



Retail Business Services

Embracing Neurodiversity: Retail Business Services Partners with IBM IGNITE

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If there's one thing Retail Business Services is dedicated to, it's finding new, innovative solutions.

It's this part of the company's promise that led its IT department to participate in IBM's IGNITE ASD, which empowers individuals who fall along the autism spectrum.

As an IBM partner, the Retail Business Services IT department made a decision to support IGNITE ASD in 2018. Shortly thereafter, IBM placed Dyllan Rafail, an IBM associate who participates in IGNITE and self-identifies as having ASD, as a contracted resource with Retail Business Services. Since being assigned to Retail Business Services, Dyllan has added benefit to the IT Quality Assurance (QA) team, bringing a new, unique perspective to the discipline.

Nancy Silva, QA Portfolio Manager, and Rafail's supervisor while he's on site with Retail Business Services, recalled a project where the team was working on a new mobile app. The rest of the team saw no way forward but to test the app on multiple different phones and mobile operating systems, one at a time.

"He looked at that differently and said, 'I think I can set up something to do this a little better,'" she remembered.

Instead of testing each phone individually, Rafail built a station where up to eight phones could be tested simultaneously.

"That was a huge help to us," Silva said.

Aside from his day-to-day work with QA, Rafail also designs and prints organizational items on his 3D printer. The inventions have helped tidy up the office space and have helped smooth out more than a few knotty problems in the lab.

Rafail has been working in Retail Business Service's QA lab for a little over a year, and Silva said she already can't imagine the place without him.

"Somewhere, someone's taken a chance on us in our careers," Silva said. "So, what a wonderful thing to be able to pay that back."

Individuals with ASD often take a different approach to problem-solving and tend to have a greater attention to detail than those not on the spectrum. However, these individuals with ASD may have difficulty in social situations, or in making a good first impression during job interviews and so might be unable to secure stable employment. IBM's IGNITE program seeks to match professionals on the spectrum with roles that recognize the valuable skills individuals with ASD add to a workplace.

Because she's had such an excellent experience with the IGNITE program and has seen firsthand the value Rafail adds for her team, Silva presented recently at IBM's national THINK conference about RBS' experience with the IGNITE program and the value Rafail adds to her team.

"We strive to be a better place to work where our associates reflect the communities where we live, where our voices are heard and valued, where we

find purpose and meaning in our work, and can grow and contribute fully based on our background, perspectives, individuality and uniqueness," Silva told conference attendees. "Dyllan has been a great addition to our team and we value the unique perspective he brings and value he adds to our business."

Click [here](#) to watch a video that IBM shared at the conference featuring the IGNITE program, including some thoughts directly from Rafail. Click [here](#) to find out more about the IBM IGNITE program.