# What Is the Economic Impact of Hiring Autistic, Neurodivergent and Disabled Talent? Here's What You Should Know.

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Much as the world sings paeans of praise about how disability inclusion has become an integral part of workplace culture, concerns around return on investment remain a major deterrence for many organizations not to hire autistic, neurodivergent and disabled people at scale. These concerns stem from ignorance at best and ableism at worst. In this article, I am going to present nine compelling reasons why disability inclusion benefits not just workplaces but also the overall economy of a community or country in several ways.

## 1. Increased productivity and decreased support costs

Ever wondered why a workplace that is homogenous in terms of a lack of diversity seems to hit a productivity plateau every so often? Do people lack the motivation to push forward, or does the apparent sameness of thoughts and approaches breed an invisible culture of doing just enough to not get fired?

Autistic, neurodivergent and disabled people can be the missing piece in the productivity puzzle. They often bring unique talents, strengths and perspectives to the workplace,

leading to increased productivity, better problem-solving and innovation.

In addition, employing autistic, neurodivergent and disabled people helps them become financially independent, which, in turn, decreases their dependence on government allowances while also lowering the cost of various community support services such as adult care, according to a PubMed Central® report.

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## 2. GDP growth

A study by Accenture, Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities revealed that closing the employment gap between people with disabilities and people without disabilities could help boost the GDP of the U.S. economy by up to $25 billion (about $77 per person in the US).

Therefore, it is a no-brainer that promoting disability-inclusive hiring practices and reducing employment gaps can have a positive impact on the overall economy of a country.

## 3. Increased consumer spending

As I mentioned earlier, autistic, neurodivergent and disabled people bring innovation and creativity to the workplace. With innovation comes better and more intuitive products and services that cater to a wider range of consumers, leading to increased consumer spending within a given marketplace. It is also possible to create new revenue streams if those products and services are specifically designed for consumers from niche markets such as hearing and visual aids, weight loss supplements, telehealth services for rural populations, gaming, etc.

Additionally, when neurodivergent or disabled people are employed, they often have more disposable income to spend on goods and services. This increased spending capacity can help revitalize the economy.

## 4. Lower turnover

Disabled employees tend to have lower turnover rates, which can bring down the costs associated with talent attraction, hiring and training.

According to a Job Accommodation Network (JAN) survey, 44% of accommodations for disabled employees cost less than $500, and the rest of the accommodations cost nothing at all. These findings, when contrasted with the cost of replacing an employee, which can range from 50% to 200% depending on their annual salary, further this benefit as reported by Enrich citing a study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

## 5. Increased customer satisfaction

By hiring employees who better represent the diverse population of customers, businesses provide better customer service and improve overall customer satisfaction.

A ResearchGate publication found that 92% of customers were more inclined to buy products and services from businesses that hire people with disabilities, and 87% said they would prefer to support businesses that actively hire people with disabilities.

This brings me to my next point.

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## 6. Improving brand reputation

Companies that demonstrate a commitment to disability inclusion are often viewed more favorably by consumers. This leads to increased brand loyalty and investment. In addition, the disability community, along with their family and friends, is a significant market worth trillions of dollars. By sharing the success stories of disabled employees and their families, companies can create a satisfied and loyal customer base, happy employees and a positive brand image through word-of-mouth marketing.

## 7. Tax benefits

Employing disabled individuals can offer businesses numerous tax benefits, including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Disabled Access Credit and the Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction – among other incentives. The extent of these benefits depends on the accommodation provided by the business for the employee, potentially resulting in substantial credits or returns.

## 8. Local economic and environmental impact

Sourcing disabled candidates locally stimulates the local economy through the creation of job opportunities in the immediate area – ones that may be impractical for people coming from distant locations due to transportation and relocation issues. When local people are employed, they are more likely to spend their money locally, which contributes to the growth of other local businesses. Working locally also means employees can avoid long commutes, which lowers their carbon footprints and helps build a more sustainable future.

# 9. Social impact

Hiring autistic, neurodivergent and disabled people helps break down stereotypes, reduce social stigma and discrimination, promote inclusion and create a positive social impact in the community. When individuals who are autistic, neurodivergent and disabled see others like them succeeding and achieving recognition in their community, it benefits not only them but everyone who supports them.

Hiring autistic, neurodivergent and disabled people goes beyond altruism. It strengthens the bottom line of an organization and provides numerous broader economic, social and environmental benefits that positively impact the well-being of any community or nation.

**Related: How Leaders Can Support and Embrace The Untapped Potential of Neurodiverse Talent**

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