

## **Executive Summary**

Each year, millions of uniquely talented, highly qualified candidates all over the nation walk across graduation stages and into the workforce as freshly minted high school, college, and professional school graduates. They come from as many diverse walks of life as there are people in any given graduating class, and while they are united in the essential qualities of determination, resilience, and perseverance, each is quite distinct in his specific set of skills, aptitudes, and intellectual inclinations. Many of these talented young men and women are among the one in every five individuals around the globe today that are burdened by dyslexia. While this condition can pose seemingly insurmountable struggles in the earliest years of education and continue to present difficulties in more advanced studies and eventual careers, the fact is that the “deficit” in reading and language processing is often a disguise for what is, much to the contrary, a unique arsenal of abilities and aptitudes spurred on by the necessity of developing compensatory mechanisms for success in school and work. The result is almost always invaluable abilities and working skills that are typically not developed by an individual non-dyslexic individual.

However, the challenge still remains, through no fault of employers, educators, families, or dyslexic individuals themselves, to devise strategies to make sure it is these unique strengths, rather than the often more readily observable weaknesses, that are brought to the forefront in an evaluation and in a dyslexic individual’s work product. At Jobs for Dyslexics, our mission is to help you confront that challenge by providing you background, resources, contact information, and countless other tools that can help you maximize the human resources you have available to you and to give you a business advantage in the form of superior strategies in how best to deploy the talents of those with dyslexia. The result, inevitably we feel, is a happier, more self-assured workplace made up of dyslexic and non-dyslexic individuals alike, and a competitive edge to those businesses able to realize the hidden potential of dyslexic individuals. We are excited that you are ready to accept this challenge and are committed to helping you experience a transformation of your workplace and a competitive boost in today’s fierce business climate.

## **Understanding Dyslexia**

Today, numerous definitions of dyslexia are active across the globe, and each time a new definition or interpretation gets added to the conversation, our hopes to establish a coherent, unified approach as a society to address the problems presented grow dimmer. There is strong evidence that dyslexia has a genetic basis, and the probability that a parent or other close relative has the condition significantly raises the odds that an individual will display symptoms. However, equally compelling are the indications that brain development plays a central role. The interactions between these two causes are still in the process of being completely understood.

At its core, dyslexia is a neurological condition affecting a wide range of language processing and generating tasks, many of which are integral to an individual’s participation in an information-based 21<sup>st</sup> century society. The symptoms indicating a high likelihood of dyslexia are numerous, and no two dyslexic individuals will display the same set of indicators, but the most commonly recognized signals

are difficulties with reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, organization, and time management. Adding to the difficulty of understanding and diagnosing dyslexia is the fact that many individuals with certain language difficulties present as anomalies. A student may struggle with reading speed and comprehension due to her dyslexia, however, instead of exhibiting the predicted poor spelling and vocabulary skills, she achieves far beyond her chronological age in these latter academic areas. Similarly, while a dyslexic adult may struggle with tasks of lexical access (i.e., finding the right word to use in a given situation) and phonemic awareness (a natural ability to translate letters and letter combinations to auditory sounds), such a person may be a very fluent and accomplished reader.

While the dyslexia, in any of its manifestations, is brought to the forefront because of its obvious impact on a student's work in the classroom or an employee's work product at the office, it is present and operative at all times and in all settings. We may take breaks from our scholastic and work lives, but dyslexia, like any neurological irregularity, knows no recess, spring break, or timeouts. An individual who struggles with dyslexia in a formal setting invariably must cope with it in his or her everyday life, regardless of the apparent ease with which one conducts activities outside of school or work. Because of the apparent contradictions in a dyslexic individual's skill set, a proper diagnosis is often not made until young adulthood. By this time, a person has likely completed or is nearing completion of his or her academic career and has often settled into a highly focused occupation. Because today's working world is far more poorly resourced than the public school system as regards tools to combat dyslexia, an individual may not get the chance to achieve at the highest professional level of which he or she is capable, and the devastating result is often the stunting of professional development and sometimes the loss of one's career altogether.

However, dyslexia is not inherently a death sentence to one's academic or professional career. Individuals with dyslexia typically display average to above average intellectual ability, and the historical contributions select individuals have made to our society are too numerous to recount in a single document. But in order to unlock the aptitudes and talents, it is often necessary for a dyslexic individual and those in his or her immediate environment to work together to clear the hurdles. Modern technology has endowed us with the resources to effectively combat problems with spatial sequencing of words, spelling inconsistencies, phonemic awareness, writing difficulties (sometimes called "dysgraphia"), and deficiencies in basic math operations (sometimes called "dyscalculia"). The task, therefore, is to bridge the gap between the potential of these tools and their effective deployment on behalf of dyslexic individuals, and to establish and maintain the level playing field that is essential to the fluidity of any professional workplace.

### **Numbers Don't Lie: The Staggering Impact of Mismanaged Dyslexia on American Business**

Dyslexia is the most common reading disability with approximately 1 out of every 5 people struggling with dyslexia. More than 20% of the population is dyslexic, yet many remain undiagnosed, untreated and struggling with the impact of their dyslexia<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity, <http://dyslexia.yale.edu/MDAI/>

- Even more startling is that a 2007 study revealing that in a survey of 102 entrepreneurs in the U.S., 35 percent identified themselves as dyslexic<sup>2</sup>. This small sample suggests that among society's most innovative and creative individuals, the frequency of dyslexia is almost twice that found in the general population, and that more than 1 in 3 individuals of this category will have dyslexia. Therefore, if extrapolated to the general population of entrepreneurs in America, a business culture that wholly excludes these talents on account of dyslexia precipitates a deadweight loss of one-third of its potential talent. While we do not believe a blanket exclusion currently exists as unwritten policy, the rate of integration is still far too low.
- A survey of union representatives found that 8 in 10 members were aware of somebody in their workplace with dyslexia, and that 55 percent believed that those individuals are experiencing barriers to training<sup>3</sup>. The odds are overwhelmingly high that a company of any industry employs dyslexic individuals. It is therefore necessary to take the steps recommended herein regard to management's awareness of any individual cases so that a company is prepared to manage a talented dyslexic employee before the actual need arises
- Another recent study of entrepreneurs confirmed the above finding that 35% of U.S. entrepreneurs are dyslexic<sup>4</sup>. This compares with an incidence of 1% in U.S. corporate managers. Our goal is to explore ways to open up the doors of America's leading corporations for the best and brightest minds to be represented equally at all levels of business and social contribution.
- While the stark imbalance is a worldwide phenomenon, our progress lies behind our peer nations, and in particular, the United Kingdom. The same study found that 19% of British entrepreneurs identify as dyslexic, compared to 3% of British corporate managers<sup>5</sup>. It is our belief that the UK currently does a far better job in integrating special talents into its mainstream workforce while providing an atmosphere conducive to entrepreneurial self-employment, and that we would benefit from looking to their system as a model for domestic development.

### **Dyslexia in the Workplace**

JFD is committed to assembling innovative, cutting-edge resources that transform the modern workplace by facilitating access to the most advanced assistance tools by dyslexic individuals and their employers and identifying and actively reaching out to working individuals most in need of the resources available. Additionally, we are working to create a portal through which individuals in need and their employers can seamlessly determine the best tools to manage individual cases of dyslexia and to make available the knowledge and experience of JFD to unite individuals with the most ideal mitigation tools.

Before the job even starts, a dyslexic applicant may face an insurmountable hurdle in a lengthy written job application. Typical job applications are often upwards of ten pages long and require extensive

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<sup>2</sup> Leiber, Nick. "New Dyslexia Documentary Explains Entrepreneur Link."

[www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/running\\_small\\_business/archives/2011/05/journey\\_into\\_dyslexia.html](http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/running_small_business/archives/2011/05/journey_into_dyslexia.html)

<sup>3</sup> "Learning & Development." *People Management* (2011): 15. Business Source Elite. Web. October 20, 2014

<sup>4</sup> Miller, Danny. "The Dyslexic Researcher: A Call to Broaden Our Portals." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 10.2 (2011): 340-350.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

written information, if not lengthy written passages, from the applicant. These forms often use extremely small font for some smaller required fields which exacerbates the processing difficulties of some, though not all, dyslexic individuals in deciphering their content. To ensure that unique talent invaluable to an individual companies' interests and philosophy is not overlooked because of the difficulty he or she may exhibit completing one or more of the many steps of the application process, employers could benefit from working closely with their Human Resources departments in crafting a hard-copy application that appears in as straightforward a format as is possible. Each company will require applicants to demonstrate different aspects of experience and qualifications, and general guidance is therefore quite abstract, but the Human Resources departments and hiring managers of each organization are best positioned to determine what style of written application will result in the fewest applicants being dismissed for reasons other than substantive job qualifications.

Additional problems faced by dyslexics who ultimately receive and accept a job offer in the modern workplace include difficulty accurately reading charts, graphs, schedules, directories, and other forms of information compilation, in addition to underlying inefficiencies in processing standard prose. Research is underway to determine fonts that most effectively ameliorate the various deficiencies individuals may demonstrate using these standard forms of information storage. Even without high-tech resources on hand, employers can continuously ensure that employees are comfortable with the font and typeset in which information is presented. Employers should actively gauge the level of comfort an employee with dyslexia appears to have with a given mode of presentation, and in the cases of marked difficulty, the opportunity to have information presented in an alternative format, wherever possible, should be seized. In addition, all employers can benefit from a human resources perspective by seeking to hire or engage professionals trained in the management of dyslexia by providing ongoing tutoring and reinforcements in the areas in which an employee is found to have the greatest difficulty. Investment in these specialists is a nearly certain payoff due to the vastly increased productivity a dyslexic employee would experience under their mentorship.

Lastly, peer awareness and support systems is invaluable to a functional modern workplace. The contributions of hiring managers, executives, and human resources professionals are all indispensable to success in the effective management of dyslexia and the tapping of what otherwise threatens to be the dormant potential of dyslexic workers. However, policy and awareness only go so far, and the key to success of dyslexic individuals in the workplace inevitably lie in the day-to-day support systems established among co-workers. Training should be available in all levels of company operations to inform, instruct, and enhance the cooperative systems that lie at the heart of any functional organization. Such a support network among employees ensures that valuable resources go the greatest possible distance in establishing and maintaining not just a policy, but a general climate of support for individuals with all manifestations of dyslexia.

JFD is committed to reaching out to and working with all stakeholders in government and private industry to exchange ideas and concerns and to establish and fine tune these company programs in pursuit of a more efficiently managed workforce comprised of dyslexics and non-dyslexics alike.

### **Myths Debunked**

*MYTH: Dyslexia is indicative of a lower level of intelligence and comprehension*

FACT: Dyslexia bears no connection to an individual's IQ, other than the fact that the neuropsychological basis for the diagnosis of a Specific Learning Disability in reading, writing, or math as dictated by recently released DSM-V (2013) is a discrepancy test between one's IQ subsets and actual academic achievement demonstrated. If there is any pattern, it is that the typical IQ level of an individual with dyslexia is in the Above Average range

*MYTH: Dyslexia is synonymous with a low literacy level*

FACT: Dyslexic adults fall in a range spanning the entire spectrum of established literacy standards. Many are academically accomplished and read at superior levels of comprehension. Most commonly, however, the observed phenomenon is a slower reading speed. Employers can provide an environment conducive to maximum output by ensuring, whenever possible, that bright, dyslexic individuals are provided ample time, even when some constraints are inevitable, to complete dense reading tasks integral to the job. When possible, the co-worker and manager support systems outlined above should be implemented to streamline a dyslexic's comprehension of dense materials, and those able to provide crucial information succinctly should offer to be of service in this manner. Subject to the resources of each individual company, providing incentives to employees who are able to make meaningful contributions to the job comfort of dyslexic colleagues would be a fruitful strategy to build a cooperative environment in which dyslexic and non-dyslexic individuals can both function at their maximum capabilities.

*MYTH: Dyslexia is defined by the reversal of letters on the printed page*

FACT: Letter reversal is a commonly reported symptom in dyslexic individuals, but it is by no means a typical manifestation of the disorder, let alone either a definitive or conclusive sign of dyslexia. Effects range from words appearing jumbled or misaligned to difficulty with accurately writing letters.

*MYTH: Dyslexia is a childhood phenomenon and disappears completely by early adulthood*

FACT: Dyslexia is a lifelong condition that has a very different manifestation during childhood than during adulthood. Most typically, problems with decoding words and text in the school years translate to poorer efficiency and comprehension in the later stages of school, continuing on into a dyslexic individual's working life. An individual may have worked very hard to compensate for the difficulties presented by his or her dyslexia over many years, if not decades, and therefore, the difference may be almost imperceptible to an employer. Therefore, when an employee discloses the presence of dyslexia, it is important to remain vigilant and actively monitor the progress and comfort level that an employee experiences in the workplace. When older and out of school, the difficulties remain, but are likely only seen when a serious error occurs. With proper support and oversight, but not at the expense of opportunities for advancement, an individual's lifelong efforts to compensate for his or her shortcomings attributable to dyslexia will be well rewarded in the workplace.

### **Impact of Insufficient Understanding of Dyslexia**

These misconceptions about dyslexia lead to the deadweight loss of valuable talent across all levels of industry. However, the overarching problem rarely finds its root in the workplace, and employers are hardly the only cohort prone to misunderstanding the nature of dyslexia. Far more often, the seeds of mismanaged dyslexia are sown in the educational system. As a dyslexic individual works to compensate and find coping mechanisms to succeed academically, he or she is at least as likely as an educator or an employer to form spurious views and conclusions about his or her own dyslexia. Furthermore, in early childhood, when the achievement gap between dyslexic and non-dyslexic individuals begins to widen, the self-esteem of the former often atrophies. While many dyslexics are able to close this gap with highly personalized learning strategies and eventually excel academically, the self-esteem and positive attitude necessary for success and self-sufficiency in the real world frequently go unrecovered. For this reason, gifted and accomplished dyslexics often have the deepest and most problematic misgivings about their own condition.

The devastating impact of this misinformation is that dyslexic individuals themselves are prone to opt out of many language-based fields that they have developed integral competencies through academic study, and to which they would bring invaluable contributions. Even more often, they eschew academic paths leading to opportunities in those fields due to intensive reading requirements. These individuals do not even afford themselves the opportunity to compete for employment in fields that are in need of their abilities. While disadvantages posed by dyslexia in the application process, as discussed above, hinder the access of qualified applicants to competitive jobs and lead employers to form false conceptions of the potential value of those candidates to their firms, this problem is dwarfed by the decision of countless dyslexics that they are not fit for a particular occupation.

JFD believes that the startling numbers presented earlier are much more attributable to the discouraging experiences and views that dyslexics acquire over their academic and early professional careers than to the prejudices formed by employers in the application process and in evaluations of work performance. Nonetheless, employers can be of great assistance to future professionals by reaching out to schools in their community and working with educators and administrators in those schools to ensure that dyslexic individuals with talents for a particular field are encouraged to elect and maintain the academic pathways that lead to careers in those fields. By addressing this far more damaging early problem, employers will be better positioned to identify and recruit these able individuals by the time they are job-ready. Furthermore, hiring managers should be encouraged to enlist the experience and knowledge of these educators in ensuring that once they are hired for the job, dyslexics continue to get the support and encouragement to persevere in their chosen fields despite the struggles that may persist.

### **Business Advantages of Dyslexic Individuals and Their Employers: How to Capitalize**

The following is just a very small sample of the numerous talents and advantages dyslexic employees are likely to bring to the table. While a comprehensive list is truly impossible, we have tailored the collection below to contain those abilities that provide the most indisputable business edge for employers. What we have done is match a particular set of talents with a career path more typically associated with those abilities, identified the areas in which such a person is likely to need the greatest assistance in order for

the underlying gifts to be realized, including where that would affect them in the stated traditional career path, and finally, suggested the business role in which such an employee would be most likely to thrive followed by a general tip on how to provide a smoother, more efficient experience in that role.

The way we suggest that this resource be deployed in the business setting is simple. When an applicant who has disclosed dyslexia or has difficulties strongly suggesting the presence of dyslexia (see earlier sections), hiring officials should examine the application, and if necessary, inquire of the applicant during the interview, for evidence of participation in activities associated with the careers mentioned. This way, likely talents come to the forefront before deployment in any particular business setting, and hiring officials provide themselves with a guide on how to further examine the applicant for fitness in a particular role. After hiring, HR officials should pass this information along to hiring managers who can further explore these talents in special focus to best ensure that potential is being maximized from the very start of employment.

*Skill:* Mastery of observation, intuition regarding character and personality, and empathy for human nature

*Typical Career:* Actor/Actress, Author, Psychological Therapist

*Typical Weakness:* Slow and laborious reading of scripts, needs greater amount of time to produce written prose

*Business Advantage:* Successful human resources professionals need a keen eye for talent, and a dyslexic HR official, in addition to recognizing somebody with similar aptitudes, brings a unique intuition towards the construction of a successful project team and the delegation of assignments. In this way, a dyslexic individual enables a company to make the most of its investments in staff by ensuring that talents are put to use in areas in which they will generate the greatest insight and advantage. In addition, these individuals almost always make for the most adept marketers (see next item).

*Deployment Strategy:* Allow the employee to express thoughts orally whenever possible, and when the dyslexic employee is examining another applicant for employment, allow most of the hiring process to be done face-to-face. This, in turn, benefits future dyslexic applicants.

*Skill:* Dexterity and fine hand-eye coordination

*Typical Career:* Mechanic, Technician, Surgeon

*Typical Weakness:* Slow reading of instruction manuals and textbooks on technical subject

*Business Advantage:* These dyslexic employees are most often best employed as the chief creators of the company's value. These are the minds behind a company's product, and they provide the scientific knowledge of the processes by which these products are developed and operated. In the case of a professional services industry, these employees have a great deal to offer clients of the firm with which they are employed and advise them of their product. Often, technically skilled individuals go on to excel in heavily text-based professions, such as law and public policy, and it is their technical understanding

that propels them to the most highly esteemed posts in those fields. It is imperative, for example, that an intellectual property attorney be skilled in a technical field, as the patent rights accorded a company for an innovative product must be secured by highly detailed claims and descriptions often only accessible to minds that work in this way. Dyslexic employees can participate in all roles of product development, but those skilled with hands-on demands are indispensable as a company seeks to develop its business and capitalize on its knowledge and contributions to society.

*Deployment Strategy:* Lean towards placing dyslexic employees who are highly skilled in a technical area into the most active stages of substantive development of the product. This may range from research into manufacturing efficiency to creation of next-generation models to propose to management for further investigation. Without the talents of this category of individuals, the other business advantages we describe in this section are left without a substrate, and it is therefore crucial that a company realizes every bit of development potential at its disposal by actively seeking out dyslexic individuals with these attributes.

*Skill:* Visual and three-dimensional proficiency and technical understanding

*Typical Career:* Painter/Sculptor, Engineer, Architect Interior Designer

*Typical Weakness:* Difficulty processing written descriptions of physical concept

*Business Advantage:* Industries whose primary products are devices or machines, in addition to benefiting from the talents of dyslexic individuals in product development, stand to distinguish themselves from the competition in sales with the help of the persuasive ability possessed by dyslexics in representing a product and its features to the consuming public. These individuals are likely to have a superior understanding of the technical workings of a company's product, both in itself and in the differences between that and other products on the market. Furthermore, artistically inclined individuals are likely to be able to produce the best visual aids and manuals for use of the product, and, whether face-to-face with customers or not, they are likely to have the greatest impact on both active and prospective purchasers of the company's products.

*Deployment Strategy:* Allow meetings to be based on pictorial representations of the company's ideas, and avoid PowerPoint and other modes of presentations that are flooded with text and do not emphasize physical manifestations. Furthermore, these individuals best work with the use of colors and their contrasts, sometimes through use of a photographic or eidetic memory, and a setting that lends itself to such a depiction of business notions would be ideal.

*Skill:* "Sixth sense" abilities, or the ability to understand things that are not explicitly stated

*Typical Career:* Psychoanalyst, Literary Critic, Historian

*Typical Weakness:* Processing of dense text is slow and focus on minute detail is not an efficient strategy

*Business Advantage:* Dyslexic employees may not be able to offer rapid processing of several small facts and figures when they are presented in prose (though they may excel when presented graphically),



but they are likely to be able to offer an all-encompassing approach to business data by virtue of the learning process that enabled them to complete their education. Others are likely to focus on such details, while dyslexic employees will draw sweeping conclusions and more powerful methods of presentation to executives. Furthermore, these employees are often the most skilled negotiators, and will detect strategies and weaknesses of their counterparts during negotiation sessions more rapidly than those who are able to process smaller details with alacrity.

*Deployment Strategy:* Instead of placing dyslexic employees with these characteristics in processing roles, involve them in the parts of development in which the company communicates its overall ideas to the outside world, including consumers. Dyslexics have evolved strategies of integrating massive amounts of integration through their compensation methods in the classroom, and, if applicable, previous jobs, and can be the effective spokespeople for the company in ways that do not repel members of the public by overloading materials with information.

JFD encourages all employers to visit its website, [www.jobsfordyslexics.org](http://www.jobsfordyslexics.org), to explore the numerous technologies available for use by dyslexic employees and their employers in providing adequate accommodations. However, above all, we believe it is helpful to view the support systems we are advocating in the workplace as a positive and innovative business strategy rather than as a solution to a problem.

One goal of ours is to be of help in any particular instance in which we are able. We have the ability and expertise to provide highly-tailored solutions for the support of individual dyslexic employees and to craft a management strategy that will extract the highest productivity from that employee and his co-workers. However, our ultimate goal is to provide the resources and framework necessary for managers and other individuals in supervisory roles to think for themselves and develop an intuition that morphs into business habit and industry standards. We invite you to examine the section above for a very broad introduction to the special talents most commonly found in dyslexic individuals. In hiring and evaluation practice, we encourage employers to examine this list for further guidance on the types of business projects a dyslexic team member might best be put to use. In turn, we encourage each employer to build on this short and admittedly highly incomprehensive list to create a company-specific resource that can be used to match employees with a particular skill set to a fitting project or general responsibility. While our list is quite generic, our hope is that the individual products generated by Human Resources officials and other in-house professionals will be highly differentiated, industry- and organization-specific guides that use terminology and job language singular to each employer to aid managers in recognizing hidden and untapped potential.

### **Engagement and Hiring**

As previously discussed in the Workplace section, the very first obstacle to success of a dyslexic individual in a job comes in the very act of obtaining the job. Even if subsequent hardships would be brought to the forefront once employment commenced, a dyslexic navigating today's highly language-based work culture may be deprived of the very basic chance he or she deserves to demonstrate unique

aptitudes and to continue what is usually a lifelong undertaking, namely, to continue to find ways to achieve excellence in spite of apparent hurdles to success.

JFD does not take a position on whether or not it is appropriate for a dyslexic to disclose or conceal his or her struggles when applying or interviewing for a job. We feel that this is a personal decision to be made by each individual in consultation with career advisors. However, in the instances in which an individual chooses to disclose dyslexia in the application process or following acceptance of a job offer, we would encourage an approach that sought the active hiring and retention of these individuals with an eye to detecting talents in the categories we have described above. Strategies of this type include, but are not limited to, a strong emphasis on oral application components, a clearer application form if written material is necessary, and an interviewing format that reserves extensive and anxiety-yielding reading tasks for times outside the window of the interview. The latter, while often important to any applicant's ability to present a compelling case for hiring, is essential for a dyslexic to effectively demonstrate his or her potential to an official making hiring decisions.

We believe it is imperative to good hiring practices that active steps are taken to assist and advise dyslexic applicants in their application processes and subsequent occupational adjustment. While many dyslexics will already have the support of their schools, families, and even prior employment settings, each individual employer can aid its own recruiting process by disseminating information and suggestions focusing on how to make its own application process less cumbersome for those with language difficulties. The natural result of such an approach would be a greater influx of competitive talent that saves resources otherwise expended on slow and laborious talent searches and a misallocation of the time and energy of Human Resources professionals in addressing individual cases.

### **Community Participation**

No permanent and broad-reaching initiative in support of any group in need of assistance can ever take hold without the active involvement and continual reinforcement of the values and objectives of the undertaking by the larger business community. JFD aims to deploy its solutions not just on a case-by-case basis, but to encourage the widespread integration of innovative strategies as industry standards to maximize the potential of dyslexic employees in the workplace. We encourage employers not just to turn to JFD in the event they need counsel on a particular, pressing issue involving a dyslexic individual. Rather, we hope that industry leaders will seek to build policies and practices that anticipate the needs of dyslexics in the workforce and take prophylactic measures to ensure that resources are in place before the dyslexic worker is even brought in for an interview. Hiring managers and Human Resources departments can collaborate horizontally and across different industries to share information and experiences and advise one another on how to build the most effective support systems. The result, we expect, will be a welcoming business climate that is engineered to identify and hire talented dyslexic candidates across a vast array of fields without the long-term need for corrective measures by individual companies or departments to support the access of these individuals to the job market.

### **Towards a Brighter Future for Dyslexics and Their Employers**

Happily, American business and government has already accepted this mission and efforts to actively integrate dyslexics into all sectors of the workforce are well underway. Legislators, state executives, and business leaders have recently been giving increased focus to the full integration of the workforce, and dyslexics stand to be one of the chief beneficiaries. However, as we suggest, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and full participation of industry is required for success.

The Markell Blueprint, an initiative sponsored by Delaware Governor Jack Markell, has aimed to provide a conduit for individuals, educators, employers, and lawmakers to more efficiently exchange ideas in a way that would lead to a more sensible comprehensive strategy from both the policy and implementation standpoints<sup>6</sup>. The document is intended as a guide for other state administrations to devise modern systems of integration and also functions as a wonderful overview of the economic advantages brought by a more welcoming system.

Dyslexics stand to benefit from the proposed strategies because they represent exactly the kind of unique resource that will be better employed when specifically sought after by industry. An affirmative system is essential not just because it is likely to yield a greater representation of dyslexics in the workplace, but because it will give businesses the tools they need to craft their own carefully tailored recruitment strategies based on its singular needs, and not ones more closely applicable to other industries in need of the talents of dyslexics. Furthermore, viewing the mission as an active search for what is currently overlooked potential is far more beneficial than a defensive system that simply ensures that dyslexics are not excluded, because our greatest current problem lies in getting these would-be game changers to enter the market for their talents in the first place. By identifying this talent and bringing them in for examination and interview, the major barrier to integration is achieved, and in contrast to an approach that battles exclusion as a form of discrimination, an issue already well-covered by our laws, hiring takes place based on strengths in an inclusive system, rather than on the comparison of weaknesses, which, by comparison to the affirmative strengths, is inconsequential to a company's bottom line.

We hope other states, as well as the federal government, will continue to form collaborations to come up with solutions for a prosperous 21<sup>st</sup> century in the American workplace for all of its participants, and we hope that industry leaders will assume the lead as the core and most active participants in creating a better future.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://governor.delaware.gov/docs/NGA\\_2013\\_Better\\_Bottom\\_Line.pdf](https://governor.delaware.gov/docs/NGA_2013_Better_Bottom_Line.pdf)