

Bettaway Marks One Year with We Make Operating an Innovative Jobs Program for Adults with Autism

Program completes first year providing jobs for adults on the autism spectrum.

Delivers over 7,000 hours of "vocational immersion" training, work experience.

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*John Vaccaro, president,
Bettaway*

Bettaway Supply Chain Services has completed its first year partnering with local Pennington non-profit We Make - [Autism at Work](#) operating a structured hiring, training, and [skills development](#) program providing meaningful jobs and career opportunities for adults on the autism spectrum.

"We were very pleased and excited with the success of this program in its first year," noted John Vaccaro, President of Bettaway. "In collaboration with We Make, we provided over 7,000 hours of 'vocational immersion' experiences and training, engaging 68 individuals across various job capacities supporting our business." The program has been so successful, Vaccaro said the company intends to

expand it, adding more participants over the next 12 months.

Bettaway is a family-owned supply chain services company that provides freight trucking, warehousing, inventory management, product packing, order fulfillment and pallet supply, and [logistics management](#) services for beverage and consumer products companies through New Jersey and the northeast U.S.

Founded in 2017, We Make is a non-profit skills development and workforce management organization dedicated to supporting persons with autism, an autism spectrum disorder or IDD. With the creation of its model program, We Make supports resource and purpose-designs to enable companies to establish and sustain meaningful workplace opportunities to help autistic adults succeed on their own in compatible work environments. We Make has coined the term "Industry Inclusion," and is a leader and consultant to companies wanting to diversify their workforce. At the same time, the program provides participating businesses with reliable, skilled,

high-performing employees at a cost typically less than that for workers hired from traditional temporary agencies.

“This has been a major success for We Make and Bettaway, proving that with the right training and support, we can create pathways to meaningful, successful employment, skills development and inclusion for individuals with IDD, delivering real results in real industries,” said Moe Siddiqui, We Make’s founding executive director. “For these individuals, a job is so much more than a job,” he emphasized. “Being a recognized, respected, and contributing member of a workplace fosters confidence, builds self-worth, and brings joy and a feeling of pride at being an accepted part of the community delivering something of value to the business and its customers. This is a huge win for the IDD community and serves as a template for other businesses to participate as well.”



Adults on the autism spectrum work at Bettaway's BevDS beverage fulfillment center helping pack and prepare beverage products for shipping in a joint jobs training program with We Make

The We Make program builds upon Bettaway’s experience providing career opportunities for autistic adults. The company previously worked with the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services, providing jobs during the pandemic for the program’s participants. “That experience provided the proof points and the incentive for us to do more,” noted Vaccaro, whose son, Frankie, is on the autism spectrum.

The program proved out the worth of investing in individuals with IDD, as well as the bottom line impact their performance had on the business. At Bettaway, specific jobs were designed which involved packing assortments of various beverage products into cases and then moving them into a shrink-wrapping line. Over the course of the year, We Make participants produced tens of thousands of cases, fulfilled with over 99 percent accuracy, and exceeding productivity goals set for the project.

“From a business perspective, it was a remarkably smooth, sustainable performance,” Vaccaro noted, “But the real value for me and our team was watching how these individuals grew into the jobs, embraced them, improved, developed a camaraderie with the team and really found a joy that wasn’t there before. You could see it in their faces. There was a pride and a sense of accomplishment that you could see and feel.”

“That endorsed our expectation that our teams can deliver the precision and attention to detail to ensure orders are fulfilled efficiently and accurately,” noted Siddiqu. “We provide businesses with the opportunity to support, with action, the inclusion of workers from the autistic adult community.”

With about 1 in 68 children in the U.S. having been identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the lack of programs and sustainable work situations for adults with autism will only become more acute, explained Tony Lesenskyj, We Make’s founder and Board Chairman. “When your child has autism, you look at the world in a whole different way.”

Siddiqu added that the 3PL space is ideal for We Make because of the industry’s persistent labor shortage, and the type of work to be done. “This is something we can put into a teaching curriculum,” he noted. “These are long term jobs that are not going away, provide stability and consistency, and even offer opportunity for development and advancement, all of which help instill pride, confidence and self-esteem.”

Vaccaro intends to grow the program and be a vocal advocate to encourage other businesses to engage as well. “Autistic adults thrive in this environment,” he notes. “As they grow and mature, take ownership of the work, and master their skill set, they become mentors and peer leaders for others coming in,” he explained. “That’s where I really get inspired, seeing these individuals with so much potential earning their success and, really, fulfilling a dream for themselves and their parents.”

And for employers, gaining not only good employees, but the respect and recognition of all families touched by autism and the larger community. “We’re helping a very deserving and underserved demographic find a meaningful purpose, and most importantly, achieve their dreams of independence and confidence in their skills, worth, and abilities – regardless of where they fall on the spectrum,” Vaccaro concluded.

Gary Frantz

Bettaway

+1 925-594-1434

[email us here](#)

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