

Innovation: Tapping into the talents of autistic adults

Award-winning social enterprise Auticon launches its first UK office in London.

The B2B IT service provider Auticon exclusively employs autistic adults as Consultants. The exceptional cognitive abilities of Auticon Consultants create significant value for clients – the business model in Germany is highly successful. For its employees, Auticon creates autism-friendly work environments and thus promotes an increasingly inclusive labour market. The NAS estimates that only 15% of autistic adults in the UK are in full-time employment, often despite being highly qualified.

19.02.2016, London – When Kurt Schöffler joined Auticon as CEO in 2013, he had one clear goal in mind: ‘We wanted to create a bridge between the talents of autistic adults and the ongoing IT skills shortage that poses a tremendous challenge to the industry’, Schöffler remembers. ‘We are over the moon that so many high profile clients have recognised the potential that Auticon Consultants bring to their project teams. Our success in Germany now allows us to replicate the business model in London – Europe’s economic capital.’



Kurt Schöffler, CEO Auticon
Photo credit: Auticon

Auticon was founded in 2011 by Dirk Müller-Remus, who has a son diagnosed with Asperger syndrome – an autism spectrum condition. The business concept is convincingly simple. Autistic adults often have extraordinary cognitive abilities; yet many find it difficult to secure or maintain mainstream employment. Auticon is the first enterprise to exclusively employ adults with Asperger syndrome as IT consultants. It thus taps into the significant but largely unrecognised potential of what the company refers to as ‘specific autistic intelligence’.

Pattern recognition, logic, precision, sustained concentration, and an ability to intuitively spot errors are some of the exceptional qualities that Auticon Consultants add to clients’ IT projects. These skills are of particular value in areas such as quality management, security, compliance and BI – Auticon’s service portfolio. ‘Recent research by the LSE found that autism costs the UK £32bn each year, mainly due to soaring unemployment rates. Only employment can help tackle this problem. We thus produce a win-win-win situation for clients, autistic jobseekers and society’, Schöffler explains.

‘We are lucky and grateful to have investors with foresight and a vision. Without their support, the set up in UK would have been a lot harder,’ Schöffler continues. London- and Munich-based Ananda Social Venture Fund is one of the investors. The fund introduced Auticon at the G8 Social Impact Investment Forum in the UK in 2013 as a best practice model for social investment.

Kurt Schöffler: ‘We are ambitious to create as many employment opportunities for autistic adults in the UK as possible. More than a third of German DAX Index businesses are already convinced by the quality of our services and we are now looking forward to work with clients in the UK. As a long-time fan of the UK, launching in London is a matter very close to my heart.’

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