



Neurodiversity Boosts Employee Retention But Why?

In the wake of the Great Resignation, employers are eager to boost employee retention numbers. In this post-pandemic employment ecosystem, employers must reckon with their worker's willingness to depart from enterprises that are not flexible and empathetic. One solution is to embrace neurodiversity. A hallmark of the business case for neurodiversity is the fact that neuroinclusive enterprises retain employees at higher rates than their less inclusive competitors.

But what is the reason for this increased retention? Are neurodistinct employees more loyal than neurotypicals? Does embracing neurodiversity improve retention only for the neurodistinct, or does retention improve for all employees? This iteration of our Competitive Advantage Series will answer these questions and more.

Who Does Neuroinclusion Boost Attention For?

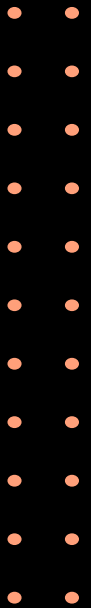


Initially, employers assumed incorrectly that their retention numbers increased after embracing neurodiversity because neurodistinct new hires were more loyal than neurotypical employees. To this day, you will see data and anecdotes from employers spun to create a narrative where neurodistinct people demonstrate superior loyalty. However, while well-intentioned, these data and testimonials tell the wrong story.

As always, it is best to glean insights related to neurodiversity directly from neurodistinct people. In his recent book, *We're Not Broken*, autistic author Eric Garcia distills his years of interviews with neurodistinct people into a concise rejection of the 'neurodistinct employees are more loyal' narrative.

Garcia explains the calculations neurodistinct employees make when considering a change in role. This often means choosing to remain in an unsatisfactory or mediocre position due to the ableist minefield between them and the next job rather than out of an authentic sense of loyalty.

For example, consider the unemployment rate for neurodistinct talent is 30-40%. Some neurodistinct candidates experience such significant barriers during the recruitment process that they complete hundreds of applications and interviews without landing a job they are qualified for. Once they finally land the job, many find themselves in a work environment void of neuroinclusion and burn out quickly. Suppose you found a way through that gauntlet and landed a suitable job. Wouldn't you also be risk-averse regarding pursuing other job opportunities?



Future Talent Wars

Industry-leading, ground-breaking corporates investing in authentic neuroinclusion have only begun doing so during the last decade. As the neurodiversity at work movement evolves, a tipping point will come where, if your enterprise doesn't embrace neurodiversity, the 20% of your workforce that is neurodistinct will take their talents elsewhere.

Early signals of this forthcoming talent war have already emerged. Many neurodistinct applicants will not accept a position at a company whose hiring processes are not neuroinclusive and who do not signal an authentic embrace of neurodiversity.

Suppose decision-makers at your enterprise don't see the benefits of neurodiversity. Can they articulate the business case for not embracing neurodiversity? It seems evident that the downside potential of 20% of their employees departing for a more inclusive setting should be motivation enough to take their first steps towards neuroinclusion.

Leveraging Neurodiversity to Boost Retention

In summary, neuroinclusion doesn't boost retention numbers because neurodistinct people are inherently more loyal. Instead, neuroinclusive best practices foster company cultures that are attractive to all employees. Your employees want to work where they can be authentic without fear of discrimination. They want to be understood and accepted individually rather than feeling like a cog in a machine. They want to work where senior leaders share their values. They want to work where empathy and flexibility are defaults. Neuroinclusive best practices potentially deliver these results.

If your enterprise has yet to take its first steps towards embracing neurodiversity, doing so now is critical to the future success of your business.



The following light-lift neurodiversity solutions offer a competitive edge through talent retention:

- Providing a regular cadence of check-ins and feedback during onboarding and transitions to new roles
- Permitting success enablers as a default – like lighting adjustments and noise-canceling headphones – rather than defaulting to formal accommodations request processes
- Launching a neurodiversity employee resource group
- Investing in scalable, tech-driven neurodiversity business solutions
- Incorporating neurodiversity within your broader diversity training and initiatives
- Make your interpersonal communications and expectations clear

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