

Dandelion Program – How do I kick it off?

The Dandelion Program is an organisational change initiative to create great inclusion for people that are on the autism spectrum.

The program is about building the skills and careers of the individuals in the program, and establishing a more inclusive environment.

The hardest part of the journey is starting.

For the program to be successful, it requires five elements:

- Identification of a strong need and/or value proposition, e.g. business area in need for resources and/or competitive differentiate.
- Executive sponsor advocating the vision.
- Establishment of a working group including business and technical leads.
- Establishment of a common purpose with working groups.
- Engagement and communication with the current workforce.

The business area with the strong need or pain point will mostly likely be the earlier adopter.

Establishing the right working group is critical; the group needs to cover a good cross section of the people that are required to assist with the implementation, and be the owners of the team/individuals afterwards.

Working group could look like this:

- Project Manager
- Human Resources Representative
- Manager/Team Leader of the area
- Individuals that want to assist

Establish regular cadence on the meetings and document actions. The working group should provide a regular update to the executive sponsor to keep them engaged.

The Outcome

Identify a strong need, stakeholders, and a sponsor that advocates the vision.

Checklist

- Has the organisation hired people with disability in the past? If so:
 - Who in the organisation?
 - How was the recruitment done?
 - What support was provided by the organisation?
 - What has been the experience?
- Identification of need within the organisation:
 - Resource shortages
 - High staff churn
 - Competitive advantage
- Identify the manager and/or team leaders in the area of need
- Presentation of the value provided to the people with autism to manager/team leads in the area
- Is there an organisation advocate group?
- Identification of the stakeholder that need to be involved in the program
- Identification of the executive stakeholder
- Establishment of working group:
 - Business area
 - Human Resources
 - Project manager
- Establishment of a common purpose and vision within the working group and the executive sponsor
- Establishment of an engagement and communication plan with the existing workforce
 - Town hall updates
 - Email update
 - Autism awareness sessions
- Executive sponsor presenting the program to his peers and/or his management