

# getting employment right for autistic people: the rewards are worth it!

Dr Anna Remington



# why talk about employment?



- 16% autistic adults in full time work
- 32% in any paid work vs. 47% of other disabled groups (57% typical population)
- huge economic impact
- huge psychological impact



## **Employing autistic people makes good business sense**

>>> Loyal employees, increase overall retention

>>> A new perspective, increased creativity

>>> Hardworking, focused

>>> Attention to detail

>>> Increased productivity

>>> Honest!

>>> backed up by research?

Kemner et al  
2008

Fewer eye  
fixations

Enhanced  
discrimination of  
targets

Joseph et al  
2009

Embedded  
Figures Task

Shah & Frith 1983

Jolliffe & Baron-Cohen 1997

Visual Search

Plaisted et al 1998

O'Riordan 2004

O'Riordan & Plaisted 2001

**The Autism Gift**

Change Blindness

Smith & Milne 2009

Spatial Abilities

Caron et al 2004

Perfect Pitch: 5% in ASD

(0.05-0.01% in general population)

Rimland & Fein 1988

Pitch Discrimination Tasks

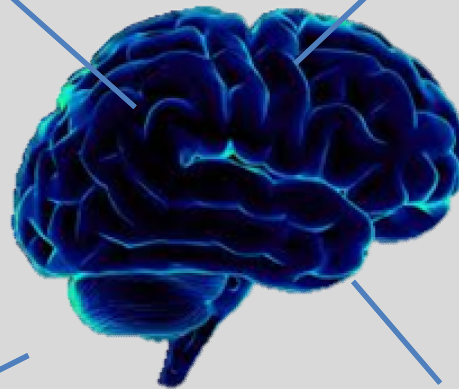
Bonnell et al 2003

Melody Discrimination

Mottron et al 2000

Identification and memory of individual musical notes

Heaton et al 1998





**Autism**

How do you solve the trickiest problems in the workplace? Employ more autistic people

Neurodiversity can be a huge advantage for companies, yet people on the spectrum are often overlooked

**THE CONVERSATION**

Academic rigour, journalistic flair

[Arts + Culture](#) [Business + Economy](#) [Cities](#) [Education](#) [Environment + Energy](#) [Health](#)

**Why employing autistic people makes good business sense**

April 14, 2015 6.21am BST

**Harvard Business Review**



**HIRING**

**Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage**

by Robert D. Austin and Gary P. Pisano

programme  
individualised  
adviser practice  
training coach  
employer coaching  
online  
placement support  
sheltered  
awareness interview  
supported job  
internship

- starting to see evidence that supported employment works
  - better employment rates
  - better retention rates
- but... we need more studies!



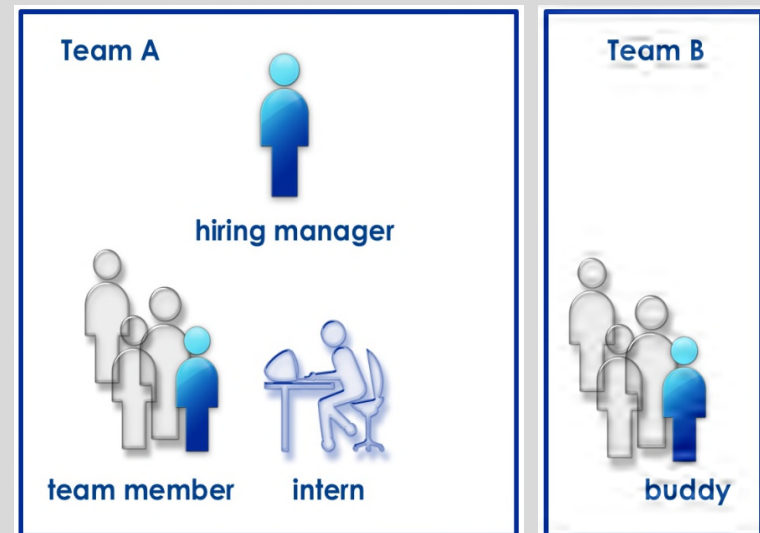
## An Internship Programme for Autistic Graduates at Deutsche Bank, UK



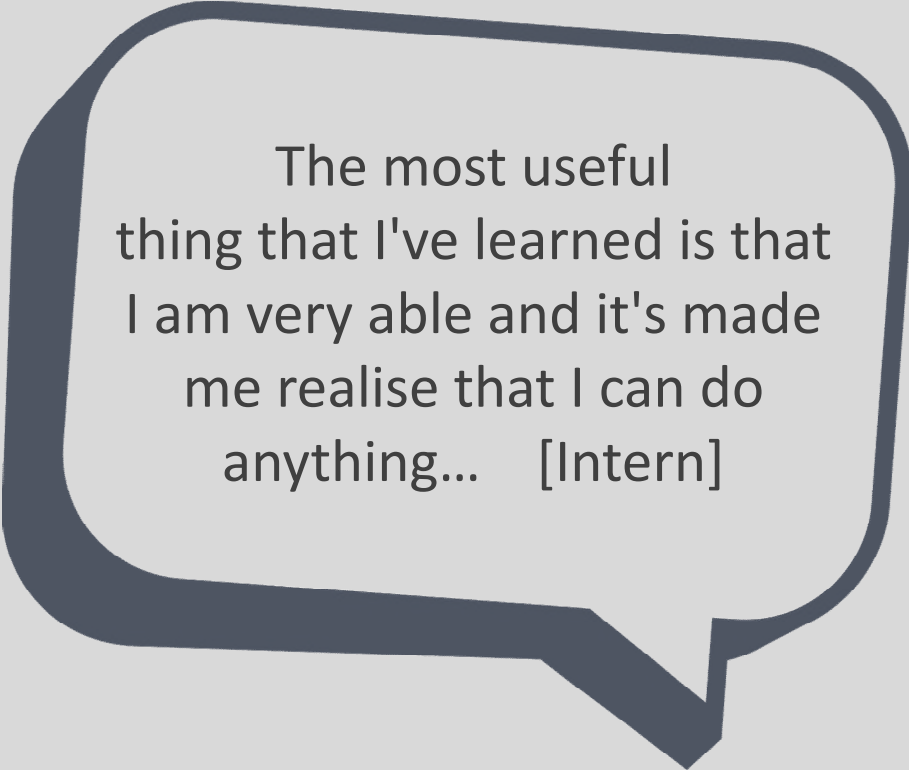
## semi-structured interviews



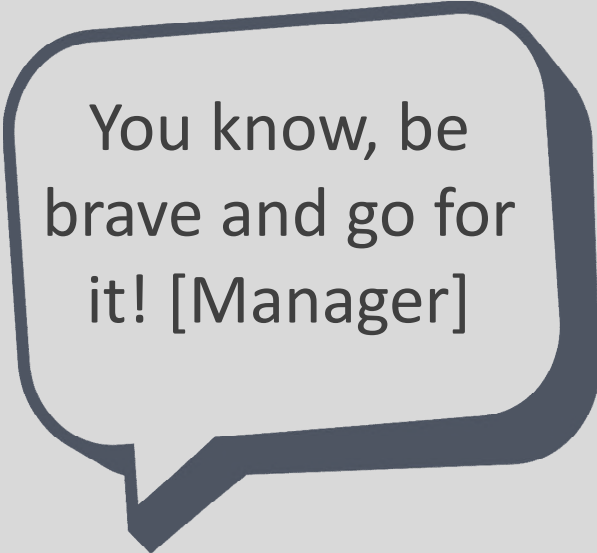
- 8 managers & 8 interns:  
before and after the 3-month  
internship
- 9 buddies and 8 team  
members: after internship



a positive, meaningful experience

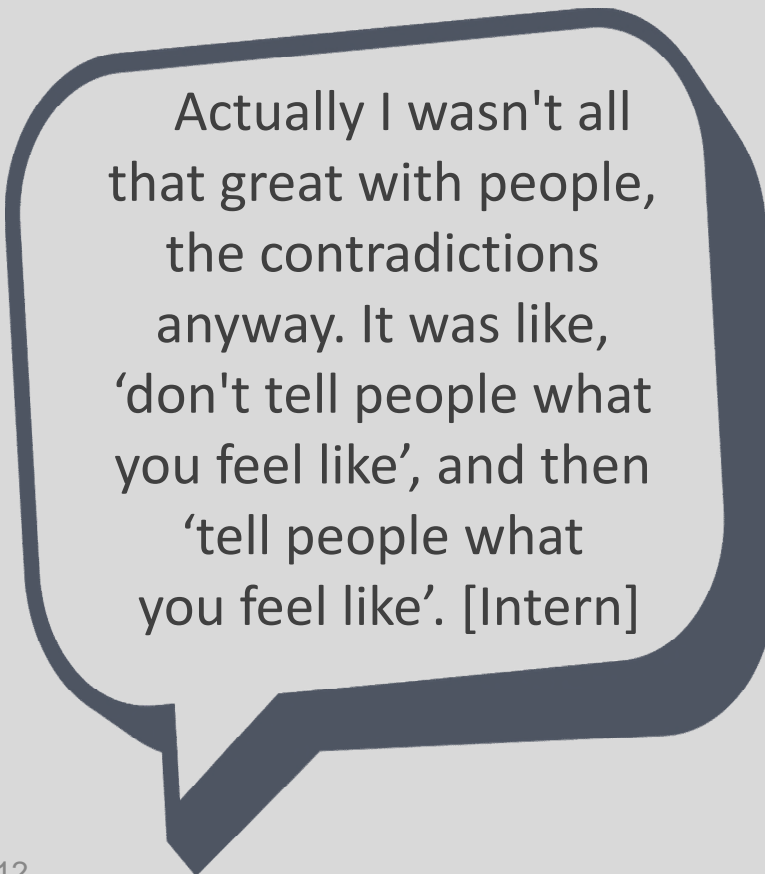


The most useful  
thing that I've learned is that  
I am very able and it's made  
me realise that I can do  
anything... [Intern]

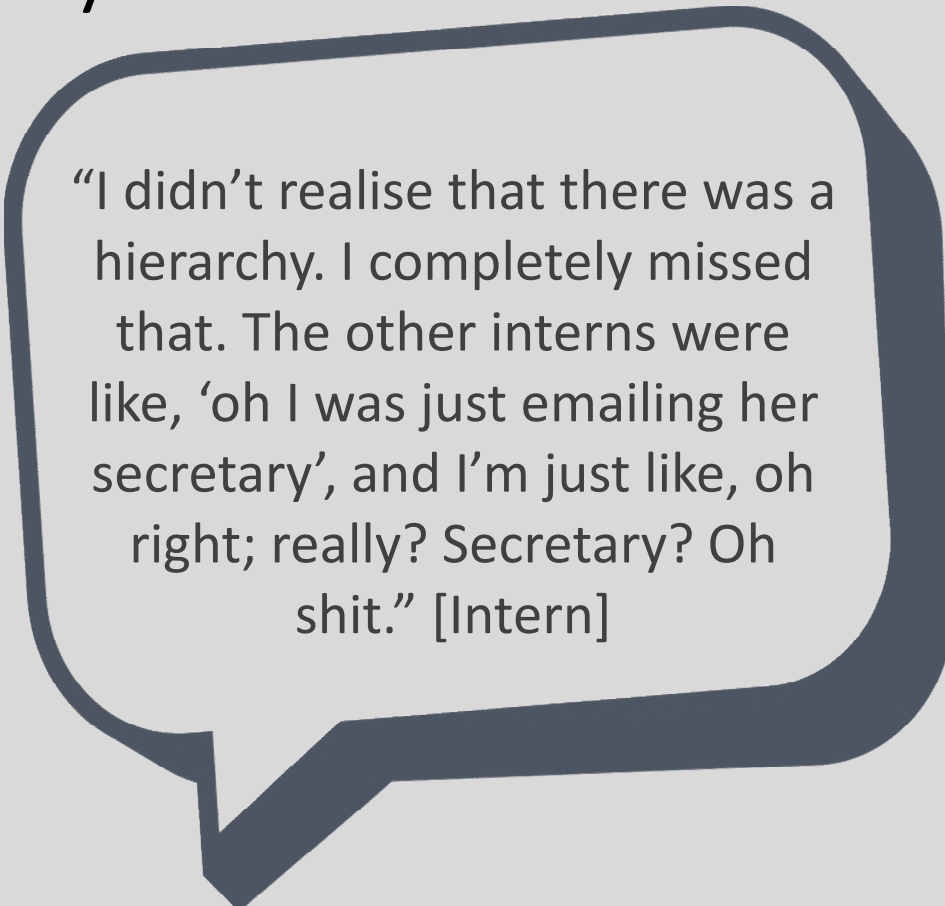


You know, be  
brave and go for  
it! [Manager]

## challenges along the way



Actually I wasn't all that great with people, the contradictions anyway. It was like, 'don't tell people what you feel like', and then 'tell people what you feel like'. [Intern]



"I didn't realise that there was a hierarchy. I completely missed that. The other interns were like, 'oh I was just emailing her secretary', and I'm just like, oh right; really? Secretary? Oh shit." [Intern]

## ***1. Maintain clarity and always be committed***

- Provide clear expectations about the programme.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Wherever possible, promises should be kept and deadlines met.





## ***2. Remember all individuals are different***

- Autism varies widely from person to person.
- Avoid making assumptions.



Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. You need to work out what the strengths are of your candidate and what the weaknesses are and find the right way [Manager]



### ***3. Provide training on autism as widely as possible***

- Provide training for all those who will interact with the interns.
- Managers should also be given ongoing professional support during the internship.

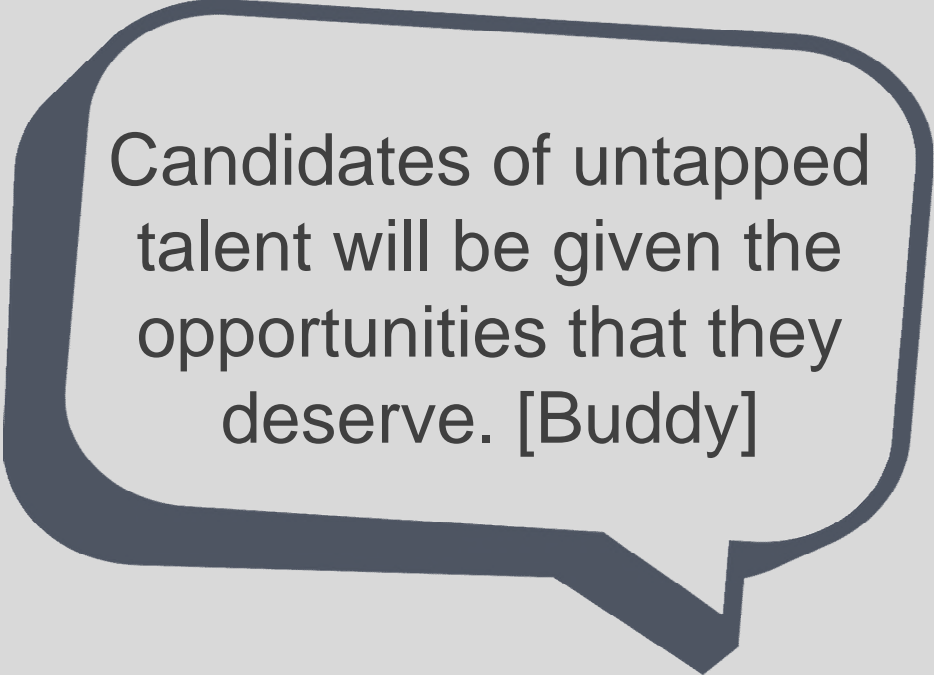


## ***4. Create a point-person for autistic interns and their managers***

- Difficulties in communicating concerns, especially when disagreements between interns and managers.
- Future cohorts would benefit from a neutral point-person, who could facilitate discussion between different parties.



- Deutsche Bank's autistic graduate internship programme seems a promising strategy



Candidates of untapped talent will be given the opportunities that they deserve. [Buddy]