Business Disability Forum

Building disability-smart organisations

Going Places: supporting people with learning disabilities and autism into work and in the workforce

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Who are we?

- Business Disability Forum is a not-for-profit member organisation that makes it easier and more rewarding to do business with and employ disabled people
- We have almost 30 years' experience of supporting organisations by sharing expertise and advice, providing training and facilitating networking opportunities
- Ultimately, we exist to transform the life chances of disabled people as **employees** and **consumers.**

Our membership

Our membership

Department for Work & Pensions

enterprise rent-a-car

Environment Agency

EY Building a better working world

GlaxoSmithKline

HM Revenue & Customs

Home Office

Our membership

What do we do?

- Membership and Partnership
  - Advice service
  - Learning & Development
  - Resources and toolkits
  - Networking and events
  - Consultancy
  - Mediation service
- Disability Confident accreditations
- Our own Disability Standard

Disability Standard

1. Commitment

2. Know-how

3. Adjustments

4. Recruitment

5. Retention

6. Product and services

7. Suppliers and partners

8. Communication

9. Premises

10. Information and communication (ICT)

Campaign themes we are focusing on

- Going Places:
  - Getting In – getting your first job and also physical access to buildings
  - Getting On – career progression and development
  - Getting There - transport
- Identity: the people behind the job titles
- Disability building blocks – don’t forget the basics!

The employment landscape - disabled people in today’s workforce

There are 13.3 million disabled people in the UK.

That's 1 in 5 people.

18% of working age adults are disabled.

44% of pension age adults are disabled.

80.2% of adult population in employment BUT

51% of disabled adult population

15% of adults with autism

6% of adults with learning disabilities

Government target: 1 million more disabled people into work by 2027

Not just a nice to have – skills shortages and…

BREXIT!*

*sorry

Transition to the workplace

Start with the end in mind

- Transition planning goals
- Better transition support from education to work – disabled graduates better degrees but poorer work outcomes
- Opportunities for practical work experience – college courses that include placements and support to learn skills linked to these
- Do service providers keep up with changing entry level jobs – increased technology and “traditional” roles disappearing?
- Opportunities in sectors like construction (and technology)

Rethinking recruitment

Poacher turned game keeper!

- Many employers we work with WANT to reach the broadest possible talent pool
- “How do I find disabled candidates?”
- Genuine commitment and some ground-breaking practice

What do you really need?

- Challenge your assumptions – and frame of reference
- Maynard Review removal of GCSE requirements
- Do you really need 5 years of experience? Or a particular qualification? Or a driving licence?
- How else might someone show you that they can do the job – or achieve the necessary standard?
- Softer competences may be off putting – e.g. “team player”
- Focus on outcomes – what you need done, rather than how
- Could the job be done flexibly? Part time? At home?

Attraction & application

- Does the imagery and language show “someone like me”?
- Is your advert accessible? Can you offer information in other formats?
- Where you advertise - and a long enough application window
- Application forms may be difficult – accessible process and also disadvantage those with less “traditional” CVs
- Digital screening – don’t build in bias
- User testing and inclusive design – are your portals and test systems accessible?

Ask about adjustments

- Examples of adjustments for interview
  - Easy read information
  - More time for tests (or remove timed element)
  - Questions in advance – and unambiguous
  - Opportunity to visit premises or see visual layout
- Are you testing the skills you need for the job?
  - Work trials – so people can show you what they can do, not tell you – are legally a reasonable adjustment
  - “Place and train” model consistently shown to work
- Hiring manager confidence to respond to requests

Adjustments in work

- Many adjustments are free
- Softer adjustments like travel times, flexible working, having a fixed desk space – under the Equality Act, to treat someone with a disability fairly doesn’t mean treating them the same
- Team meetings and socials
- Job carving and TSI
- Supporting the wider team e.g. communications, working patterns

Access to Work – Government's "Best kept secret"?

What AtW will fund

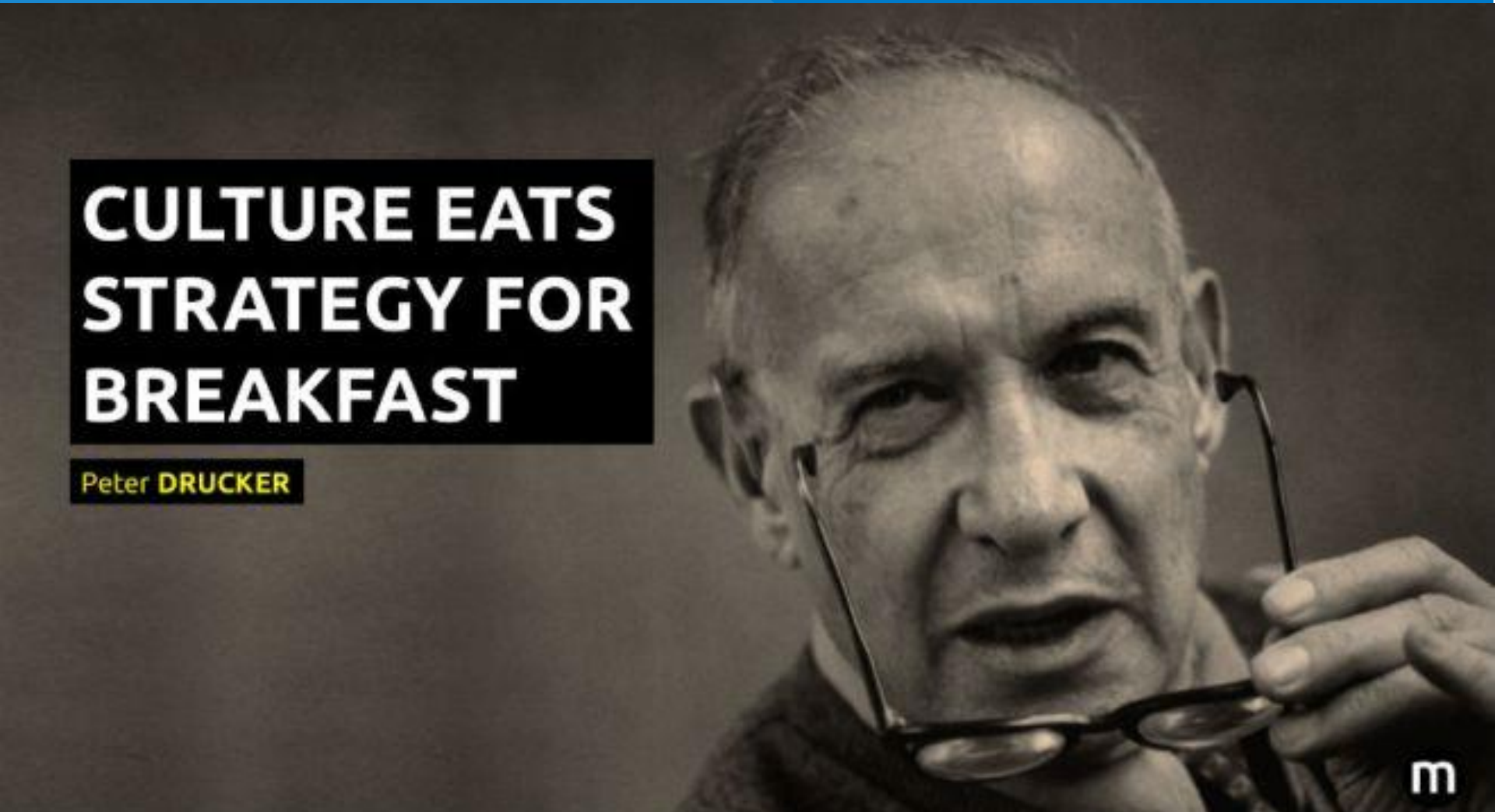
- Adaptations to the equipment you use
- Special equipment or software
- BSL interpreters and video relay, lip speaker or note takers
- Adaptations to your vehicle so you can get to work
- Taxi fares or a support worker if you can’t use public transport
- A job coach to help you in your workplace
- A support service if you have a mental health condition
- Disability awareness training for your colleagues
- Moving your equipment if you change location or job

What AtW will NOT fund

- Changes that your employer has to make (reasonable adjustments) – AtW will decide this
- Items that would normally be needed to do the job whether a person is disabled or not
- Support that your employer used to provide but has stopped
- **Still a cap on individual expenditure – cap has increased which is good BUT still too low for communications and “human” support e.g. job coach**

Some examples of best practice

- Civil Service Autism Exchange Programme
- Microsoft Autism-specific recruitment campaign
- Manchester Metropolitan University year long apprenticeships for young people with a learning disability aged 17-25
- National Grid apprenticeships programme – and effect on morale
- Camden Ability project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