

10 **auticon** years

Growing and nurturing the neurodiversity movement

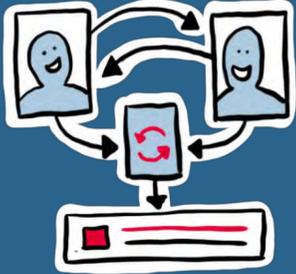
Impact Report 2021

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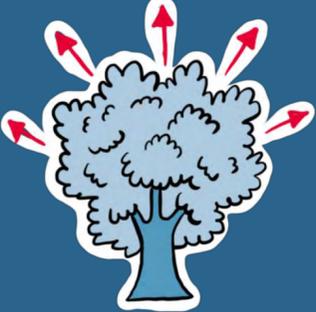
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Introduction



auticon

2021 marked auticon's 10 year anniversary. Much has changed for us in the last decade. We have grown into a global organization with 22 offices across 8 countries; our pioneering idea is now a proven model for employment of autistic adults; our work with customers in different sectors and geographies is not only creating an increasing number of employment opportunities for autistic professionals, but also enabling organizations to tap into high-quality talent pools.

What remains unchanged however is our commitment to create an inclusive employment landscape for autistic people and the neurodivergent community at large. There is still a wide autism employment gap, and while Diversity, Equity & Inclusion is high on the corporate agenda, neurodiversity is still not well understood. Our social innovation therefore continues with greater urgency and even greater enthusiasm.

As a neurodiverse organization, auticon is always buzzing with new ideas and creative energy to build innovative solutions that can help autistic people thrive in the workplace. This is what fires our social innovation engine - our people. I am incredibly proud of the expertise, passion and can-do spirit of our people to make the world more neuro-inclusive.

Our impact report too is the result of this spirit of continuous challenge. This year we have gone back to the drawing board to reimagine the framework to measure our social performance. I'm grateful to our customers and colleagues who have contributed their time and insights so generously. I hope this report informs and inspires you to see autism and its strengths with a fresh perspective.

Kurt Schöffner
Group CEO
auticon

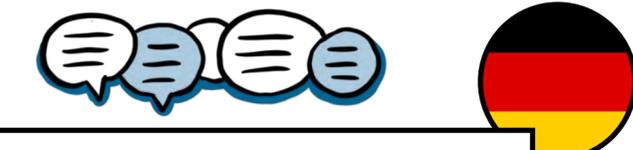


Our Vision

To create equal employment opportunities for autistic people.

Our Impact Framework

We believe affecting a change in one life is the starting point for changing society. We therefore measure our social performance through the difference auticon makes to the lives of our autistic colleagues, the impact on our customer organizations, and the role we play in creating awareness of autism in society. The following sections report how we did in each of these areas.



Benjamin Heiland
Consultant, auticon Germany

“ Neurodiversity is a topic for the entire society. Even people considered 'typical' think differently from each other, have to compensate and mask. The neurodiversity discussion can benefit everyone. ”



Bastian Ballmann
Consultant, auticon Switzerland

“ Having a stable job means being able to - like everyone else - have an aim and the ability to stand on your own feet. ”

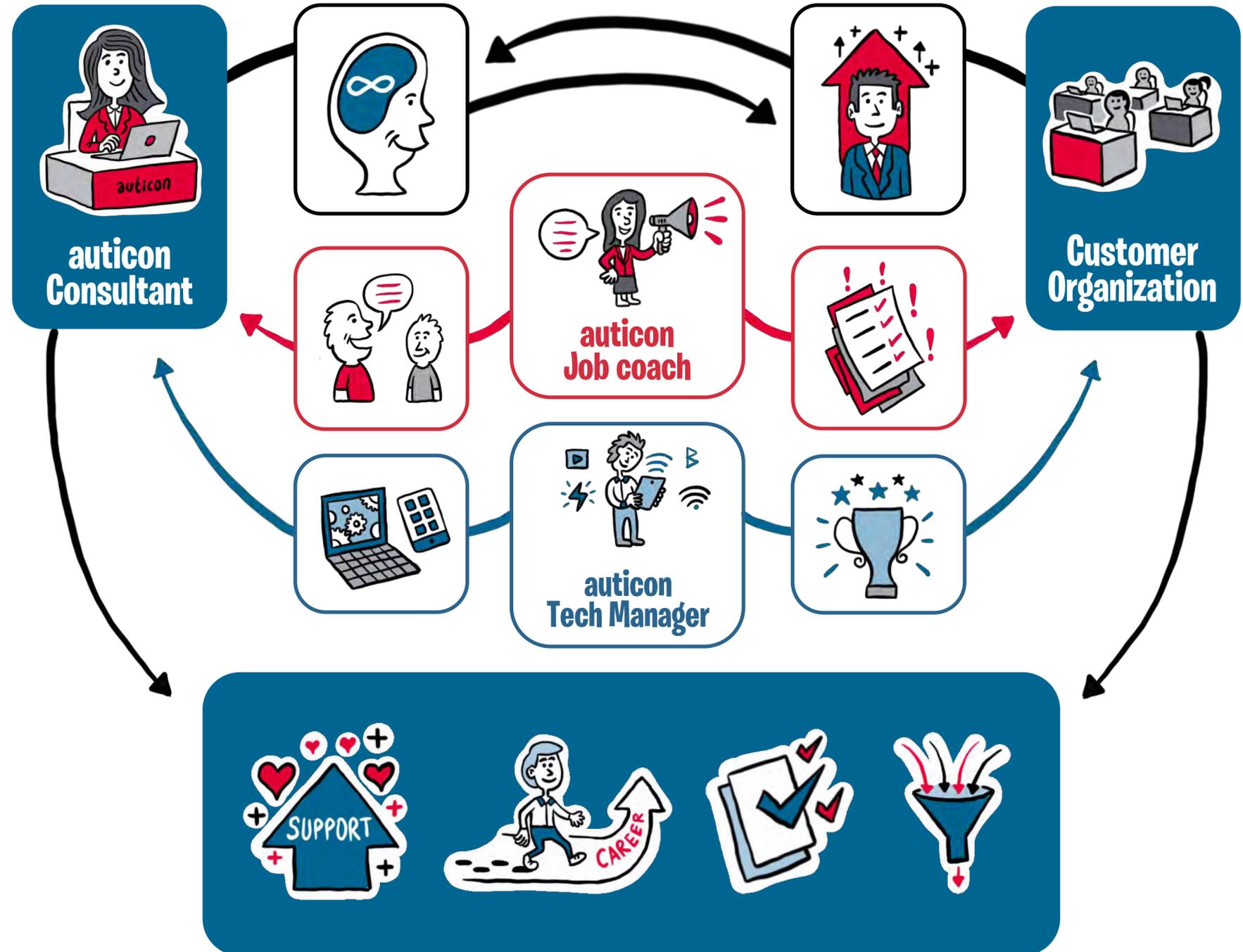
Our Social Innovation Model



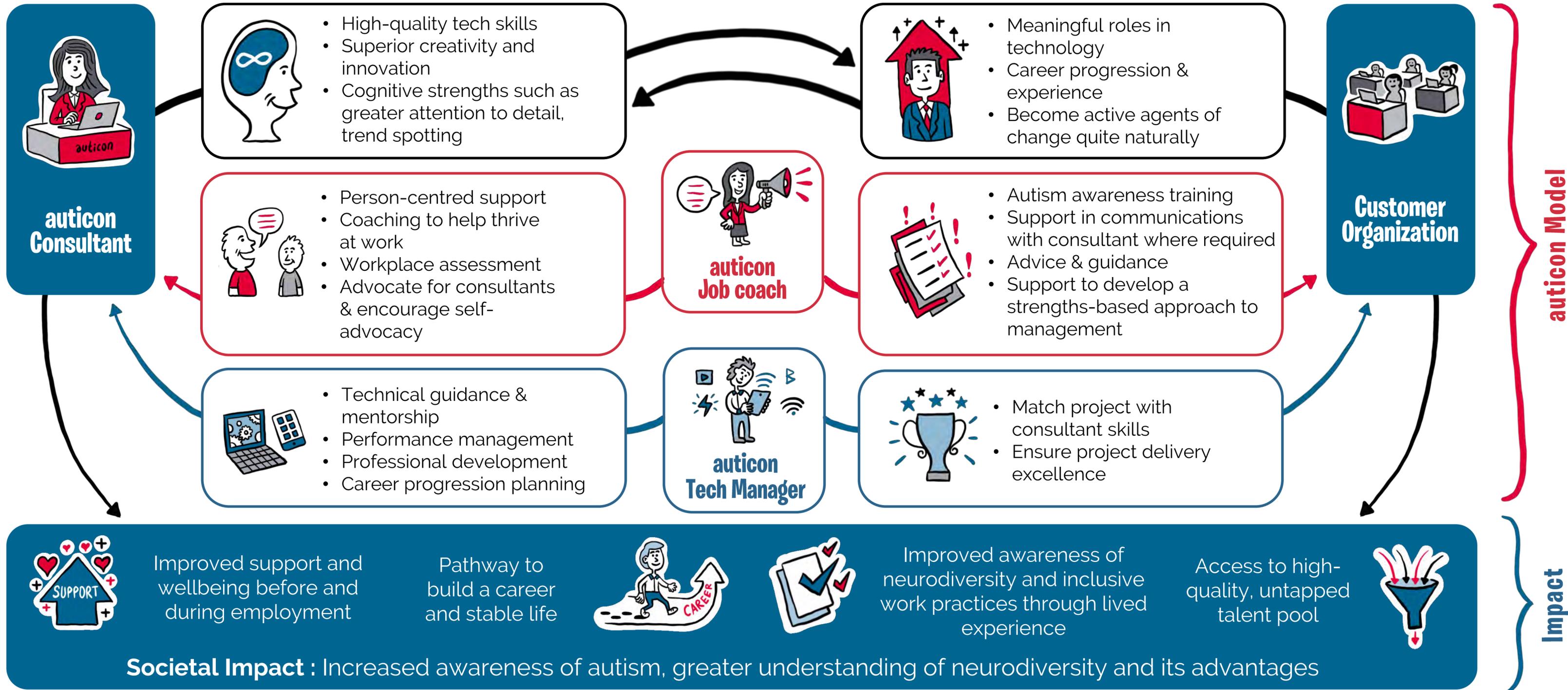
auticon delivers high-quality technology expertise and projects to leading organizations across the world. Our consultants are technology professionals who are on the autistic spectrum.

We pioneered a unique model of support for our consultants and customers. Our aim is to create an enabling environment for autistic professionals to fulfil their potential, and a supportive structure to help our customers on their journey to neuroinclusion. Based on decades of lived and professional experience, using evidence-based methods, our support model brings to life innovative practices that empower neurodivergent employees.

This ultimately creates workplaces and a society that understand neurodifferences and can benefit from a diversity of thinking.



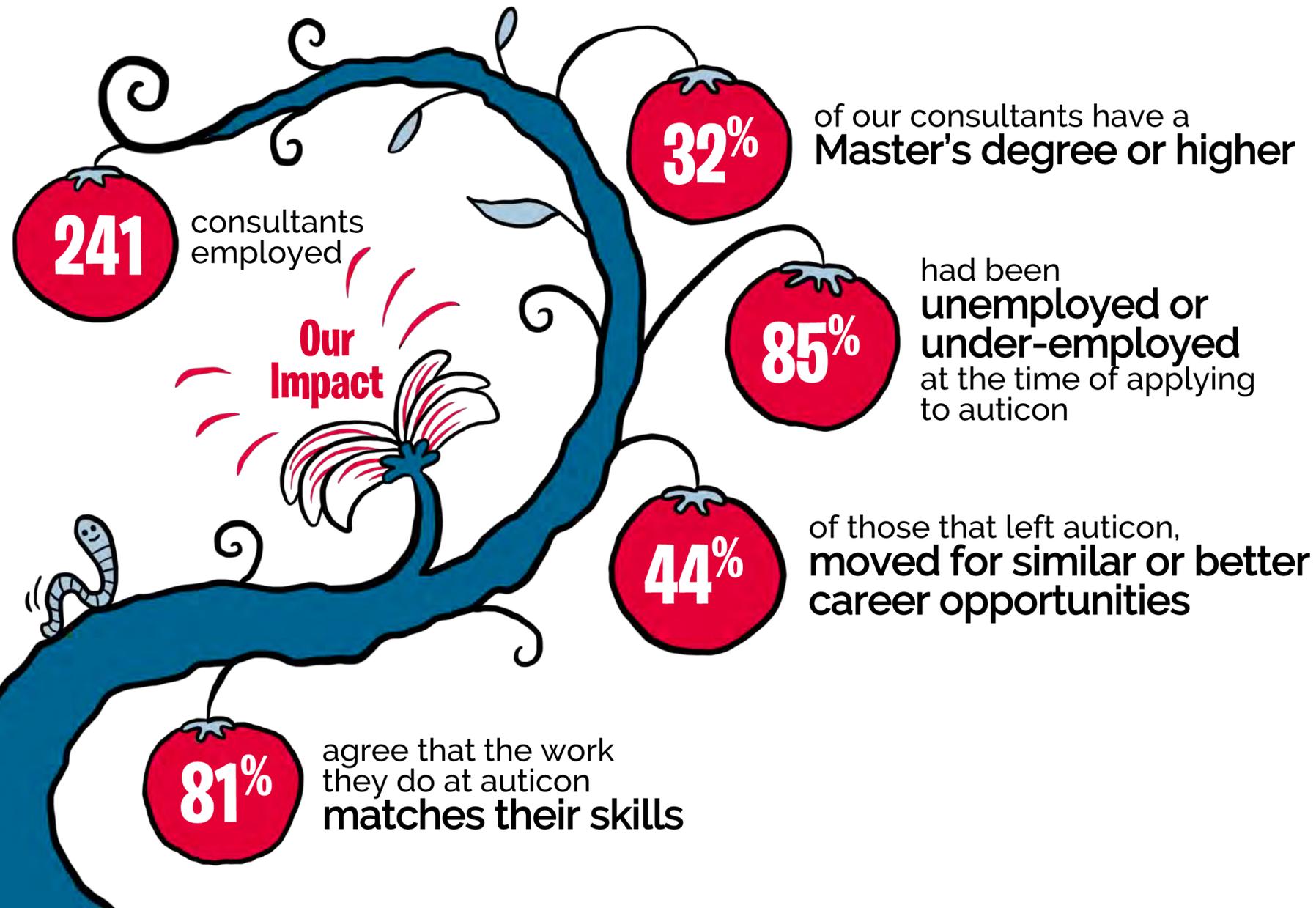
auticon Model & Impact



Individual Impact

Autism and Employment

Globally there is a large autism employment gap. It is estimated that less than 22% of autistic people are in any form of meaningful employment [\[1\]](#) which aligns to their educational achievements. Even an above-average level of education does not improve the employment chances for an autistic person. Surveys [\[2\]](#) by organizations such as the UK's National Autistic Society reveal that the vast majority of autistic people want to work and have much to offer. However, they are faced with barriers such as complex recruitment processes, lack of support at work, poor autism awareness in organizations and employer prejudice.



Phillipe Demichele
Consultant, auticon Italy

“It's great to work at a place with other smart autistic people and with established, well-reputed customer organisations. I can use my skills fully here and our customers can benefit from my expertise.”

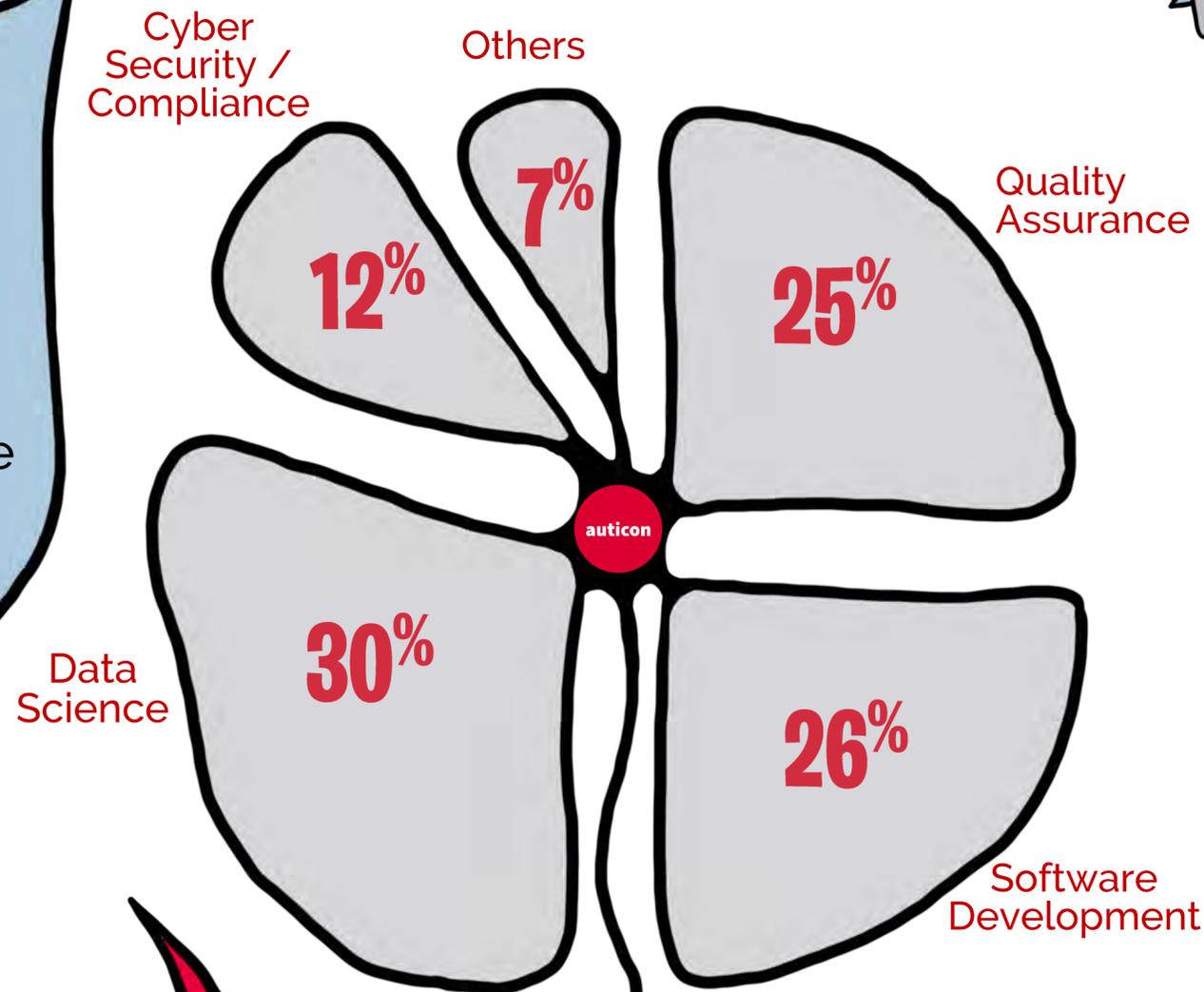
Individual Impact

Autism and Employment



auticon Group Projects 2021

auticon delivered a range of projects and technology expertise across multiple sectors and geographies.



Patrick Cooper
Consulting Director,
auticon UK

“ We're not giving our consultants synthetic jobs constructed for autistic people. These are real jobs that come with good salaries and good benefits. ”



Meiko Gieseemann
Consultant, auticon Australia

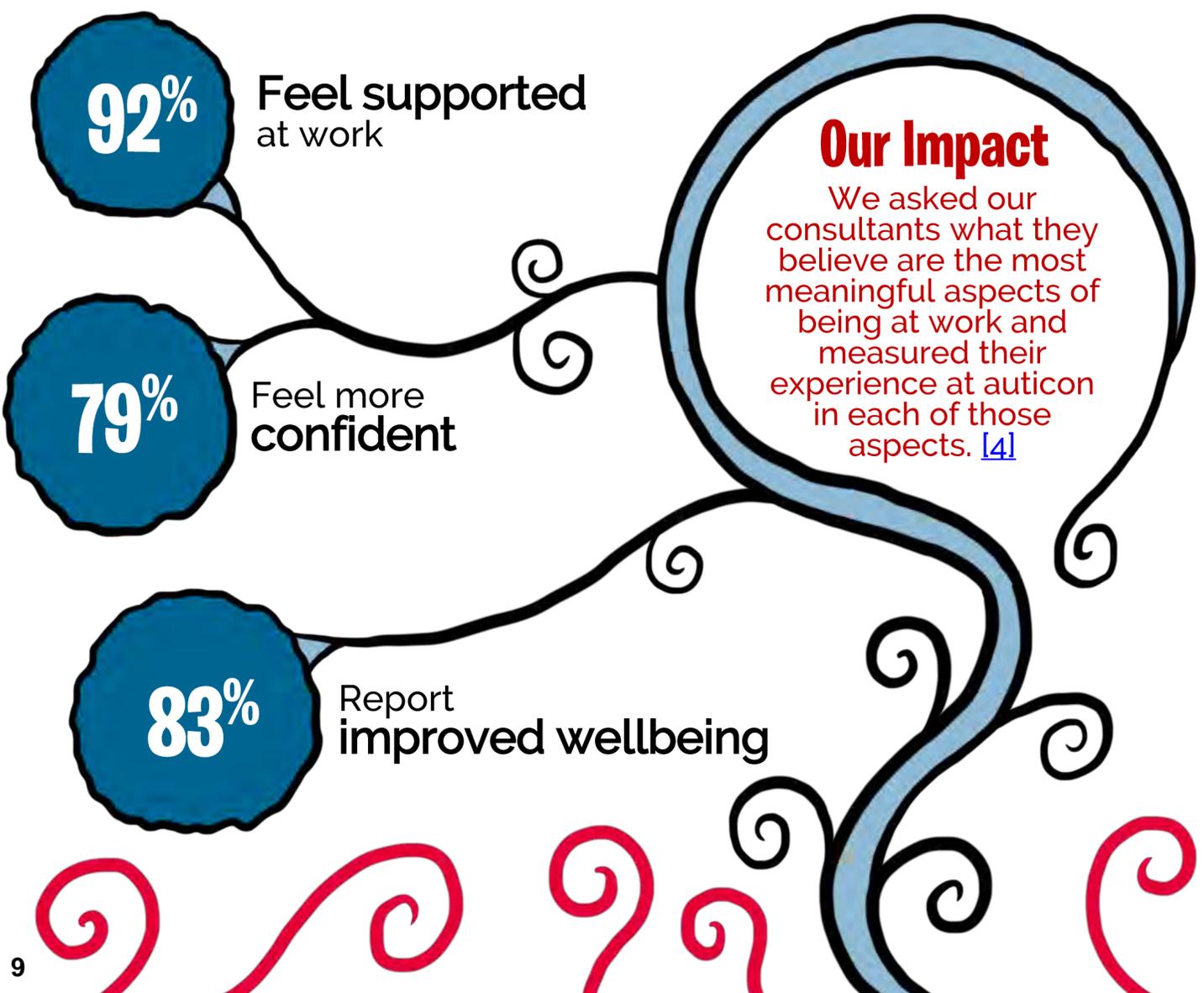
“ Getting the opportunity to upskill and work in new areas is for me the most valuable and enjoyable aspect of being at auticon. ”

Individual Impact



Experience at Work

Autistic people experience and interpret the world in a different way. These differences are often misunderstood, or worse, unfairly judged. This often leads people to mask their autism or feel uncomfortable disclosing their autism to employers. Without the right support and understanding, an autistic person's experience at work can be draining and overwhelming, often leading to burnout. However, only 12% of autistic adults say they receive adequate employment support [3]. Finding and retaining work can therefore become a real challenge for an autistic person.



61% Consultants have been with auticon over 2 years

87% Experience an improved quality of life since joining auticon

91% Feel valued for who they are

85% Say they enjoy the work they do

82% Feel can be their authentic self at work

Andrea Derpini
Consultant, auticon Italy

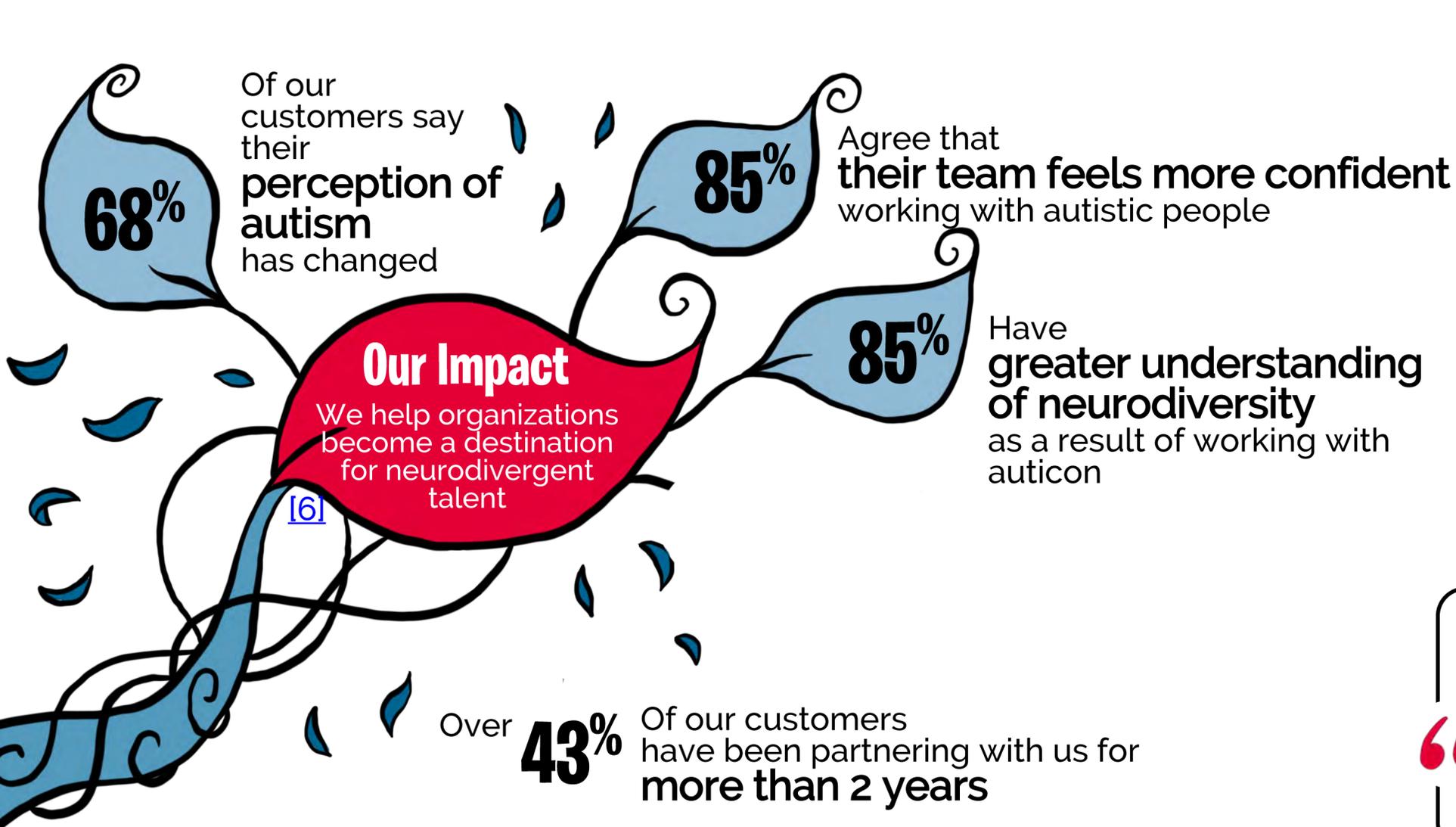
“ auticon is second family to me. I enjoy being at a workplace that not only understands me but also helps me to understand myself. ”

Brooke Talcott
Consultant, auticon USA

“ The biggest change for me since joining auticon is not having to convince people that I need accommodations. I can therefore have a more rewarding life all round and not just drain my energy convincing people to help. ”

Organizational Impact

Seeing the world differently enables an autistic person to bring unique perspectives to any task or situation. Autistic people often have cognitive strengths such as attention-to-detail, sustained attention, heightened imagination and creativity, superior autobiographical memory and instinctive analytical abilities in trend spotting or pattern recognition. This makes them particularly well-suited for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Yet employers today are unable to tap into this gifted talent pool due to poor awareness and systemic pitfalls in employment practices. The fear amongst hiring managers of getting support and accommodations wrong for neurodivergent employees [5] acts as a further barrier to inclusion. With a global talent shortage and increasing skills gaps in technology, the ability to attract and retain neurodivergent talent is a real competitive advantage for any organization.



Co-worker
At Customer organisation

“ I now have a much thorough understanding of the positive workplace contribution that someone with autism can make, and what autism actually is. ”

Department Head
At Customer organisation

“ auticon has helped build our awareness around neurodiversity, improve our internal practices, and contributed to our success through the work of these highly skilled individuals. ”

Organizational Impact



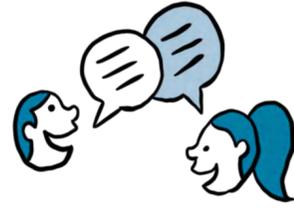
auticon has successfully partnered with organizations in a variety of sectors in every geography.



Financial Services



Pharma



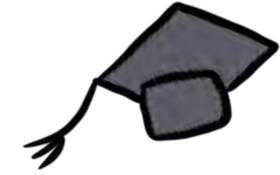
Consulting



Telecom



Utilities



Edtech



Insurance



Technology



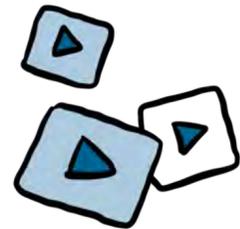
Manufacturing



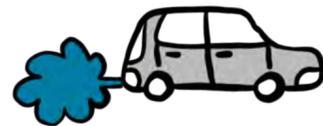
Healthcare



Energy



Entertainment



Automotive



Transport & Logistics



Public Sector



Communication



Aerospace



Retail



Oil & Gas



Ali Dussault
Employment Director, auticon Canada

“

The coaching we provide can be applied by our customers to all their employees, enabling everyone on the team to flourish.

”

Organizational Impact



Senior Leader
At customer organization

“ The consultant defined our problem more precisely. As a result, a much more targeted and effective solution was implemented. ”



93% Customers said that auticon consultants made **valuable professional contributions** to their projects

- Greater accuracy**
- Innovative approach**
- Alternative perspective / ideas**
- Increased efficiency**



86% Customers believe that working with auticon consultants **positively impacted the culture** of their team

- Clearer communication**
- Better teamwork**
- Increased empathy**
- Greater sense of purpose**

Department Head
At customer organization

“ auticon consultants have very high level technical profiles with high accuracy and ability to bring innovation to our projects. The inclusion of autistic profiles in the team has also had a very positive impact on the team. ”

Societal Impact

We are proud of the ways in which our people are giving voice to autism as advocates for issues that have gone unidentified or unaddressed so far in society and workplaces. These examples of social activism are at the heart of innovation at auticon.



Australia



Drawing national attention to the strengths of neurodiversity

Fresh off the back of winning an award at the Australian Computer Society's Digital Disruptor Awards, auticon Australia appeared in a feature story by multi-platform media network SBS Australia. Our consultant Anthony Ni shared his experience in the story that highlighted the strengths of neurodiverse employees and their valuable contribution to national retailer Woolworths.

SBS Australia reach approximately 12 million Australians each month, presenting an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of autism and the positive impact of neurodiversity in organisations. The story aired nationally throughout Australia via SBS World News Television on 2nd April - World Autism Awareness Day. Following SBS World News, the story was also featured on SBS Australia's social media channels, SBS national radio, on the SBS podcast service, on the network's home page and in four different languages reaching a multitude of Australians.

Shining a light on workplace experiences of autistic employees

auticon Canada in partnership with Deloitte Canada published a first of its kind market report on the employment experience of autistic Canadians: "[Embracing neurodiversity at work: How Canadians with autism can help employers close the talent gap.](#)" The report surveyed over 450 adults across Canada and included interviews with both autistic job seekers, and employers engaging with neurodiverse workers. The study found that one of the highest-ranked barriers currently facing the autistic community is employers' focus on social competency during the interview process as well as a lack of structural support systems, including flexible work policies. However, many employers have found having autistic people on their teams has positively impacted the business and how it operates. The study also showcased illustrations from Emcie Turineck, a Montreal-based neurodivergent digital artist and illustrator. Released in March 2022, the study received Canada-wide media coverage and was positively received by the corporate community.



Canada

Societal Impact



Raising awareness through research: Sexual violence against autistic women

auticon France consultant Elisabeth Reyes and Fabienne Cazalis, researcher at the CNRS (and member of auticon France Advisory Board), in association with other scientific experts, published one of the largest studies to date investigating the vulnerability of autistic women to sexual violence. This peer-reviewed research found that 9 out of 10 autistic women are victims of sexual violence. Only 30% of the participants said they had reported the abuse, of which 26% were not believed. The research concludes that being autistic elevates the risk of sexual victimization in women.

This research paper has been published in [Frontiers](#) – the world's largest and highest-cited academic journal in the world. The aim of the study is to prevent and raise awareness of sexual violence and help improve treatment strategies for victims, as well as prevention programs worldwide.

Sharing skills, ideas and expertise: auticon Academy

In Germany, we have established the auticon Academy - a learning platform by employees for employees. The Academy holds lectures, workshops and interactive discussion seminars on topics of common interest that can range from self-advocacy to mental health awareness to social impact initiatives. A workshop on "Language and Autism" explored perspectives on how we speak about ourselves and the nuances of language when speaking to and about autistic individuals. The outputs of the discussion were later shared with the media at an external neurodiversity awareness event.

The Academy also has an important impact within auticon. It is open to all employees and serves as an open participation platform to hold events and showcase expertise. Our autistic IT specialists often have extensive know-how in their field which they can share with other colleagues. Most importantly, it gives our people a sense of agency that builds confidence and contributes to greater wellbeing overall.



Societal Impact



Italy



Leading research and development to improve lives: Mindfulness Program

auticon Italy Job Coaches Alice Nova, Simona Ravera and Giuseppe Betti with Prof. Giovambattista Presti and a team of academic experts have created a Mindfulness Program for autistic adults based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). The program was developed during the Covid-19 lockdowns to support our consultants as all interactions moved online. The effectiveness of the early sessions in supporting the mental wellbeing of the consultants led this to become a fully developed program that continues as weekly sessions for our colleagues in Italy.

In June 2022, Alice Nova presented this work at the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science (ACBS) World Conference in San Francisco. The World Conference brings together clinicians and researchers to discuss cutting-edge research for practitioners and experts across the world.

Taking auticon innovations to society: Residential Coaching Project

As we transitioned to work-from-home arrangements during the pandemic, our team in Switzerland identified several challenges that this posed for our consultants. Motivated by the need to support consultants struggling with sensory issues that any living space can present, the team started a close collaboration with a local not-for-profit group. Together with Swiss researchers, they created a coaching support plan to help with living space challenges, especially for autistic persons living on their own for the first time.

Over the last 18 months, this has developed into a full-fledged Residential Coaching Project. A residential coach offers online consultations for everyday problems and offers regular coaching to autistic people who are building their independent lives. The opportunity to receive this coaching from the non-profit in addition to job coaching from auticon has been very well received by the consultants with everyone involved benefitting from the synergy.



Switzerland



UK

Leading conversations on autism in the workplace

auticon UK launched a series of autism awareness podcasts - 'Autism: In conversation with auticon'. The series is designed to drive awareness of the realities of autism in the workplace, from the merits of hiring neurodiverse talent, through to some of the more common challenges faced by autistic adults navigating the workplace, the podcasts. Hosted by Carrie Grant MBE, each episode features interviews with leading voices on autism, including figures from the business world, social media influencers and autism academics.

auticon consultants, Job Coaches and operational team members feature regularly in the podcasts to share their lived experiences and perspectives on autism. The podcast is available on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Google Podcasts](#).

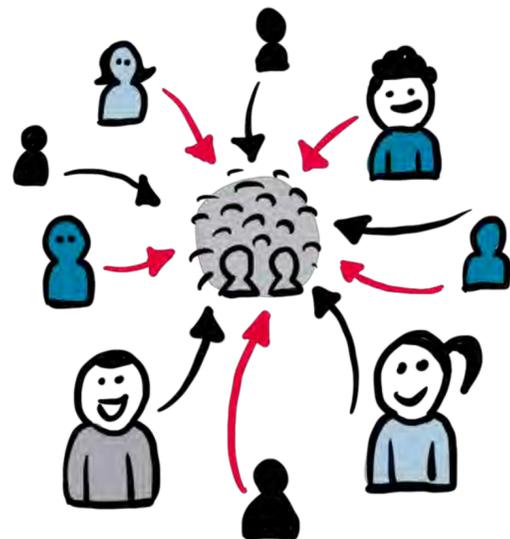
Building communities and opportunities for autistic job seekers

auticon recruitment processes are designed to provide autistic candidates environments and interactions that are value creating – whether or not they ultimately join auticon. To support autistic candidates looking for employment, auticon US formed the 'Ready to Work Community'. As part of this community, free sessions are offered to candidates who are going through our recruitment process or are looking actively for employment elsewhere.

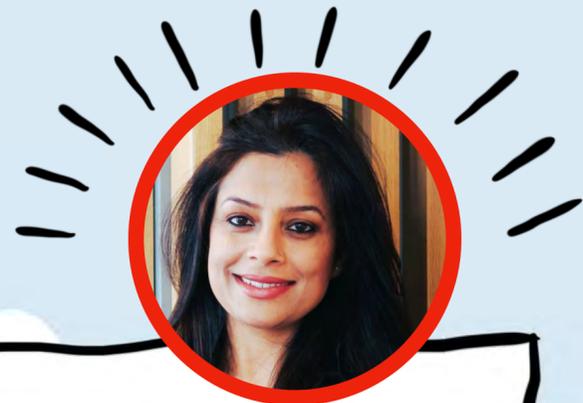
Hosted by Louise Stone - Head of Recruitment and Community Partnerships, auticon USA – these sessions focus on both soft skills and technical skills with topics such as “SQL and Careers in Data”, “Navigating the Recruitment Process”, and “Software Engineering – What's Trending, What's Timeless”. During these hour-long sessions, a presentation on the topic is followed with an open discussion where candidates can share their knowledge and ask questions. The Ready for Work community sees active participation from candidates and continues to grow, meeting on a monthly basis.



USA



What Next...



auticon is a proud social innovator. Our achievements are testament to what a neurodiverse organization can achieve. We are grateful for the recognition that our work has received internationally over the years and for the growing trust that our customers and investors place in us.

We also know that there is much work to do still. While we see greater emphasis than before on diversity, equity and inclusion, there is poor awareness of autism and not near enough appreciation for neurodiversity. This state of affairs only serves to strengthen our resolve to do and achieve more as advocates of neurodiversity.

We are excited about the next decade and the opportunities that we have ahead of us. As an autistic-majority company, auticon enjoys a rich diversity of abilities and skills. We will continue to harness our diverse strengths; share the know-how and expertise we have built over the years to offer innovative new services and products that improve the lives of neurodiverse people.

Our social innovation journey has just about started!

Meeta Thareja
Chief People & Social Innovation Officer
auticon


Senda Herring
Job Coach, auticon France

“ Working for a cause drives me. At auticon you make an impact and are constantly challenged to learn new things. It's exciting to be here knowing that our work is changing the world! ”



End Notes

- ➔ Office for National Statistics (ONS), UK – Outcomes for disabled people in the UK 2020: [Outcomes for disabled people in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\) \[1\]](#)

- ➔ The National Autistic Society - The autism employment gap: [basw_53224-4_0.pdf \[2\]](#)

- ➔ [Autism-Europe \(autismeurope.org\)](#)
State of play of employment of people on the autism spectrum in Europe: barriers, good practices and trends [\[3\]](#)

- ➔ auticon Consultant Survey: The Impact Survey questionnaire was sent to all our 266 consultants, of which 150 participated, representing a 56% participation rate. The survey was carried out in June 2022. [\[4\]](#)

- ➔ The Institute of Leadership and Management – Workplace Neurodiversity: [The Power of Difference: Workplace Neurodiversity | The Institute of Leadership & Mgt \(institutelm.com\) \[5\]](#)

- ➔ auticon Customer Survey: We had 93 respondents from 72 companies across 8 countries. The survey was carried out in June 2022. [\[6\]](#)

- ➔ Impact methodology: We follow a Lean Data Approach to measure our social performance. Developed by [acumen.org](#), Lean Data Approach is a human-centered methodology that uses lean experimentation principles to measure the social benefits to the people served by an organization. It aims for actionable insights from customers that can help improve outcomes that are most meaningful for them.

For more information, please visit www.auticon.com

Or write to us at press_global@auticon.com