

Linklaters

Linklaters LLP – helping social business to thrive

Linklaters LLP has a longstanding commitment to supporting social enterprises to thrive. The firm has supported more than 200 social entrepreneurs during its twelve-year partnership with the School for Social Entrepreneurs, offering free legal advice and mentoring support to fledgling social businesses. In 2017, Linklaters also signed up to SEUK's Buy Social Corporate Challenge, a ground-breaking initiative bringing together a group of high-profile businesses which are aiming to collectively spend £1 billion with social enterprises through their procurement. This has allowed the firm to engage with social enterprises in its supply chain, such as auticon.

auticon UK is a social enterprise which exclusively employs IT consultants on the autism spectrum, and the firm was selected by Linklaters' technology team in London to undertake a data analysis requirement. The engagement with auticon saved time for several teams in Marketing and Knowledge and Learning, as they effectively automated a huge volume of labour-intensive data analysis which would otherwise have needed to be carried out manually.

90% of auticon's consultants were unemployed before joining the company, with half of them unemployed for more than five years despite being highly skilled. According to the National Autistic Society, only 16% of autistic adults are in full time employment despite 77% of people with autism on out-of-work benefits wanting to work. The project with Linklaters has supported the direct employment of autistic consultants and has also helped auticon to expand their offering – the organisation has now proven its ability to run projects with a dedicated team that manages and delivers the project from specification to planning through to delivery.

"It's really been a pleasure to work with auticon. We've been impressed by the professionalism of their consultants. It's been a positive and eye-opening experience." James Pilgrim, Senior Knowledge Systems Manager, Linklaters LLP

"We are delighted to have Linklaters as one of our UK clients. As a true innovator among global law firms, Linklaters recognises the value of neurodiverse talent and have worked with us to provide the right conditions and a great welcome to our consultants. By engaging with auticon, City firms can not only address the unemployment issue among autistic adults but also benefit from our consultants' market-leading skillsets on complex IT projects." Ray Coyle, CEO, auticon UK

To find out more about Linklaters' work in this area, visit <https://www.linklaters.com/en/about-us/responsibility/social-impact/helping-social-business-to-thrive>

To discuss supply chain opportunities for your social enterprise, email rebecca.z.thomas@linklaters.com