



NEURODIVERSITY SPIKY ASSESSMENT

Harnessing Cognitive Asymmetry as a Strategic Leadership Asset

DANIELE FORNI

Executive Coach and Tech Founder · The Data Shaman

www.danieleforni.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Daniele Forni

"The Data Shaman"

Executive Coach &
Neurodiversity Strategy

Executive Coach and Tech Founder

SquirrelCoach.com · www.danieleforni.com

Daniele Forni, known as “The Data Shaman,” is not your average executive coach. He helps senior professionals leverage their unconventional traits into tangible ROI using rigorous science, AI tools, and strategic wit. As the founder of the SquirrelCoach platform, he champions the “Spiky Profile” concept: exceptional leaders are defined by their peaks, not their averages.

An alumnus of the University of Cambridge and a 6x author on leadership, neurodiversity, and meditation, Daniele previously spent 15 years driving risk management as an HSBC Director across Europe and Asia.

Now at the intersection of coaching, AI, and neuroscience, he advises C-suite executives, tech founders, and high-performance teams across the UK, Europe, and Hong Kong on how to turn cognitive asymmetry into strategic advantage.

Discover your spiky profile this white paper has research at:

www.squirrelcoach.com/spiky-profile.

ABSTRACT

Contemporary organizations operating in high-complexity, VUCA environments have increasingly recognized that the “well-rounded” leader — optimized for general competency — is an inadequate model for the demands of a knowledge economy. This white paper argues that cognitive asymmetry, the “Spiky Profile” characteristic of many neurodivergent individuals, is not a liability to be managed but a strategic asset to be leveraged.

Drawing on psychometric theory from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS-IV) — specifically the Verbal Comprehension (VCI), Perceptual Reasoning (PRI), Working Memory (WMI), and Processing Speed (PSI) indices — alongside neurodiversity frameworks including Monotropism and the Double Empathy Problem, we introduce the Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment: a digital occupational phenotyping instrument designed to map cognitive peaks and translate them into four leadership archetypes (Visionary Strategist, Deep Specialist, Intuitive Connector, and Architect of Order).

The paper presents the economic and legal case for neuroinclusion — supported by data from HLB Global, the 2025 Neurodiversity Index, and UK employment tribunal statistics — details the assessment methodology, and outlines two implementation frameworks: Systemic Agility and Relational Dialogic Communication. The appendix provides extended reference material including key terminology, WAIS-IV index descriptions, statistical tables, and a sample assessment question framework.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE END OF THE “ROUNDED” LEADER

The contemporary business landscape, characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA), demands a re-evaluation of executive leadership models. For decades, corporate governance has relied on the “Competency Model,” which privileges the General Intelligence (g) factor and the ideal of a “Full-Stack” leader — simultaneously strategist, communicator, operator, and decision-maker. Psychology has challenged this model for decades; corporate practice has been slow to follow.

Neuropsychological research shows that the pursuit of the “well-rounded” leader filters out the “Spiky Profile” — the asymmetric cognitive signature most often associated with neurodivergent leaders (ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia) — despite this profile offering a measurable competitive advantage in a knowledge economy driven by specialization.

This white paper establishes the theoretical basis for the Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment: a digital instrument mapping cognitive and leadership domains. It synthesizes the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) indices with Monotropism and the Double Empathy Problem to argue that cognitive asymmetry is a strategic asset, not a deficit.

“
The pursuit of cognitive uniformity is no longer a safety mechanism — it is a competitive liability.
 ”

Scope of Analysis

This white paper is structured into four strategic sections, each building the evidence base for organizational adoption of the Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment:

1. The Business Case — The economic, demographic, and legal imperative for neuroinclusion, drawing on 2025–2026 global data.
2. Theoretical Foundation — The cognitive science underpinning the Spiky Profile, including the WAIS-IV indices and the High PRI / Low PSI paradox.
3. The Assessment Engine — Psychometric methodology, the dual-bucket scoring system, leadership archetype definitions, and the Clinical-to-Commercial crosswalk.
4. Strategic Application — Implementation frameworks including Systemic Agility and Relational Dialogic Communication for building high-performing, cognitively diverse executive teams.

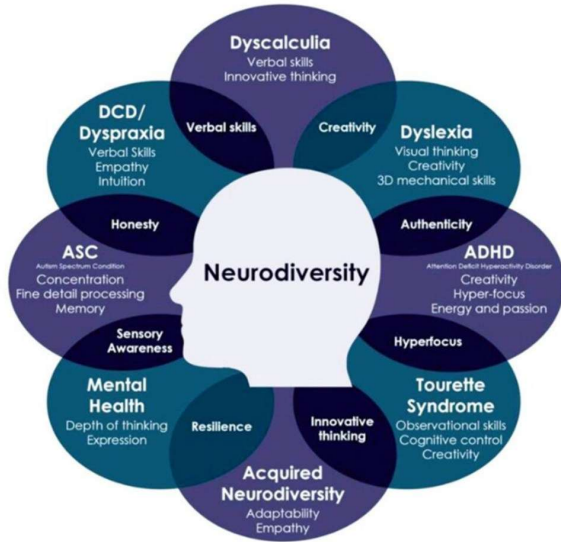
01 THE BUSINESS CASE

Neurodiversity: A Genomic Asset

“Neurodiversity is a concept that regards differences in brain function and behaviour as part of the normal variation of the human population. It represents a new way of understanding and embracing diversity based on cognitive differences.”

Neurodiversity defines variations in cognitive function — such as information processing and behavioural regulation — as natural expressions of the human genome rather than deficits to be cured. Analogous to biodiversity in an ecosystem, neurodiversity introduces necessary variance into the corporate workforce. By integrating minds

ranging from the neurotypical to those with ADHD, Autism, and Dyslexia, organizations gain access to a broader spectrum of problem-solving capabilities. This framework acknowledges that while non-standard neurotypes may face friction in rigid environments, they provide the distinct perspectives essential for navigating complexity and driving progress.



Created by Dr Nancy Doyle based on the work of Mary Colley

Figure 1: The Neurodiversity Spectrum — overlapping cognitive strengths across conditions

The Contemporary Landscape

The global labour market is retiring the model of the “standardized employee.” In its place, we are seeing a pivot toward cognitive intelligence and neurodiversity — not merely as a concession to inclusion, but as an asset class. With 15–20% of the global population falling on the neurodivergent spectrum (including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia), this cognitive variance is too significant to ignore. As we move through 2025 and 2026, neurodiversity has graduated from a niche HR initiative to a central driver of operational efficiency.

However, a dangerous dissonance exists between boardroom rhetoric and frontline reality. The 2025 Neurodiversity Index highlights a critical failure in

psychological safety: only 32% of neurodivergent employees feel safe disclosing their condition. Consequently, without the necessary adjustments, 40% of these employees report daily struggles with their work environment. The economic argument for fixing this has never been stronger: HLB Global’s 2025 Report establishes that teams actively fostering neuro-inclusion see a 15% surge in innovation outputs and maintain a 90% retention rate among neurodivergent talent.

Neurodiversity Metric	Current Status (2025–2026)	Significance for HR Policy
Global Population Prevalence	15–20%	Reflects a major segment of the talent pool.
Employee Disclosure Comfort	32%	Indicates widespread lack of psychological safety.
Innovation Boost (Inclusive Teams)	15%	Direct correlation between diversity and R&D output.
Retention in Focused ND Programmes	90%	Competitive advantage in talent-short markets.
Daily Work Impact (ND Staff)	40%	Underscores urgency for workplace adjustments.

By 2030, Generation Z and Millennials will command approximately 74% of the global workforce. For these cohorts, wellbeing is no longer a perk but a currency equal to salary — a view held by 88% of workers. Furthermore, 83% are prepared to exit organizations that fail to prioritize holistic health.

74%

KEY METRIC

Gen Z + Millennials will constitute the global workforce by 2030 — demanding neuroinclusion as standard.

The HLB Global 2025 Perspective: Innovation as a Function of Cognitive Diversity

HLB Global’s 2025 survey, spanning 1,242 business leaders across 55 nations, identifies a specific tier of high-performers: “Profit Accelerators.” These organizations are 2.6 times more likely to run optimal operating models, achieving this status by fusing Artificial Intelligence with the unique strengths of a cognitively diverse workforce. The mechanism at work is the disruption of groupthink. Neurodivergent individuals often exhibit Spiky Profiles — cognitive topographies defined by sharp peaks in pattern recognition, logical analysis, or creative synthesis. When these distinct cognitive architectures collide with standard workflows, they generate productive “cognitive friction,” yielding solutions that homogeneous teams simply cannot see.

With a 90% retention rate in neurodiversity programmes, organizations that validate specific cognitive needs are rewarded with exceptional stability. In Australia, employees in inclusive teams are four times less likely to leave within 12 months — offering enterprises a decisive hedge against the high costs of recruitment and brain drain.

Organizational Segment	Primary Investment Focus	Neurodiversity Strategy
Profit Accelerators	Technology (AI) + People	Highly integrated; ND seen as a core competency.
Profit Stabilizers	Process & Structure	Awareness campaigns; early-stage ND policy.
Profit Defenders	Cost-cutting & Speed	Compliance-based; minimal ND adjustments.

Barriers and Benchmarks: Findings from the 2025 Neurodiversity Index

Despite the clear economic signal, the 2025 Neurodiversity Index reveals significant structural

drag. A “knowledge gap” is cited by 39% of employers as the principal obstacle to neuroinclusion, far outstripping concerns over cost (25%) or competing priorities (30%). This deficit is most acute in the managerial layer: 56% of managers admit they lack the expertise to support neurodivergent talent, and 70% have never received specific training.

Neurodivergent professionals are already twice as likely to experience severe burnout, driven by the exhausting cognitive load of “masking” — suppressing natural neurological traits to mimic social norms. The result is a sharp rise in legal exposure: neurodiversity-related employment tribunals in the UK have surged by 79%, signalling that the workforce is no longer willing to tolerate environments that fail to adapt.

Barrier to Neuroinclusion	Prevalence	Organizational Impact
Lack of Knowledge / Expertise	39%	Stalls policy implementation and manager support.
Competing Organizational Priorities	30%	De-prioritizes ND in favour of short-term goals.
Cost of Adjustments	25%	Often a perceived rather than actual barrier.
Manager Confidence Gap	56%	Leads to inconsistent employee experiences.

The Triage of Support: A Tiered Framework

To break the paralysis of a 32% disclosure rate, organizations must dismantle the “all-or-nothing” approach to identification. The industry has coalesced around a tiered architecture that decouples support from strict medical disclosure.

Screening: The Low-Friction Entry

The first line of defence is Screening: brief, non-diagnostic instruments designed to lower the stakes of exploration. By offering a “safe harbour”

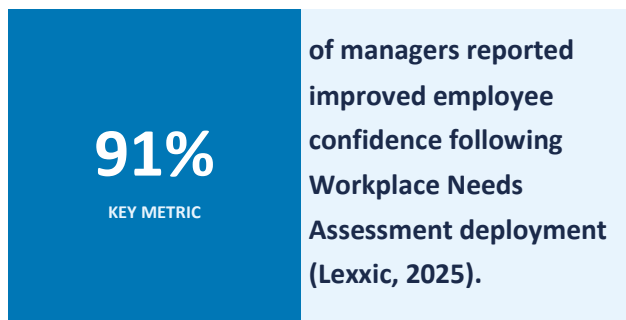
for employees to map their own cognitive traits, organizations gain a macro-level heatmap of their workforce’s neurocognitive diversity without triggering privacy anxieties associated with formal medical records.

Diagnostic: The Clinical Pivot

Diagnostic Assessment remains the requisite standard for accessing legal protections under frameworks like the Equality Act or the ADA. In 2025, the methodology has shifted away from the traditional “deficit model” toward “neuro-affirmative” diagnostics — weighing an employee’s lived experience and functional strengths as heavily as clinical biomarkers.

The Workplace Needs Assessment (WNA): Engineering for Performance

The WNA is the operational pivot point. While a diagnosis provides a medical label, the WNA provides a functional map — analysing the dynamic interplay between a specific cognitive architecture and the physical, sensory, and social environment of the role. Data from Lexxic validates its impact: 91% of managers observed a tangible surge in employee confidence; 90% of HR teams reported direct performance improvement.



Assessment Category	Primary Goal	Typical Recommendations
Screening	Early Identification	Suggestion for further support or WNA.
Diagnostic	Legal / Clinical Clarity	Formal label; medical and therapeutic pathways.

Assessment Category	Primary Goal	Typical Recommendations
Workplace Needs Assessment	Performance Optimization	Flexible hours, noise-cancelling technology, mentoring.

Redefining Ergonomics: From Physical to Cognitive and Sensory

In 2025, the priority is Cognitive Ergonomics. For employees with Autism or Sensory Processing Disorder, the modern open-plan office is often less a collaborative hub and more a sensory minefield. The sub-perceptual flicker of LED drivers or the visual noise of a busy walkway are not mere distractions; they are biological stressors that lock the brain into a fight-or-flight state where executive function collapses. The 2025 Mayfield Review establishes that employees are nearly five times more likely to successfully reintegrate if a WNA is conducted within the first year of absence.

Adjustment Type	Traditional DSE Focus	Neuroinclusive WNA Focus	Impact
Workspace	Desk height / Monitor angle	Quiet zones / Adjustable lighting	Reduced sensory overload.
Technology	Standard peripherals	Noise-cancelling / Text-to-speech	Improved concentration.
Schedule	9-to-5 standard	Flexible hours / Quiet hours	Optimised performance windows.
Management	Verbal check-ins	Written briefs / Visual timelines	Clarity and reduced anxiety.

The Gatekeeper of Innovation: Redesigning Recruitment

Recruitment is the specific control point that determines whether an organization captures the 15% innovation dividend. Standard interview protocols — which prioritize social fluidity, eye contact, and rapid verbal recall — act as a “social

filter,” frequently discarding high-capability neurodivergent candidates. The “unstructured behavioural interview” is being replaced by performative assessments: Microsoft has pioneered multi-day hiring events where candidates engage in hands-on projects rather than answering abstract questions.

AI sourcing tools strip away bias that favours linear career paths, scanning instead for concrete skill density and tangible outputs. Platforms like Develop Diverse audit job descriptions to remove exclusionary jargon — replacing vague terms like “rockstar” with literal, operational definitions (e.g., “participate in daily 15-minute stand-ups”). This is not a dilution of standards; it is an expansion of reach.

Recruitment Trend (2026)	Mechanism	Outcome
Questions Provided in Advance	24–48 hour preparation window	Lower anxiety; more thoughtful answers.
Work-Sample Tests	Practical task evaluation	Directly predictive of job performance.
Literal Job Descriptions	Removal of corporate jargon	Wider, more diverse applicant pool.
Hybrid Assessment Formats	Choice of video, text, or in-person	Respects different sensory and social needs.

Wellbeing and the Disclosure Paradox

The ecosystem is plagued by the “Disclosure Paradox”: a structural catch-22 where the very adjustments required for peak performance are gated behind a declaration that employees fear will stall their careers. Data from the 2024 CIPD reveals that 52% of neurodivergent professionals in the U.S. remain silent due to fear of stigma. This results in “selective disclosure” — a fragmented reality where an employee might confide in a trusted peer but hide their status from HR.

Wellbeing Indicator	Impact on Neurodivergent Staff	Business Consequence
Burnout Risk	2× more likely than neurotypical peers.	Accelerated turnover; loss of institutional knowledge.
Authenticity	82% feel they can be themselves (Auticon).	5.7× higher employee engagement.
Mental Health	33% report work negatively impacts wellbeing.	Increased absenteeism and degraded morale.
Retention	70% more likely to stay if belonging is felt.	Significantly lower recruitment and training costs.

The Managerial Fulcrum

The line manager is the operational centre of gravity for neuroinclusion, driving 70% of overall engagement. Yet 56% of managers admit they lack the confidence to support neurodivergent talent, and only 35% have received formal neurodiversity training. The result is a “line manager lottery” — the quality of support entirely dependent on personal empathy rather than a standardized protocol. Only 14% of neurodivergent employees report feeling psychologically safe at work, compared to 41% of neurotypical colleagues.

Managerial Readiness Metric	Percentage
Managers lacking confidence to support ND talent	56%
Managers who have received neurodiversity training	35%
Managers feeling uncomfortable hiring a neurodivergent person	50%
Reduction in grievances after manager ND training	35%
HR professionals confident in supporting ND staff	23%

Management protocols must be rebuilt around Manager Usability — the measure of a leader’s ability to interface effectively with diverse

cognitive profiles. Three core competencies: (1) Radical Clarity — explicit, unambiguous directives free of idiom and metaphor; (2) Structured Feedback — specific, high-cadence constructive updates; (3) Output over Optics — evaluating work product quality, not social demeanour.

“
A neuroinclusive manager is no longer a nice-to-have — they are a primary driver of retention and performance.
 ”

■ The 2030 Horizon: From Accommodation to Advantage

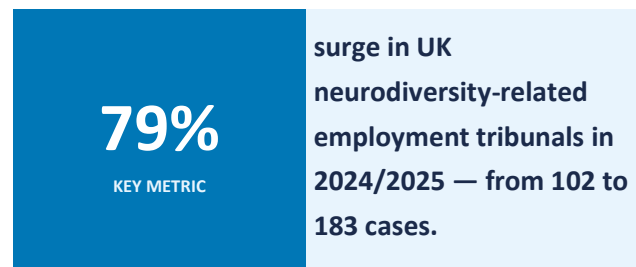
The World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report 2025 forecasts a labour market hungry for AI fluency, big data analytics, creative synthesis, and resilience. These competencies map precisely onto the Spiky Profiles characteristic of neurodivergent cognition. Organizations that institutionalize cognitive intelligence — formal assessments, skills-based hiring, and inclusive leadership — will realize the 15% innovation boost and 90% retention rates that distinguish market leaders.

■ Legal Exposure and the Surge in Employment Tribunals

UK employment tribunal cases referencing neurodiversity have surged by 79% in one year — from 102 to 183 cases. These claims frequently stem from a lack of reasonable adjustments or a failure of managers to understand their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Tribunals

are increasingly viewing the absence of manager training not as an oversight but as a failure to meet fundamental legal standards — as demonstrated by rulings against Greene King and Capgemini.

Tribunal Metric	2023/2024	2024/2025	Trend
Total ND-related ET Cases	102	183	+79%
Disability Discrimination Claims	9% of disputes	16% of disputes	+77.7%
Dyslexia-related Claims	—	44% of ND total	Significant



■ The Counter-Argument: Critiquing the Commodification of Cognition

Scholars argue that justifying neuroinclusion solely through its contribution to the bottom line creates a fragile environment. The “Risky Wager” hypothesis warns that if an organization expects an immediate innovation boost but fails to implement the necessary cultural infrastructure, leadership may abandon the programme — blaming the employees rather than the environment. The popular narrative of neurodivergent “superpowers” also risks creating a hierarchy within the neurodivergent community between those deemed “economically viable” and those who are not.

To mitigate this risk, the 2026 roadmap must move beyond the business case toward Universal Design (UD): making the workplace accessible to neurodivergent employees as a standard — not a profit-seeking exception — creating an

environment where all employees perform at their highest potential.

Synthesis: From Insight to Infrastructure

Moving from awareness to architecture requires three specific migrations: (1) From Standard to Cognitive Ergonomics — prioritizing sensory regulation; (2) From Social Filtration to Skills Verification — hiring for output rather than social conformity; (3) From Reactive Accommodation to Universal Design — implementing changes that benefit all employees regardless of neurotype. When leaders disclose their neurodivergence — now at 44% of organizations, up from 35% in 2023 — it signals that the organization is a safe environment. Masking, reported by 81% of neurodivergent employees, is linked to a three-fold increase in burnout risk.

02

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION — THE “SPIKY” SHIFT

Beyond Diagnosis: Occupational Phenotyping

The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment represents a departure from the clinic to the modern workplace. While its algorithm derives archetypes from four core psychometric indices adapted from the Wechsler scales (WAIS-IV), its purpose is not medical diagnosis. We call this Occupational Phenotyping — mapping the operational architecture of how an individual thinks, decides, and executes. By illuminating cognitive mechanics that are often invisible even to the employee, organizations can stop forcing square pegs into round holes and start leveraging the unique geometry of their workforce.

The Fallacy of the “Rounded” Leader

Standard corporate competency models are obsessed with “rounding out” employees — coaching them to fill “gaps” until their weaknesses match their strengths. This is a strategy for mediocrity. Research confirms that high-performance innovation is not the result of balance, but of intensity. High-performers exhibit a Spiky Profile, defined by statistically significant disparities between cognitive peaks (e.g., 99th percentile Verbal Comprehension) and troughs (e.g., 30th percentile Processing Speed).

- The Neurotypical Profile (The Flat Line): Scores cluster within one standard deviation — predictable and adaptable but often risk-averse and conventionally linear.
- The Neurodivergent Profile (The Spike): Scores span three or more standard deviations. The assessment operationalizes these spikes by engineering “cognitive pairings” that cover the collective blind spots of a team.

The Mathematics of the Spike

To understand the economic implication of cognitive variance, we view it through a vector space. Total team productivity (P) is not the sum of averages, but the optimization of cognitive peaks against specific task requirements. If $S(d,i)$ is the strength of individual i in domain d , and $W(d)$ is the weight of that domain’s importance for a specific task, productivity is defined as:

$$P = \sum_{i=1}^n S(d,i) \times W(d,i) \quad \text{for } i = 1 \text{ to } n$$

Neurodiverse teams maximize P by ensuring that individuals with extreme peaks in domain d are matched exclusively with tasks where $W(d)$ is high. This explains why JPMorgan Chase found neurodivergent hires were 48% faster at specific technical tasks — they were operating in domains where their cognitive peaks provided a decisive advantage. The managerial mandate therefore

shifts from “fixing deficits” to “amplifying strengths.”

Cognitive Domain	Neurotypical Expression	Neurodivergent “Peak” Potential
Pattern Recognition	Average / Consistent	Superior — ideal for Data Science, Cybersecurity.
Attention to Detail	Consistent / Standard	Hyper-focus — ideal for Coding, Quality Control.
Creative Thinking	Linear / Conventional	Unconventional — ideal for innovation-driven roles.
Working Memory	Standard Capacity	Variable, often compensated by long-term memory peaks.

The Four Core Indices

VCI — Verbal Comprehension Index: The Narrative Engine

VCI manifests as Strategic Influence — not merely a measure of vocabulary, but of the capacity to synthesize complex internal logic into a contagious external vision. For a leader, VCI is the primary lever for cultural cohesion and change management: the ability to translate “what we need to do” into “why we must do it.”

PRI — Perceptual Reasoning Index: The Architect’s Eye

PRI measures Fluid Intelligence and spatial processing, acting as the engine of Horizon Scanning. Leaders with high PRI do not think in linear lists; they think in vectors, models, and systems. They excel at “Systemizing” — approaching the organization not as a hierarchy of people, but as a complex machine to be optimized.

WMI — Working Memory Index: The Executive RAM

WMI measures Cognitive Bandwidth — the mental workspace available to hold and manipulate multiple changing variables simultaneously:

stakeholder positions, financial risk, and regulatory constraints. It is the essential metric for complex Governance and Negotiation, distinguishing those who can juggle dynamic instability from those who are overwhelmed by it.

PSI — Processing Speed Index: The Deep Processor

Often fetishized as “Administrative Velocity” in junior roles, PSI requires a strategic re-evaluation at the executive level. A lower PSI is frequently a marker of Analytical Rigor rather than slowness. It indicates a “Deep Processing” style, where the leader runs extensive mental simulations and risk assessments before committing to a response.

The “High PRI / Low PSI” Paradox

The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment screens specifically for the “High PRI / Low PSI” phenotype — frequently observed in dyslexic and gifted profiles. This combination represents a fundamental cognitive trade-off: a sacrifice of execution speed for strategic depth. The lower Processing Speed is not a deficit in intelligence; it is a function of Deep Simulation — the time required to run multiple parallel future scenarios before committing. These leaders may appear slow in administrative tasks, yet this friction is the price of their strategic superpower: the ability to identify “Black Swan” events before they breach the horizon.

The Three Pillars

Analytical Rigor (The Anchor)

This measures the capacity to prioritize Truth Anchors — facts, data, and logic — over social consensus or speed. Rooted in Simon Baron-Cohen’s concept of “Systemizing,” it identifies leaders with a compulsive drive to analyse input-operation-output systems. This is the organization’s “Brake System” — the critical counterforce to Groupthink.

Relationship Intelligence (The Bridge)

This is the ability to read Social Subtext and manage the emotional nervous system of the organization. Mapped to the Comprehension subtest of the WAIS, it evaluates the leader’s ability to navigate the Double Empathy Problem. Essential for the Intuitive Connector archetype, it fosters the Psychological Safety required for innovation to survive the boardroom.

Numerical Logic (The Proof)

Distinct from simple arithmetic, this measures the ability to detect patterns, validity, and logic within quantitative data. Aligned with Matrix Reasoning and Arithmetic fluidity, it predicts financial leadership performance and provides the “Proof of Concept” required to validate the visions of the Visionary Strategist.

- **Weighted Cognitive Load:** By assigning higher weights to “safe-to-fail” behaviours and rapid processing, the assessment identifies who thrives in volatility versus who provides the necessary “slack” for deep-dive analysis.
- **The Translation Catalyst:** Results do not just categorize employees — they provide a framework for Relational Dialogic Communication, revealing where communication “Double Empathy” breakdowns are most likely to occur.
- **Architectural Alignment:** The assessment identifies which individuals are naturally wired for the adaptive “Web” and who might require more support in moving away from the traditional “Tree” hierarchy.

03 THE ASSESSMENT ENGINE — METHODOLOGY

Assessment Overview

The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment moves beyond the static “personality test” by mapping the intersection of neuro-psychological indices — VCI, PRI, WMI, and PSI — onto the functional archetypes required for modern, adaptive networks. By utilizing a weighted scoring system that prioritizes high-signal behaviours over generic self-reporting, the tool uncovers the cognitive spikes that define an individual’s natural contribution to a system. It serves as the foundational “Rosetta Stone” for leaders acting as Connectors, allowing them to identify, translate, and synthesize diverse cognitive styles into a unified, evolutionary growth engine.

Key Pillars of the Assessment Methodology

Cognitive Index	Technical Definition	Organizational Function	Network Utility
VCI	Ability to access and apply acquired verbal knowledge.	The Translator: Ensures cross-synthesizing complex ideas into narratives.	Ensures cross-departmental alignment.
PRI	Ability to interpret and organize visually perceived material.	The Architect: visualizing and system blind spots.	Drives Evolutionary Growth.
WMI	Ability to hold and manipulate information in mind.	The Multitasker: managing multiple shifting variables.	Maintains coherence in Adaptive Networks.
PSI	Ability to process non-verbal information quickly and accurately.	The Iterative Lean: making rapid “90% right” decisions.	Accelerates the Sense and Respond loop.

The Mechanics of the Assessment

The assessment operates on a dual-bucket scoring engine. Every time a user rates a statement on a

scale of 1–10, that raw value is simultaneously added to two distinct registers: the Cognitive Domain (VCI, PRI, WMI, PSI, Analytical Rigor, Relationship Intelligence, or Numerical Logic) and the Leadership Archetype (A, B, C, or D) associated with that question.

The final result is determined by simple summation: the system aggregates the total points for each of the four Archetype buckets, and the one with the highest cumulative value is flagged as the Dominant Profile. The seven Cognitive Domain totals are normalized to generate the visual “Spiky Profile” bar chart. Where scores are closely matched across two archetypes (within 10% of each other), the assessment surfaces a “Hybrid Profile” narrative, acknowledging the blend and highlighting calibration strategies appropriate for both archetypes.

The assessment is not a personality test. It is an Executive Function Architecture map — describing the distinct machinery of how a leader processes information, calculates risk, and executes decisions.

Archetype Deep-Dive: The Neuro-Cognitive Taxonomy

◆ A. The Visionary Strategist

High PRI / High VCI / Low PSI

Engine: Divergent Thinking — a high-velocity association engine connecting disparate data points into coherent futures. Frequently correlating with ADHD traits, specifically high ideation and novelty-seeking.

Function: “Horizon Scanning” — identifying market shifts before they manifest in data.

Growth Friction: The “Translation Gap” — clarity about the destination, difficulty articulating the route.

Calibration: Pair with an Architect of Order to translate vision into execution; use Truth Anchors to ground strategic pivots in data.

▲ B. The Deep Specialist

High Analytical Rigor / High Monotropism

Engine: Convergence Thinking — narrowing focus to a single “truth” or technical domain, excluding all noise. Often “Twice Exceptional” (High IQ + Neurodivergence), but this intensity creates high task-switching inertia.

Function: “Technical Anchoring” — providing the vertical depth that prevents strategic drift.

Growth Friction: “Scope Rigidity” — prioritizing technical perfection over market timing.

Calibration: Create protected deep work time blocks; pair with an Intuitive Connector for stakeholder communication.

⊕ C. The Intuitive Connector

High Relationship Intelligence / High VCI

Engine: Social Processing. This phenotype interprets interpersonal data with the same fidelity that a CFO interprets financial data. They act as the bridge between Systemizing and Empathizing types, solving the Double Empathy Problem in diverse teams.

Function: “Cultural Cohesion” — translating the Visionary’s abstract ideas into human values.

Growth Friction: “Consensus Paralysis” — delaying necessary conflict to preserve harmony.

Calibration: Establish structured decision timelines; use Truth Anchors to externalize authority to data.

≡ D. The Architect of Order

High PRI / High Numerical Logic / High WMI

Engine: Systemizing — the compulsive drive to construct predictable, scalable rules from chaos. Primary cognitive goal: reducing VUCA through process.

Function: “Systemic Scaling” — building the operational rails that allow the Visionary’s innovation to travel at speed.

Growth Friction: “Bureaucratic Sclerosis” — processes that become too rigid for a shifting market.

Calibration: Introduce Evolutionary Growth metrics (OKRs, safe-to-fail prototyping) alongside process management.

The Clinical-to-Commercial Crosswalk

For decades, HR and leadership teams have struggled to quantify the value of neurodiversity because they lack a shared lexicon with clinical psychology. A diagnosis of “slow processing speed” sounds like a liability. Translated correctly, it reveals itself as a critical asset for risk management.

Audit Metric	Clinical Construct	Business Value	Strategic Advantage
High PRI	Fluid Intelligence & Spatial Processing	Organizational Architecture	Visualizes the enterprise as a 3D system; spots redundancies invisible to linear thinkers.
High VCI	Verbal Concept Formation	Narrative Strategy	Translates complex technical “truth” into a compelling market “vision.”
Low PSI	Deliberative Processing	Analytical Rigor	Natural “Wait” reflex that prevents costly reactive decisions by forcing consequence simulation.
High Monotropism	Attention Tunnelling / Flow	Deep Specialization	Locks onto Wicked Problems — resolving technical debt that generalists cannot penetrate.

Audit Metric	Clinical Construct	Business Value	Strategic Advantage
High Relationship Intel.	Social Judgment / Theory of Mind	Operational Empathy	Bridges the Double Empathy gap, translating intent between Tech (Systemizers) and Sales (Empathizers).
High WMI	Auditory Holding / Sequencing	Governance & Risk	Tracks and manipulates multiple risk variables simultaneously during high-stakes negotiation.

Deep Dive: Strategic Re-Framing

The “Low PSI” Paradox — The Pause That Saves Millions

In a standard interview, a candidate with low Processing Speed might seem hesitant or slow. In the commercial world, this delay is Strategic Latency. High-PSI leaders suffer from “Action Bias” — the urge to do something immediately, even if it is wrong. The Low-PSI leader runs a mental simulation of second- and third-order consequences before speaking. In sectors like Law, Cybersecurity, and Mergers & Acquisitions, this “hesitation” is the firewall that prevents catastrophic error.

Monotropism as a Competitive Moat

Monotropism — channelling all attentional resources into a single interest — is pathologized in clinical settings as “obsessive” or “rigid.” In an innovation economy, this is a Deep Work Engine. While neurotypical minds multi-task and scan the environment, the monotropic mind drills. When an organization faces a “Wicked Problem” — a complex, knotted technical or structural failure —

the monotropic leader does not just “work on” the problem; they inhabit it until it is resolved.

04 STRATEGIC APPLICATION — IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORKS

The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment not only identifies the Archetype but prescribes Calibration Strategies to mitigate specific “Growth Frictions.” Two overarching frameworks govern this implementation.

Framework 1: Systemic Agility

To prevent the assessment from leading to rigid bureaucracies, we apply the Systemic Agility (SA) model. This measures organizational adaptation across six domains, each representing a spectrum from “Modern” to “Postmodern” practice. The assessment uses these dimensions to identify where an individual’s cognitive style is likely to thrive — and where cultural friction will occur.

Domain	Modern (Score 0)	Postmodern (Score 5)
1. Sense of Purpose	Shareholder Value: profit extraction and efficiency.	Stakeholder Value: sustainable value for community, employees, and environment.
2. Management	Command & Control: Holding Space: leaders direct results; leaders facilitate focus on compliance.	conditions for autonomy; focus on emergence.
3. Organization	Bureaucratic Machine: hierarchy, silos, rigid procedures.	Adaptive System: networks, cross-functional flows, evolving collaboration.
4. Information Flow	Need to Know: information is hoarded as power.	The Commons: information is transparent and accessible to all.

Domain	Modern (Score 0)	Postmodern (Score 5)
5. Methods	Waste Reduction: optimizing the machine for output.	Evolutionary Growth: meta-structures enabling constant adaptation.
6. Behaviours	Self-Interest: guided by individual KPIs and career safety.	Collective Intelligence: guided by shared responsibility and situational context.

Sense of Purpose: From Shareholder to Stakeholder Value

The shift from Shareholder Value to Stakeholder Value is a move from a profit-centric, closed system to a purpose-centric, open ecosystem. In a Postmodern organization, the primary goal is sustainable value for all entities — employees, community, environment — and management facilitates autonomy rather than controlling compliance.

Management Practices: Command & Control to Holding Space

“Command and Control” is often toxic to Visionary and Specialist archetypes — stifling Divergent Thinking and interrupting Monotropic flow with constant status reporting. “Holding Space” is the advanced state required for Systemic Agility. The leader acts as a gardener: creating the soil conditions that allow people to grow — containing the anxiety of the unknown so the team can function during chaos.

Organizational Practices: Hierarchy to Adaptive Network

The Traditional Hierarchy (The “Tree”) is built for efficiency in stable environments — rigid structure, position-based authority, top-down communication. Adaptive Networks (The “Web”) are designed for speed and complexity — fluid cross-functional teams, expertise-based authority, transparent omnidirectional communication, and an “iterate and evolve” mindset.

Feature	Hierarchy (Static)	Adaptive Network (Fluid)
Primary Goal	Optimization & Predictability	Responsiveness & Innovation
Leadership	Leaders as “Bosses”	Leaders as “Enablers” or “Architects”
Decision Making	Centralized at the top	Decentralized at the “edge”
Individual Role	Fixed job description	Dynamic “Roles” based on talent
Risk Tolerance	Risk-averse (mistakes punished)	Psychologically safe (mistakes are data)

A note of caution: Moving to an adaptive network is not a magic wand. Without clear alignment and high psychological safety, these networks can devolve into chaos or shadow hierarchies where the loudest voice wins.

Information Flow: “Need to Know” to “Open Commons”

In traditional organizations, information is a restricted resource, creating an “us vs. them” mentality and decision bottlenecks. In an Open Commons, information is “open by default” — fostering high trust, enabling collective intelligence, and allowing autonomous decision-making aligned with the organization’s North Star metrics. The key shift: managers move from Gatekeeper (deciding who sees what) to Sense-maker (helping the team understand why it matters). In practice, radical transparency works best as a spectrum rather than an absolute.

Methods: Waste Reduction to Evolutionary Growth

“Waste Reduction” (from Lean and Six Sigma) leads to “efficiency fragility” — when all slack is removed, the organization has no buffer for unexpected shocks. “Evolutionary Growth” views the organization as a living ecosystem: the goal is a system that senses and responds, prioritizing

adaptability over raw efficiency. The critical methodological shift is from fixed KPIs (used to monitor and punish deviation) to OKRs (used to align ambitious stretch goals), and from Standard Operating Procedures to Simple Rules that allow for local autonomy.

Behaviours: Self-Interest to Collective Intelligence

In traditional structures, incentives train employees to prioritize their own “patch” over the health of the whole. Collective Intelligence — the superpower that emerges when a group works in a way that makes the group smarter than its smartest member — relies on three pillars: Working Out Loud (sharing unfinished work so others can contribute early), Cognitive Diversity (actively seeking dissenting voices), and Generative Listening (listening to build upon ideas rather than waiting to rebut).

Framework 2: Relational Dialogic Communication — Solving the Double Empathy Problem

To operationalize neuroinclusion, we must fundamentally redefine communication — not as a transmission of data, but as a shared social space that must be actively managed. This shift is necessitated by the Double Empathy Problem, coined by Dr. Damian Milton: when two people with different internal “operating systems” interact, the failure of understanding is a two-way street. Neither party is “broken”; they are simply tuned to different frequencies.

“
The leader’s role shifts from being the loudest voice in the room to being the architect of the space between people.”

The friction in neurodiverse teams often stems from a collision between two distinct cognitive tribes: Systemizers (high-VCI/PRI) driven by technical accuracy and predictability, and Empathizers (high-WMI/Relationship) driven by team harmony and holistic impact. Without a translator, the Systemizer's focus on the bottom line is read as "coldness," while the Empathizer's focus on the human factor is dismissed as "inefficiency."

The leader must intervene as a "Systemic Mirror," using a three-step Translation Loop: (1) De-escalation — stripping emotional charge, transforming "this plan is a disaster" into "there is a concern about capacity"; (2) Intent Validation — acknowledging that the goals of speed (Systemizer) and sustainability (Empathizer) are both valid strategic imperatives; (3) Synthesis — guiding the team from binary "either/or" conflict to a "both/and" design challenge.

To govern this dynamic, organizations must implement Truth Anchors: 3–5 non-negotiable data points — such as Cash Runway or Server Uptime — that define objective reality. When a Visionary wants to pivot based on intuition, the team consults the Anchors. This mechanism externalizes authority to the data, bypassing ego battles and grounding the organization in shared reality.

CONCLUSION: THE ROI OF COGNITIVE DIVERSITY

The Era of the Prosthetic Executive Team

The industrial logic that governed the 20th century — standardization, uniformity, and the deification of the "well-rounded" leader — has reached its expiration date. The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment is not merely a diagnostic instrument;

it is a manifesto for organizational redesign. By moving from clinical diagnosis to Occupational Phenotyping, it dismantles the fallacy that a leader must be "good at everything."

The implementation of this assessment signals the end of the "Heroic Monologue." The complexity of the modern market exceeds the processing power of any single brain. The solution lies in the construction of "Prosthetic Executive Teams" — systems where the cognitive trough of one leader (e.g., low executive function) is bridged by the cognitive peak of another (e.g., high systemizing). In these configurations, the Visionary's chaos is harmonized by the Architect's order, the Specialist's depth is made accessible by the Connector's empathy, and every cognitive blind spot has a corresponding human counterpart. The result is not a compromise — it is a form of collective intelligence that no single "well-rounded" leader could match.

“Prosthetic Executive Teams” are not a compromise — they are the organizational form that the complexity of the 2026 economy demands.”

From Heroic Isolation to Collective Intelligence

This architecture requires a new cultural operating system — Systemic Agility. Organizations must transition from "Command and Control" hierarchies to Adaptive Networks, where information flows through an Open Commons rather than being hoarded in silos. It requires leaders to master Relational Dialogic Communication, acting as translators who solve the Double Empathy Problem by converting the

raw logic of the Systemizer into the human values of the Empathizer.

■ The Final Binary: Evolution or Obsolescence

The economic mandate is clear. Organizations that successfully operationalize cognitive diversity — transforming it from a DEI initiative into a core strategic asset — will unlock the status of “Profit Accelerators,” realizing the proven dividends of a 15% innovation boost and 90% talent retention. Conversely, those that cling to the “rounded” model face structural decline defined by talent haemorrhage, innovation stagnation, and legal exposure. In an economy defined by relentless complexity, Neurodiversity is not an ethical footnote — it is the ultimate competitive advantage. The future belongs to those who can harmonize the Visionary’s chaos with the Architect’s order.

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— Daniele Forni, The Data Shaman

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Terminology

VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity): A framework originating in U.S. Army War College strategic doctrine describing modern business operating conditions. VUCA conditions demand adaptive, non-linear thinking over procedural compliance.

Neurodiversity: The concept that differences in brain function and behavioural traits (including ADHD, Autism Spectrum Condition, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, and Tourette Syndrome) are natural variations within the human genome rather than disorders requiring correction. Coined by sociologist Judy Singer in 1998.

Spiky Profile: A cognitive profile characterized by statistically significant variance between an individual's cognitive strengths (peaks) and weaknesses (troughs), typically spanning three or more standard deviations across psychometric indices. First described by Nancy Doyle (2020).

Monotropism: A theory of autism (Murray, Lesser & Lawson, 2005) proposing that autistic cognition is characterized by a tendency to allocate most available attention resources to a small number of interests at any one time (an "attention tunnel"). In organizational settings, Monotropism manifests as capacity for deep, sustained focus and extended Flow States.

Double Empathy Problem: A concept introduced by Dr. Damian Milton (2012) challenging the traditional framing of autistic social difficulties as a one-sided deficit. When two people with fundamentally different internal operating systems interact, the breakdown in mutual understanding is bidirectional — neither party is "broken."

Occupational Phenotyping: The process of mapping an individual's cognitive architecture onto the functional demands of a specific role or team context, as distinct from clinical diagnosis.

Masking: The effortful suppression of one's natural neurological traits in order to conform to neurotypical social norms. Reported by approximately 81% of neurodivergent employees and associated with a three-fold increase in burnout risk.

Universal Design (UD): An approach to workplace design that proactively builds accessibility and flexibility into standard practice. UD holds that an environment optimized for neurodivergent employees (e.g., written agendas, flexible scheduling, quiet zones) typically improves conditions for all employees.

Prosthetic Executive Team: An organizational configuration in which the cognitive trough of one leader is deliberately bridged by the cognitive peak of another, creating a collective capability that exceeds the sum of individual contributions.

Appendix B: The WAIS-IV Indices in Depth

The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV) is the global standard psychometric battery for assessing adult cognitive ability. The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment adapts its four primary indices for occupational phenotyping, translating clinical constructs into organizational and leadership competencies.

Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI) — The Narrative Engine

Measures the ability to access, apply, and express acquired verbal knowledge. Subtests include Similarities, Vocabulary, and Information. In leadership contexts, VCI predicts the capacity to construct and communicate a compelling organizational narrative. The key risk for high-VCI leaders is a tendency toward rhetoric over rigor.

Perceptual Reasoning Index (PRI) — The Architect's Eye

Measures fluid intelligence and the capacity to interpret and organize visually perceived material. Subtests include Block Design, Matrix Reasoning,

and Visual Puzzles. PRI is the primary driver of systems thinking and structural intuition. The High PRI / Low PSI phenotype is associated with the “Oracle Effect”: slow in routine processing, exceptional in long-horizon scenario planning.

Working Memory Index (WMI) — The Executive RAM

Measures the ability to hold, manipulate, and sequence information in short-term mental workspace. Subtests include Digit Span, Arithmetic, and Letter-Number Sequencing. A working memory deficit — often associated with ADHD — may be compensated by strong environmental structuring (written agendas, shared decision logs) rather than treated as a fixed limitation.

Processing Speed Index (PSI) — The Deep Processor

Measures the speed and accuracy of simple visual-perceptual tasks, primarily Coding and Symbol Search. Low PSI is the most widely misunderstood cognitive signature in organizational settings — routinely misinterpreted as a proxy for low intelligence or poor work ethic. The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment reframes low PSI as “Strategic Latency.” Industries where low-PSI individuals provide disproportionate value include Mergers & Acquisitions, Legal Strategy, Cybersecurity Architecture, and Pharmaceutical Research.

Appendix C: Key Statistics Reference

Prevalence and Workforce Demographics

- 15–20% of the global population is estimated to be neurodivergent (HLB Global, 2025).
- By 2030, Generation Z and Millennials will represent approximately 74% of the global workforce.
- 88% of workers report that wellbeing is equivalent to salary as a factor in employer selection.
- 83% would leave an organization that fails to prioritize holistic health.

- 85% of autistic adults in the U.S. are estimated to be unemployed or underemployed.
- 44% of organizations now have at least one senior leader who has publicly disclosed their neurodivergence, up from 35% in 2023.

Organizational Performance

- Teams fostering neuroinclusion report a 15% increase in innovation outputs (HLB Global, 2025).
- Organizations with strong neurodiversity programmes report 90% talent retention among neurodivergent staff.
- “Profit Accelerator” organizations are 2.6 times more likely to run optimal operating models (HLB Global, 2025).
- Employees in inclusive Australian teams are four times less likely to leave within 12 months (DCA, 2019).
- JPMorgan Chase: neurodivergent hires were 48% faster than neurotypical peers at certain technical tasks.
- 91% of managers reported improved employee confidence following WNA deployment; 90% of HR teams reported direct performance improvement (Lexxic, 2025).
- Employees are nearly 5 times more likely to successfully reintegrate if a WNA is conducted within the first year of absence (Mayfield Review, 2025).

Disclosure and Psychological Safety

- Only 32% of neurodivergent employees feel safe disclosing their condition at work (2025 Neurodiversity Index).
- 52% of neurodivergent professionals in the U.S. remain silent due to fear of stigma (CIPD, 2024).
- 40% of neurodivergent employees report daily struggles with their work environment without reasonable adjustments.

- Only 14% of neurodivergent employees report feeling psychologically safe at work, vs. 41% of neurotypical colleagues.
- 81% of neurodivergent employees engage in masking; linked to a 3-fold increase in burnout risk (Birkbeck / McDowall et al., 2023).
- 70% more likely to remain where they experience a sense of belonging.

Manager Readiness

- 56% of managers admit they lack the confidence to support neurodivergent talent.
- 70% of managers have never received specific neurodiversity training.
- Only 35% of managers have received any form of neurodiversity training (EY, 2025).
- 50% of managers report discomfort with the prospect of hiring a neurodivergent candidate.
- Manager neurodiversity training is associated with a 35% reduction in employee grievances.

Legal Exposure

- Neurodiversity-related employment tribunal cases in the UK rose 79% in 2024/2025, from 102 to 183 cases.
- Disability discrimination claims now represent 16% of all employment disputes (up from 9% in 2023/2024).
- Dyslexia-related claims account for 44% of all neurodiversity-related tribunal cases.
- Recent rulings have explicitly cited the absence of neurodiversity training as a factor constituting unfair disadvantage.

Appendix D: Sample Assessment Question Framework

The Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment uses a dual-bucket scoring engine: each item contributes simultaneously to a Cognitive Domain score and a Leadership Archetype score. Respondents rate

each statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree).

VCI / Archetype C — Relationship Intelligence: “When a colleague presents an idea I believe is flawed, I focus first on understanding their reasoning before raising my objection.” [1–10] High score: relational attunement characteristic of the Intuitive Connector. Low score: preference for direct technical challenge, consistent with Deep Specialist or Architect of Order.

PRI / Archetype A — Horizon Scanning: “I find it easier to think about where the organization needs to be in five years than to manage today’s operational priorities.” [1–10] High scores combined with low scores on routine-task execution items identify the Visionary Strategist phenotype.

WMI / Archetype D — Governance & Risk: “During a complex negotiation, I can simultaneously track the financial position, each stakeholder’s underlying interest, and the regulatory constraints without losing sight of the strategic goal.” [1–10] Directly probes working memory capacity under multi-stakeholder pressure — a defining capability of the Architect of Order.

PSI / Archetype B — Analytical Rigor: “I prefer to take more time than my peers to formulate my response in meetings, because I want to be certain rather than simply first.” [1–10] Operationalizes the Low PSI phenotype as a deliberate cognitive strategy rather than a deficit.

Tension-based item — Systemizer vs. Empathizer: “When a project is at risk of failing, I prioritize protecting team morale even if it means delaying a difficult but necessary decision.” [1–10] Tension-based items force a choice between two legitimate organizational values. The pattern of responses across

multiple such items reveals an individual's latent priority hierarchy.

Appendix E: Implementation Checklist for Organizations

Phase 1 — Diagnostic (0–3 months)

- Conduct a neurodiversity audit of existing HR policies, recruitment processes, and management training content.
- Establish baseline data on disclosure rates, manager confidence, and current reasonable adjustments in place.
- Identify “hotspots” — teams or departments with elevated attrition, burnout, or grievance rates.
- Commission the Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment for senior leadership teams as an initial pilot.

Phase 2 — Infrastructure (3–12 months)

- Redesign recruitment to filter for cognitive skill rather than social conformity: introduce work-sample assessments, provide interview questions in advance, and remove exclusionary language from job descriptions.
- Launch a tiered support architecture (Screening, Diagnostic, WNA) decoupled from mandatory medical disclosure.
- Train the entire management layer in Radical Clarity, Structured Feedback, and Output over Optics.
- Introduce cognitive ergonomics: quiet zones, adjustable lighting, flexible scheduling, and closed captioning as default for all meetings.

Phase 3 — Optimization (12+ months)

- Roll out the Neurodiversity Spiky Assessment across high-impact teams (R&D, Strategy, Technology, Legal) to engineer cognitive pairings.

- Implement Truth Anchors — 3–5 non-negotiable data metrics — to govern decision-making in high-stakes contexts.
- Transition toward Systemic Agility: pilot Adaptive Network structures in one business unit, measure engagement and innovation output, and iterate.
- Track legal exposure quarterly: ensure all reasonable adjustment processes are documented, timely, and evidence-based.
- Establish an annual neuroinclusion review, benchmarking against HLB Global and Neurodiversity Index data sets.