

## **ADHD Entrepreneurial**

By Louise Levin

The global economy is shifting once again; we are moving from the age of corporate institutions that were “too big to fail,” to the age of entrepreneurialism, and the ADHD community is fecund with entrepreneurs. It is estimated that over 18 million adults and children in the United States are diagnosed with ADHD. In a professional environment, ADHD individuals are most commonly defined as “the visionaries;” they are the ones who see and think “outside of the box.” They are often endowed with exceptional intellect, are able to visualize the “big picture,” and have an invaluable capacity to hyper-focus, especially in moments of creative stimulation. ADHD individuals are often more adept than most at multitasking, though their ability to micro-manage may fall short of others more capable of long-term commitment and focus. ADHD individuals work well independently and are thus well suited to the entrepreneurial lifestyle.

In order for an ADHD individual to effectively take control of his or her entrepreneurial potential, he or she must first take “ownership” and responsibility for his or her unique challenges, or “bag of stones.” **So, what are the major challenges inherent to the ADHD community that may hinder professional productivity?**

- Though ADHD individuals are able to envision all aspects of the “big picture,” and to motivate others to their cause, they often abandon a project after its initial stages due to diminished interest and/or stimulation over the long-term
- Because executive function is often compromised, ADHD individuals find it difficult to effectively prioritize and execute basic tasks, often leaving the “to do list” unfinished
- Time management skills are lacking, and an ADHD individual may chronically arrive to meetings late, or not at all
- Impulse control is compromised, and those affected may blurt out inappropriate comments or divulge sensitive information/secrets. Lack of impulse control can also lead to other inappropriate behaviors, including inter-office relationships, untoward remarks and, potentially, substance abuse issues
- Inconsistent performance/attention may compromise an ADHD individual’s work output and not necessarily reflect their actual potential

Though these problems may prove inconvenient to management, the value of an ADHD professional to the corporate structure exceeds any minor concessions made to facilitate their productivity. The apparent inability to focus on one task at a time is invaluable when controlled as ADHD individuals are often more adept than most at multitasking. ADHD employees are effective team leaders. Conception of innovative business practices and the anticipation of new market potentials are two major benefits to the ADHD thought processes. An individual can easily grasp “what needs to be done,” and their high levels of energy are effective in motivating others to work towards, and to believe in, the final objective or end result.

These professionals are well suited in conceiving the “big picture,” though their ability to micro-manage needs to be aided and supported by more focused team members. Due to attention deficiencies, many ADHD employees also require highly trained, executive-level secretaries to assist in the scheduling of appointments and in ensuring that he or she is continually kept “on task.” Fixed-term assignments, consisting of flexible hours, are ideal for the ADHD individual. Levels of productivity are relatively unorthodox and will not necessarily synergize with the standard “nine to five” method. This does not, however, mean that an ADHD employee should be permitted to work fewer hours than their colleagues; instead, they should be responsible for

understanding their own daily biorhythms and request permission to work within their greatest hours of productivity. In short, ADHD professionals are highly beneficial when utilized properly.

While ADHD individuals have challenges inherent to their population, they are some of the most imaginative members of our workforce. As they begin to understand their disorder, ADHD professionals can come to realize that their seemingly negative behavioral patterns can be managed, or altered, to affect a positive work ethic and increased levels of production.

An ADHD professional, augmented by a management team comprised of operations individuals and a reliable executive secretary is more likely to realize this potential. As the ADHD individual is never the only person affected, a systemically trained life coach or therapist is also integral to mitigating recurring issues within both the familial and professional systems. Our future leaders will undoubtedly be sourced from all walks of life, constitution and temperament and there is no doubt that, provided for effectively, among these exceptional individuals a large contingent of ADHD entrepreneurs will establish themselves among the great leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.