

Specialisterne

JL: I'm Julie Langdale and I'm the Social Media Manager for Specialisterne UK. I'm primarily responsible for interacting with our specialists, from initial point of contact right until putting them on the job. I also manage all of our social media channels, I produce videos, copy edit, just the whole gambit of social media and marketing. Specialisterne was the second job, the second company I worked for after my diagnosis, the first one, the one before that I was heavily discriminated against at after I disclosed what my disability was. The difference is complete polar opposites, from being completely undermined and misunderstood to having complete support for who I am and what I do. They understand my health needs, they understand you know what I need in a physical, reasonable adjustments way to actually function in the workplace, and I get support when I need it which is key for me to be able to do my job. And it's just really rewarding when I get to actually see people come in and come on, you know for example the person that sits beside me every day, they came in very subdued and having really negative work experiences, and now you know he comes into work with a smile on his face, very relaxed and very happy, and I'm so glad you know that I can see first hand the effect that working for this company has.

SO: I'm Steven Owens, the Operations Manager here at Specialisterne UK. Often autism is seen as a disadvantage in the workplace, but at Specialisterne we focus on what we call the 'autistic advantage', and certainly Julie fits in to the skill set that a lot of people with autism can bring to the workplace. So particular things that Julie's really good at is her attention to detail. People on the spectrum can often take time to develop relationship of trust, particularly in the working environment, but very early on Julie and I sat down and had a very frank and open discussion about what our expectations were of each other which I think has been hugely beneficial because we do have quite an open relationship. I think Julie really knows that I really value her input, because I tell her, I don't just leave it to her thinking that she might be doing a good job or not. Another thing that really helps the working relationship that Julie and I have is that she gets outside support from a supported employment provider, which I think is really really helpful for people on the spectrum, it gives them that impartial advice, so it's not just reliant on that relationship that we have.