

ENSURE YOUR WORKPLACE DEI INITIATIVES INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



When we talk about building a diverse and inclusive workforce as part of a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiative, that must also include people with disabilities—both physical and intellectual disabilities and [neurodiversity](#). This month marks the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#), and it presents an opportunity to look at the work that's been done—and is still left to do—to make the [workforce](#) and the [world](#) truly inclusive.

The United Nations (UN) has made this a priority with its [Disability Inclusion Strategy](#), “a policy and an accountability framework with benchmarks to assess progress and accelerate change on disability inclusion.” The policy creates a vision and commitment for the UN to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities. According to its [policy brief](#) released in 2020, an estimated 15 percent of the world's population have a disability; one in five women is likely to experience a disability in her lifetime; one in ten children have a disability; and 46 percent of people over 60 have a disability.

As the head of [corporate social responsibility \(CSR\)](#) at BMC, I see opportunities for many companies—including BMC—to expand our partnerships with organizations that are focused on employability, building tech skills, and leveraging neurodivergence to build on the renewed emphasis for “soft skills” and create more opportunities for the inclusion of people with disabilities.

“Let's try to create corporate environments where we are open for people who bring different facets to the business, where we can benefit from each other offering employment and career opportunities to people who maybe have more difficulties to get into the standard job market,” says Alexander Brabeck, a senior director of human resources for BMC in Europe.

The other piece of the puzzle is recognizing the need for accommodation in hiring and in performing

the actual role. "We need to not expect that everyone is acting in the same way. We need to allow more diversity in how people work and what they need to be successful," Brabeck says. "And we need to create and identify opportunities."

Another colleague shared her personal story during a [session on diversity and inclusion](#) at last month's [BMC Exchange 2021](#). Allison Cramer, vice president of solutions marketing for our digital service operations management business unit at BMC, discussed how her openness about having [Asperger's](#) has been received in the workplace.

"It was a really interesting experience for me to see how people reacted to me either differently or engaged with me a little differently after that. People will make because of eye contact or loud noises. Some things are hard for me. They'll bring some of those things up, but just thoughtfully and kindly," she says.

"My brain does work differently, I do have a different perspective. Some of the benefits of Asperger's are you are incredibly focused. You can be very creative; you can do all these different things. And I think being able to be my full self at work and not feel like I'm hiding part of it, or compensating, or acting like part of it isn't there has been very welcoming, helpful, and interesting for me."

"And it also, frankly, takes less mental energy for me. Now I can put all that energy I was using to hide some things or towards my creativity, towards coming up with interesting stories, building unique customer events, doing things that actually benefit our larger ecosystem."

At BMC, we're also working on delivering more accessible experiences to our customers. This past summer, BMC hit a milestone for accessibility with our international websites, implementing a web accessibility plug-in that makes our websites roughly 40 percent more accessible as we work toward achieving complete [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) 2.1 level AA status.

The image is a screenshot of the BMC website with an accessibility overlay. The overlay, titled "Accessibility Adjustments", is on the left side and includes a search bar, a "Choose the right accessibility profile for you" section with various profiles (Seizure Safe, Vision Impaired, Cognitive Disability, ADHD Friendly, Blind Users, Keyboard Navigation), and a "Content Adjustments" section with options for Content Scaling, Readable Font, Highlight Titles, Highlight Links, and Text Magnifier. The main website content is visible in the background, featuring a header with navigation links, a main banner with the text "Invest, Innovate, Integrate" and "Become an Autonomous Digital Enterprise", and a footer with sections for "16TH ANNUAL BMC MAINFRAME RESEARCH", "AUTOMATION EVERYWHERE", and "ADAPTIVE CYBERSECURITY".

The plug-in allows users to have an accessible web experience by clicking on “Accessibility Tools” from the footer of any web page on these international BMC sites:

- <https://www.bmc.com/>
- <https://www.bmcsoftware.fr/>
- <https://www.bmcsoftware.de/>
- <https://www.bmcsoftware.cn/>
- <https://www.bmcsoftware.es/>
- <https://www.bmcsoftware.pt/>
- <https://www.bmcsoftware.jp/>

We're also imminently releasing a new onscreen [color palette](#) for easier visibility and readability that's WCAG 2.1 level AA compliant.

BMC has a robust set of employee resource groups (ERGs), one of which is dedicated to people with disabilities. The group and our larger [BMC Cares](#) organization work to support our internal community of people with disabilities, and the community at large, through volunteerism and other efforts at the following organizations.

- [The Garden Foundation](#) is a non-profit organization serving those with disabilities in the city of Las Vegas by providing a place of education, inspiration, independence, and inclusion.
- [Down Home Ranch](#), based in Texas, empowers the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through social, educational, residential, and vocational opportunities.
- Indian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) [Bhumi](#) and [Samarthanam](#) convert educational textbooks and syllabi into audiobooks for visually challenged students and visually impaired people through a network of volunteers who record themselves reading aloud.
- BMC works with the Israel-based [Taasuka Shava](#) and [Sicuy Shaveh](#) organizations to recruit employee candidates with disabilities.

We welcome you to support us in these endeavors as we strive to create an [Autonomous Digital Enterprise](#) that includes everyone.