World Autism Awareness Day: Now is the time for bold action

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd
Thursday, 1 April 2021

As communities come together around the globe to mark the fourteenth annual World Autism Awareness Day tomorrow, AMS (formerly Alexander Mann Solutions), a global provider of talent outsourcing and advisory services, has called on international employers to 'take bold actions' in creating equal opportunities for neurodiverse professionals.

According to new data from the Office for National Statistics in the UK, only 22% of autistic people are currently in employment. This is a shocking statistic in itself, but when considered in line with the wide recognition that a diverse workforce can create more profitable businesses, it demonstrates why swift action is needed. Neurodiverse talent can help companies view challenges and find solutions in new and different ways and should be a critical part of a firm's future talent strategies.

As Maxine Pillinger, Regional Managing Director, EMEA at AMS and Executive Lead for the AMS Neurodiversity and Disability Group, explained, employers need to move the neurodiversity agenda forward past the conversation stage by taking the leap into action now;

"The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) agenda has rapidly picked up pace over the last year as the world of work changed in light of the pandemic. However, when it comes to neurodiversity, progress is still slower than it should be. There's a wide recognition across most employers of the value that a diverse workforce brings to the business, but now is the time to move beyond the conversation and take bold action. It's fantastic that neurodiversity is on the corporate agenda, but there comes a point where firms need to take a leap of faith and implement changes – under expert guidance – and that time is now.

"At AMS we have started our neurodiversity journey and are continuing to adapt and learn as a business, but the important thing is we are challenging the norm to drive real change. We're partnering with the National Autistic Society in the UK under its Autism at Work programme to create a number of new roles for autistic candidates. Under this activity, we're working with the charity to review and adapt our recruitment and on-boarding process – and we'll be passing on our learnings to the global employers we work with to help create fairer opportunities for all. Our teams are also supporting an initiative in Berlin, partnering with local autism organisation Diversicon, with our colleagues volunteering their time and recruitment expertise to run workshops – delivered under guidance from the organisation's training coaches – to help prepare autistic individuals for the recruitment process and employment We're not only giving practical advice to help get more people past the initial screening and interview process, but also developing a better understanding ourselves into how recruitment can be adapted to be

more inclusive for neurodiverse candidates.

“It’s important to add that making adjustments to the recruitment process and creating a more inclusive working environment for neurodiverse individuals doesn’t require a huge financial investment. Sometimes small steps such as offering flexible working options, noise-cancelling headphones and a dedicated desk or quiet space can have a significant, positive impact on these individuals.”

ENDS

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About AMS

We are AMS. AMS is a global total workforce solutions firm founded in 1996. We enable organisations to thrive in an age of constant change by building, reshaping, and optimising workforces. We do this through talent acquisition and contingent workforce management, internal mobility and skills development, and talent and technology advisory services.

Our solutions are delivered by our 4500+ experts who live our passionate, bold and authentic values. Last year we placed 180,000 permanent hires and managed 26,000 contingent workers for our 180 outsourcing clients. And we advised many more organisations as trusted partners to help meet their talent objectives.

The ultimate aim is to help our clients around the world, in over 90 countries, create workforces that are fluid, resilient, diverse and differentiated.

We call this True Workforce Dexterity—and we’re here to help you achieve it.

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