INNOVATIVE EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES
A NEW APPROACH TO GETTING ASD CANDIDATES HIRED
Problem

- Large population of ASD Students with strong technical skills unemployed or underemployed
- Parents actively involved as advocates
- Candidates with good resumes, good GPAs and internships and/or relevant experience
- Colleges and Universities providing help with interview skills and access to recruiters
- Job prospect ends at interview
“A JOB INTERVIEW IS ABOUT CHEMISTRY; PEOPLE LIKE HIM FLUNK WITHIN THE FIRST FEW MINUTES AND THEY NEVER GET TO TELL WHAT THEY’RE GOOD AT.”

- Thorkiel Sonne, founder of Specialisterne (The Specialists) talking about his son
Anatomy of an Interview

- Hiring managers strive for consistency
  - Treat each candidate equally
  - Same questions and approach for all candidates
  - Determine skill and fit with company
  - Assess ability to work on a team
  - Evaluate passion for subject and motivation
Interview Pointers for Managers

- Introduce yourself and greet the candidate with a handshake and a friendly smile.
- Use “small talk” to break the ice; ask about the weather or traffic.
- Look for enthusiasm in responses which indicate a passion for the topic.
- Ask open-ended questions, not just those which require a “yes” or “no” answer.
- Consider using group interviews to assess team interaction.
- Ask one question such as “why should we hire you?, you have no experience” to learn how candidate responds in a stressful situation.
CONDUCT = COMPETENCE

- Interviews rely heavily on body language and social clues
- Equate “upbeat talk” with passion and motivation
- Assume stilted or monotone answers mean inadequate skill
- Every candidate needs to display strong leadership skills
What do Hiring Managers Need?

- Awareness of depth and skill of ASD candidates
- Assistance in identifying ASD candidates
- Permission/Encouragement to change the interview process
- Education on alternate interview techniques
- Understanding how ASD candidates work successfully on teams
- Confidence through role playing
Interview Training

Or

How to ensure top talent in your organization
How would you like an employee who

- Is gifted
- Focuses on tasks
- Likes the details
- Can visualize solutions
- Is a creative thinker
- Won’t take shortcuts
- Can remember huge amounts of facts
- Says what he means
- Won’t participate in gossip
Then you need some new interviewing techniques.

You can’t solve problems with the same thinking you used to create them.
How do you recognize an ASD interviewee?

A Candidate with ASD may:
- Not make eye contact
- Seem uncomfortable in the chair
- May fidget
- Have minimal change in facial expressions
- May not pick up on your changes in tone, expressions or humor

*If you’ve met one person with ASD, you’ve met one person with ASD.*
Changes to Interview Process

**From**
- Thank you and small talk to open interview
- Discussion about open position
- Using behavioral interview techniques to get information
- Ask specific open-ended questions to assess technical skills

**To**
- Thank you and specific question about resume
- Written detailed description of position
- Ask same types of questions using the Socratic approach to get information
- Provide a written problem to solve
Additional Interview Preparation

- Candidate may have spent hours practicing interview techniques
  - Struggling to make eye contact
  - Unusual speech patterns and tones
- Answers to questions can be very exacting or detailed and the candidate may need to be moved off subject.
- Some comments may seem inappropriate; “Don’t you want to ask me about…?“
- The candidate may not pick up on clues that the interview is completed.
Next Steps

- Gather input from today
- Finish training module
- Test with EP Alums and current candidates
- Review with HR and Staffing professionals
Your Turn

- Disclosure issues?
- What is missing?
- What would help with an interview?
- Suggestions and ideas to add or eliminate