

TennesseeWorks Employment Partnership Profile

AutoZone Fulfillment Center, Memphis, TN

Employer Business

AutoZone is the leading retailer of aftermarket automotive parts and accessories in the United States. The company has over 5200 retail outlets in the United States, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Brazil. AutoZone has a strong corporate commitment to diversity in its workforce and involvement in community services activities.

AutoZone operates a Fulfillment Center in Memphis. The Center, which has eighty employees, fulfills orders for AutoZone's online business. Operations at the center include breaking down shipments, pulling stock and shipping orders. In keeping with the company's commitment to diversity in its workforce, in 2013 the Fulfillment Center sought a community partner for an initiative to recruit and support employees with disabilities.

AutoZone has to date hired seven employees through its partnership with SRVS and are looking to hire more individuals.

Partners

Management at the AutoZone Fulfillment Center reached out to Shelby County Residential and Vocational Services (SRVS) for assistance in developing and maintaining its disability employment initiative. SRVS is the largest provider of services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in West Tennessee. The agency is an approved contractor for both the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (VR) which facilitates the provision of a full range of services to support people with disabilities to be employed. SRVS was excited by the AutoZone partnership offer.

SRVS staff began by assisting AutoZone in assessing workforce needs at the Fulfillment Center and determining how jobseekers with disabilities could enhance



operations. They determined that there was a need for staff to take packages from a conveyor belt and sort them onto different pallets for shipment. There was also a need to keep the lines free of debris. AutoZone utilized a staffing agency to do some of this work periodically, but it was determined that by hiring staff, these tasks could be done on a daily basis.

AutoZone and SRVS proceeded to establish a structure to recruit, train, and retain employees with disabilities to meet the Center's workforce need. AutoZone set a standard for employees hired through the initiative of "equal work for equal pay." SRVS assigned an employment consultant to the initiative to assist AutoZone with disability related issues and to serve as a single point of contact. Additionally, SRVS assigned a job coach to assist with training of new employees with disabilities and provide on-going supports for the employees in the workplace.

Employment Process

When job openings at the Center are identified, SRVS recruits appropriate candidates from the broad pool of people the agency serves. SRVS staff assist candidates with the application process. After AutoZone hires a

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Examples of Natural Supports in the Workplace

- Getting rides with co-workers to and from work
- Allowing employee to work in a quieter area
- Following a written or visual list of job duties available to every employee
- Creating a mentoring relationship with a co-worker or supervisor
- Involving co-workers as job trainers
- Having co-workers or supervisors cue when it is break time
- Using an existing scheduling system to increase productivity
- Getting feedback on work performance by supervisor

candidate, the job coach assists staff at the Fulfillment Center to train the person for skills needed for the job. The job coach subsequently monitors the employee's performance on the job and is available to provide supports to the employee on an on-going basis.

In December 2013, AutoZone hired two individuals with disabilities referred from SRVS to work in the shipping department at the Fulfillment Center. After six months of work, AutoZone was very pleased with their performance and hired a third person referred from SRVS.

In the Fall of 2014, AutoZone had a need for a janitor at the Fulfillment Center to do housekeeping. Through its partnership with SRVS, two individuals were hired for this position on a job sharing basis.

In early 2015, AutoZone identified a need for two clerical staff to do order processing. Based on the success of the employees hired through the partnership, AutoZone hired two individuals with disabilities referred from SRVS for these positions.

Stephanie Potter, Director for Employment at SRVS, said AutoZone has provided motivated job seekers with disabilities with diverse employment opportunities.

Outcomes

AutoZone has to date hired seven employees through its partnership with SRVS. Fulfillment Center Manager Dennis Johnson said his staff were at first reluctant to hire a person with a learning disability, but now are looking to hire more individuals. He added "We are thrilled with them. Their work is impeccable..." This success was highlighted when one of the employees in the shipping department received AutoZone's prestigious "Extra Miller" award that honors an employee who aligns with the company's values of striving for exceptional performance. Mr. Johnson said this employee "helped raise the bar" in the center's shipping area and "helped energize all those around him." Stephanie Potter, the Director for Employment at SRVS, said AutoZone has been a wonderful partner and has provided motivated job seekers with disabilities with diverse employment opportunities.

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