



Development and Retention of Autistic Staff in Hospitality

Project Number 2023-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000152721



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ABOUT:

The 'PERFORM' project is about educating Hospitality Managers and HR Experts in developing and supporting Autistic Staff in the EU Hospitality Sector. It also delivers an Innovative HR Platform, for performance appraisals and employee monitoring.



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PROJECT RESULTS

1

Project Result 1: PERFORM HR Platform

2

Project Result 2: PERFORM Digital Toolkit

3

Project Result 3: VET Course for Hospitality Managers and HR Experts



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Module 2 : Hospitality Management Soft Skills

Module Aim

The aim of Module 2 is to provide the required knowledge, develop soft skills and techniques to enable an effective management and leadership for employees in spectrum.

Module 2 helps managers apply soft skills throughout the Employment Cycle: Interview → Onboarding → Development → Retention.

Learning Outcomes

1

Understand the required soft skills to manage autistic employees

2

Develop required skills i.e. communication skills, listening skills etc

3

Apply required techniques i.e. time & task management



1. Introduction

Supporting Autistic Employees in the Workplace

- **Autistic individuals bring unique strengths:**
 - Focus, accuracy, persistence
 - Attention to detail, reliability
 - Technical skills (e.g., IT), strong memory
- **Small adjustments can make a big difference.**
 - Clear instructions
 - Flexible communication methods
 - Predictable routines

- **For Managers & HR Teams:**
 - Understand and support neurodiversity
 - Combine soft skills (e.g., empathy, communication, teamwork) with job-specific knowledge
 - Foster inclusive, supportive environments



2. Communication Skills

Autistic Communication May Differ

- Literal interpretation of language
- Challenges with tone, body language, eye contact
- Overwhelm in group/social settings

Manager Tips

- Be clear & direct
- Avoid idioms/sarcasm
- Practice empathy & active listening
- Adapt communication format (email, chat, in-person)



Types of Communication

The four key communication types:

1. Verbal – Spoken language
2. Nonverbal – Body language, tone, facial expressions
3. Written – Emails, symbols, reports
4. Visual – Charts, graphs, icons



Nonverbal Communication

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Body movement
- Posture
- Personal space (proxemics)
- Paralanguage (tone, pitch, volume)
- Touch



3. Active Listening Skills

More Than Hearing

- Focused attention on the speaker
- Understand meaning & intention

Why It Matters

- Builds trust & respect
- Helps understand different perspectives

Tips for Managers

- Be present, don't interrupt
- Reflect back what you hear
- Respond thoughtfully



Tips for Active Listening

Do's

- Listen more than you speak
- Let others finish
- Ask open-ended questions
- Stay focused & aware
- Show engagement (eye contact, nod)

Don'ts

- Don't interrupt or finish sentences
- Don't jump to conclusions or get defensive
- Don't multitask or zone out
- Don't let bias block understanding

4. Empathy

Empathy is foundational for inclusive leadership.

Daniel Goleman's Three Elements of Empathy:

1. Understanding Others – Tune in to emotions.
2. Developing Others – Offer support and mentorship.
3. Leveraging Diversity – Foster inclusion by valuing differences.



4a. Empathy – Understanding Others

Key Element of Empathy

“Sensing others’ feelings and perspectives; taking interest in their concerns.”

– Daniel Goleman

What It Looks Like

- Tuning into emotional & nonverbal cues
- Listening with empathy, including what’s unsaid
- Respecting different experiences & viewpoints
- Offering support based on emotional needs



4b. Empathy – Developing Others

Support Growth & Development

How to Practice It

- Recognize & celebrate strengths
- Give constructive, helpful feedback
- Provide coaching or mentorship
- Assign meaningful tasks to build confidence

Essential for managing diverse teams, including neurodivergent individuals



4c. Empathy – Leveraging Diversity

What It Means

- Embrace and value different perspectives
- Tailor interactions to meet individual needs
- See diversity as a strength, not a challenge

In Practice

- Respect all backgrounds
- Support inclusive hiring (e.g., autistic individuals)
- Challenge bias and stereotypes
- Foster a culture of respect & collaboration



5a. Problem Solving Skills – Applying SWOT

What It Involves

- Identify challenges
- Analyze causes
- Find effective solutions

Helps teams make informed, strategic decisions

Using SWOT Analysis

1.Mission & Goals – Set clear objectives

2.Environmental Analysis – Assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats

3.Strategy Formulation – Choose the best approach

4.Implementation – Take action

5.Evaluation – Review and adjust



5b. Problem Solving Skills – Decision Making

Key Steps (Ritchie & Thompson)

1. Define the problem
2. Gather information
3. Generate solutions
4. Weigh pros & cons
5. Choose the best option
6. Implement it
7. Review & adjust

Why It Matters

- Encourages clear, logical thinking
- Supports better outcomes in complex situations



6. Teamwork

What Makes Teams Work

- Right team size for the task
- Clear roles & responsibilities
- Access to tools & support
- Level of coordination depends on task (e.g., golf vs. surgery)

Effective Teamwork – Key Qualities

- **Cohesion** – Unity boosts performance
- **Communication** – Clarity reduces conflict
- **Common Goals** – Shared purpose = better focus
- **Commitment** – Active, dependable members
- **Accountability** – Everyone owns results

These traits work together to drive team success



7. Adaptability Skills

What It Is

- Adjusting actions or mindset in response to change
- Key in fast-moving, unpredictable environments
- Requires flexibility, resilience & quick thinking

Tips to Improve Adaptability

How to Build It

- **Stay aware** of changes around you
- **Embrace learning** – stay curious & skilled
- **Act quickly** – don't delay decisions
- **Accept change** – see it as growth, not threat



8. Time Management

Why It Matters

- Boosts productivity & well-being
- Reduces stress, improves focus
- Essential for meeting deadlines & staying on track

Key Benefits

- Less stress
- More free time
- New opportunities
- Achieve goals

Smart Strategies

- Set clear goals & priorities
- Use time limits & take breaks
- Stay organized with tools
- Cut distractions & plan ahead



9. Task Management

What It Is

- Managing tasks from start to finish
- Involves planning, tracking, and completing work efficiently

Key Elements

- Set priorities & deadlines
- Monitor progress & status
- Assign roles & resources
- Use tools for coordination (e.g., Trello, Asana)

Common Task Statuses

- Ready → Assigned → Started
→ Finished → Verified
- Other: Paused, Failed,
Forwarded, Expired



SMART Objectives Framework

 **Set Clear, Focused Goals with SMART:**

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Summary</u>
S	Specific	Clear: Who, what, where, and why?
M	Measurable	Trackable: Use data or observable results
A	Achievable	Realistic: Within time & resources
R	Relevant	Aligned: Supports broader goals
T	Time-bound	Deadline: Has a clear timeframe



10. Creativity

What It Is

- Involves many brain regions, not just the “right brain”
- Driven by emotion, memory & flexible thinking
- Enables **divergent thinking**—seeing problems in new ways

Why It Matters

- Fuels innovation & adaptability
- Key in education, tech, arts & business
- Supports problem-solving in changing environments

In Organizations

- Impact varies by mission & industry
- Creativity boosts effectiveness when aligned with goals



11. Leadership

What It Is

- Inspiring and guiding others toward shared goals
- About **influence**, not power or popularity
- Focused on purpose, people, and progress

Leadership is a skill—built through experience, feedback & growth

Key Traits of Effective Leaders

- Confidence & clear communication
- Empathy & emotional intelligence
- Innovative, adaptable, and resilient
- Calm under pressure



Summary Module 2

Soft Skills for Autistic Employees – Focus

Soft skills needed by hospitality professionals—especially in HR, recruitment & management—to support autistic staff across the **Employment Cycle**:

Interview → Onboarding → Daily Work → Development → Retention

Why Soft Skills Matter

- Enhance communication, collaboration & performance
- Essential in service-focused industries like hospitality
- Help build inclusive, high-functioning teams



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