

The background is a solid purple color with several overlapping, 3D-rendered shapes in a lighter shade of purple. These shapes resemble stylized, rounded rectangular blocks or columns, some of which are partially obscured by others, creating a sense of depth and architectural structure.

BBDO

**SEEK OUT
DIFFERENT**

September 2023

BBDO

WHAT ARE YOU NOT SEEING?

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, this week is National Inclusion week, next week is Dyslexia Awareness week. **These dates surface the debates that we should be having all year round.**

For this piece on inclusion we are focusing on the invisible disabilities that many of our employees navigate daily, either themselves personally, or via someone they care for.

An estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability - 16% of the world's population (WHO, 2023). Many disabilities are not visible. Unemployment among persons with disabilities is as high as 80% in some countries (UN). **Yet the business case has repeatedly been proven, "diversity and inclusion is a driver of creative excellence." (Creative Equals)**



“Diversity is what makes us unique and adds creativity and innovation to teams. We should all learn to embrace and celebrate our differences instead of fearing them.

Diversity mirrors the real world and having diversity of thought and cognitive ability can help predict the behaviours and preferences of consumers.”

*- Kelly Grainger,
Co-Founder / Director, Perfectly Autistic*

WHAT ARE YOU NOT DOING?

It is everyone's responsibility to be aware that not everyone thinks, works, and behaves in the same way.

There's been increased interest - the term "neurodivergent" was a blip in Google searches before 2020, but in 2023, there are nearly 800,000 monthly queries, peaking at one million on occasions. (Source: In bed with Social)

"Changes in the workplace to be more neurodivergent-friendly actually help everybody. Because a lot of these things might be small frustrations for everybody, but for someone who is neurodivergent, particularly with ADHD, **it can be quite debilitating.**" *- Perfectly Autistic*

Simple, conscious efforts to make the workplace easier to navigate for neurodivergent employees can benefit all.

Think quiet spaces in open plan, blank spaces in loud, colourful 'creative' offices, cut the long exhausting meetings with no agenda or meaningful output.



“I live in a house full of invisible disability. Every day is different. The message for me is always that your colleagues might be navigating something you can’t see, and to be mindful, to be kind and to allow space for that.

Usually, I’ve had at least two calls about my children before my first meeting, usually needing a resolve. **Life experience is what makes us unique and it’s often what we put into our work, it’s where the beautifully different insights, perspectives, and approaches comes from.”**

*- Melanie Norris,
Head of Planning BBDO Knows*

THE BEAUTY OF THINKING DIFFERENT

As leaders in the advertising industry, it is up to us to shape the world that we want to live in; and we do that through the stories that we tell. These stories are only more inclusive and more diverse when we have more diverse teams working on those campaigns.

“What’s right for society is what’s right for business. If you want to grow your brand, if you want to have authentic, disruptive, engaging communications, you need to tell different stories, stories from different perspectives.”

- Katy Talikowska, CEO Valuable 500

“If you think about the creative output as the final product, then you have to think about the ingredients that go into making that final product. And part of that is not only building a culture where people feel like they can speak their voices, it’s also using this feeling of belonging and injecting it into the process of creativity.”

Jason Rosario, Chief DEI Officer BBDO



THE BEAUTY OF DOING DIFFERENT

Omnicom has hosted several sessions designed to help us learn from each other. Our **“Talking ADHD at Work”** session and **“Talking Dyslexia at Work”** sessions saw Omnicom employees discuss their personal experiences with neurodiversity.

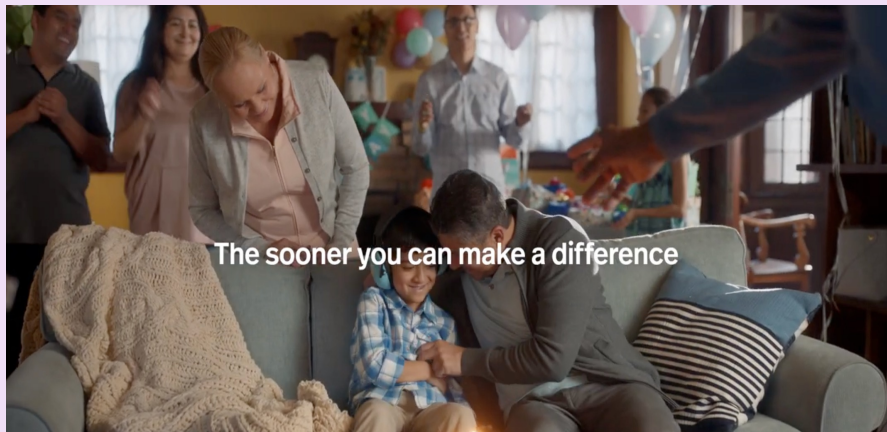
The overriding learning is that working with **neurodiversity means we excel in certain areas of our work but struggle in others. Often neurodiversity is inextricably linked to creativity, visual thinking ability, problem solving, and out of the box thinking which, let’s say it again, is indispensable and critical for our industry, our work, our relevance, our future.**

We all need to remember that sometimes the simplest adjustments can be the most effective, and when you put adjustments in place, everyone can benefit.

THE WORK...

TRUE CREATIVITY STARTS WITH DIFFERENCE

THE BIG DAY. AUTISM SPEAKS + BBDO NY



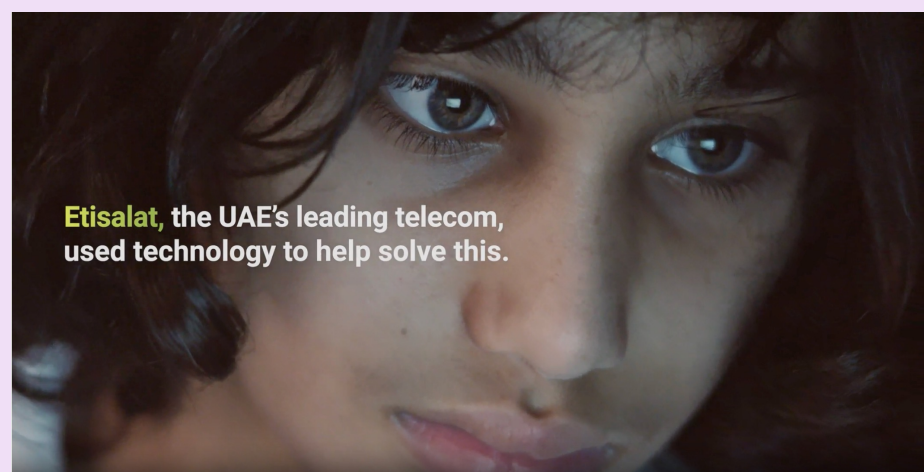
Identifying the early signs of autism can make a lifetime of difference in helping a child reach their full potential. As part of their commitment to lowering the age of diagnosis, Autism Speaks and BBDO launched a bilingual awareness campaign encouraging parents to spot the signs early and seek support.

ME, MY AUTISM AND I. VANISH



Vanish spotlights the gender gap in autism diagnosis. The film, developed in partnership with Ambitious about Autism, tells the story of an autistic girl and her attachment to her hoodie, emphasizing the role of clothing in sensory regulation. After extensive research, the campaign shifted its focus to girls due to the disparity in diagnosis rates.

WIDER WEB ETISALAT + IMPACT BBDO



While the internet is a place of discovery, people on the autism spectrum struggle online due to over-stimulation. From autoplay to pop-ups, sensory overload can become too much. Telco Etisalat created Etisalat Wider Web - a first-of-its-kind open-sourced web extension that gives people on the spectrum better control of their browsing experience.

“DE&I is about how people learn, connect, and grow with each other... one way of measuring it, which is less quantitative but incredibly important is having a look at how long people stay at a company. And then I think there’s one more way of measuring it.

And that is the feeling. There’s a feeling that you get when you walk in the doors in the office. Are people collaborating with each other? Do they care about each other?”

- Jason Rosario, Chief Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Officer BBDO



If you want to learn more about the way BBDO thinks please contact us at bbdo@bbdoknows.com

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