success of your inclusive hiring journey. Educate your employees on autism, and how they can contribute to cultivating an inclusive, neurodiverse workplace.

SG ENABLE

Equip

Attend Disability Awareness Talks - understand different disability types and be equipped with disability etiquette

Sign up for relevant [High Impact Retention & Employment \(HIRE\) Workshop Series](#) - a comprehensive and structured training framework for employers developed by Enabling Academy, SG Enable's disability learning hub. Most course fees are highly subsidised by Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) funding as part of ODP.



[Find out more about HIRE Workshops](#)

In-House Job Coach Programme

Train your own in-house job coaches so as to build your in-house capability to support the integration of employees with disabilities at the workplace.



[Find out more about Training for Disability Employment Professionals](#)

Engage

If you are still unsure,

Job Shadowing Day

Provide opportunities for Special Education (SPED) school students to understand and experience the concept of employment and what working life entails, by showcasing your work environment and offer students a glimpse of what the company does.

IHL Internship Programme

Discover an untapped talent pool of tertiary students with disabilities by offering internships. Register by completing the participation form.

RISE Mentorship

Gain new perspectives as you make a difference in the lives of students transitioning into work through this 16-week programme that matches tertiary students with disabilities with business professionals as mentors. For more information, contact IHL-to-Work@sgenable.sg.



Employability Training and Job Placement

Job Coaches will learn the job duties themselves and assist in teaching them to potential hires. They will also ensure that your job requirements (quality, quantity, safety, time limits, etc.) are met.

E2C job coaches use autism-friendly strategies to train the potential hires in both hard and soft skills. Potential hires will only proceed to job placement when they have reached the necessary levels of skills and independence.

The training of potential hires may take between 10 – 40 weeks before they are recommended for job placement.

Making Job Adjustments

As needed, Job Coaches from ARC will educate managers and coworkers about autism

Job Coaches from ARC can act as mediators between you, coworkers, potential hires with autism, as well as their families/caregivers, creating a supportive network that forms the backbone of successful hires.



Grants Available

While Job Coaches train and prepare your potential new hires, get additional support on this journey by sourcing for the different types of financial grants your company is/will be eligible for. Support is available throughout the different stages, from workplace adjustments, training subsidies and wage offsets. Apply for financial grants native to the Open Door Programme (which you should have applied for earlier!), as well as those from other VWOs or Government Agencies.



Here are some of the grants and the support they provide!

Open Door Programme (ODP) Job Redesign Grant

- The Job Redesign Grant helps employers recruit and retain persons with disabilities by supporting up to 90% of the job redesign costs (excluding GST), capped at \$20,000 per employee with disabilities, whichever is lower.

Open Door Programme (ODP) Training Grant

- The Training Grant aims to equip employers with knowledge in hiring and retaining persons with disabilities within their organisations.
- The grant provides funding of up to 95% of the course fee when they send their employees with disabilities for training programmes supported by SG Enable and up to 90% of course fees when they send their employees without disabilities to attend workshops/courses to build confidence in working with colleagues with disabilities



View full terms for ODP [here](#).

[Find out more about the Open Door Programme](#)

Enabling Employment Credit (EEC) by Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS)

- The Enabling Employment Credit (EEC) is a wage offset scheme to support the employment of persons with disabilities.
- The EEC will be paid to employers of Singaporean persons with disabilities aged 13 and above, and earning below \$4,000/month. In addition, employers who hire a person with disability who have not been in employment for the past six months will receive an additional wage offset for the first six months of employment.



View full terms for EEC [here](#).

[Find out more about the Enabling Employment Credit](#)

Note: The EEC will be available for five years from 2021 to 2025. Subject to review and adjustments by MOM.

04 Employment Onwards

Congratulations! If you have made it this far, it means you have successfully hired inclusively, or are ready to do so! But it doesn't stop here - hiring inclusively is a continuous effort. As your company looks for more new hires, you can continue to receive financial and job support from the VWOs and existing grants.



Employment & Job Support

Open Door Programme Job Portal: Access to Online Job Portal to post jobs and view/shortlist potential candidates.

Remember to also apply for the [Enabling Mark](#) and be recognised for your best practices and outcomes in disability-inclusive employment!



[Find out more about the Enabling Mark](#)



Employment & Job Support

E2C job coaches will continue to provide on-site support to coach the new hires in meeting the expectations of the job. They will also act as an advocate and intermediary between the new hires and colleagues.

E2C job coaches will continue to work closely with your company to assess the performance of the new hire. If at any point the new hire does not perform up to standard, there will be feedback sessions and chats to work towards the goals and address those gaps, just like neurotypical employees.

Readiness Checklist

Still thinking about that first step? Take this simple quiz to find out if you're ready to grow your company and hire people with autism. Answer **Yes**, **No** or **Maybe** and tally up your responses!

- Does your company have clear goals on why it is embarking on hiring people with autism?
- Does your company have someone designated to oversee recruitment of people with autism/disabilities?
- Does your company have jobs that are suitable for people with autism, or is the company able to adopt job carving to identify suitable roles?
- Are reasonable accommodations possible to make your workplace environment more conducive for people with autism to work in?
- Do you have managers that are enthusiastic / passionate about/ committed to inclusivity?
- Does your company have a welcoming and supportive culture?

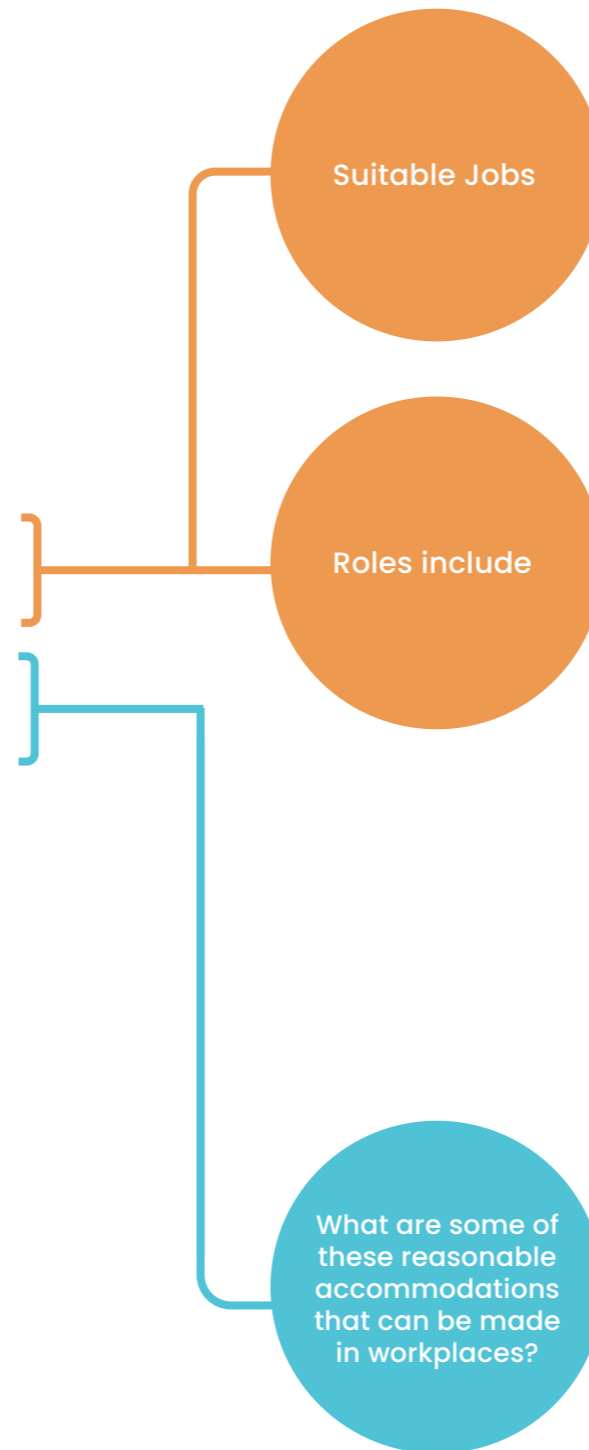


If more than half of your answers were **Yes...**

You're already one foot through the door! What are you waiting for? Reach out to any of the SSAs to get started on the inclusive hiring journey.

If more than half of your answers were **No/Maybe...**

Knowledge is power! Get a clearer picture of what hiring people with autism entails before you reach out to our SSAs. Check out SG Enable's [website](#) and [social media](#).



Across all sorts of industries and businesses but not limited to the following.

Data & QA analyst, digitisation and scanning, retail, urban farming, pharmacy healthcare, accounting, research assistant, art and design, web developer, web designer, software engineer

In general, people with autism thrive in roles that consist of

- **Routine tasks** (both basic or complex)
- Tasks where **attention to detail** and accuracy is required (e.g. research work, data entry, word processing).
- Tasks where there is a **clear procedure to follow** (e.g. sorting incoming and outgoing mails, filing, archiving, library work, baking, or packing)
- **Highly structured** tasks with a right and a wrong way of doing something (e.g. software testing, data entry)
- Tasks involving **numbers and facts** (e.g. maintaining accounting ledgers, cataloguing)

Some areas of improvement or changes:

- Giving a specific schedule of tasks, a clear set of instructions and expectations around performance standards
- Flexible work arrangements and option to work from home
- Use of devices that aid with sensory needs (e.g. noise cancelling headphones, dimmable lights etc.)
- Assigning a mentor or setting up a community of advocates
- Slight adaptations to interview processes such as providing questions ahead of time
- Designated quiet rooms/spaces
- Providing coworkers with opportunities to learn more about autism (e.g. workshops, talks, etc.)

Useful Resources

Now that you're ready to start on the inclusive hiring process, prepare for your meetings with the representatives from SG Enable and ARC by reading up on autism and inclusive hiring!

Below are some useful resources to get you started:

Informational Resources



[Employer Toolkit](#)



[Inclusive Advantage](#)



[Enabling Academy](#)

Understanding Autism



[Enabling Guide](#)



[What is Autism?](#)



[What it's really like](#)



[Autism as a Spectrum](#)

[Autism Enabling Master Plan 2021](#)



[Enabling Master Plan](#)



[Find out more about the Autism Enabling Master Plan 2021](#)

Check out our website and social media pages on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn, to learn more!



Social Media
[@theautismadvantage](#)

[Inclusive Hiring](#)

[Autism: Neurodiversity at Work Works Best | Layne Kertamus | TEDxRexburg](#)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikiolpTcBbl&list=PL_yfn1Khc6We5QLK1B4AshrFnujqm32US&index=8

[World Economic Forum: Here's why autistic people make efficient and logical workers](#)

- https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/autistic-people-neurodiversity-at-work-benefits-everyone/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social_scheduler&utm_term=Workforce+and+Employment&utm_content=29/09/2020+14:15

[UOB: The Unlimited](#)

- <https://www.uob.com.sg/theunlimited/index.html>

Acknowledgment

The Autism Advantage

Special Thanks to



SG Enable

For championing employment for persons with disabilities, and their continued support in the running of The Autism Advantage's campaign.



Autism Resource Centre (ARC) /
Employability and Employment Centre (E2C)

For their guidance and insights on the employment landscape for people with autism.



Friends – Jesselin Ong, Jan Wei Yoh, Wesley Loh, Kelvin Tan

For advocating inclusive employment for people with autism by bringing to light their stories and experiences in the workplace.



Nanyang Technological University (NTU) & Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI)

Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information
College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Management, Professors and peers for assisting The Autism Advantage in the embarking and running of the campaign.

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