



Alpha Employments E.R.N.I

Empowering adults on the Autism Spectrum to job search more effectively & independently

Jason White – Manager, Alpha Employment Service

About Alpha Employment Service

- Alpha Employment Service (AES) is a contracted provider of Disability Employment Services in Victoria
- Alpha is the recognised ASD specialist provider of Disability Employment Services in the state
 - We operate out of 8 locations throughout the metropolitan area, and currently assist over 120 participants
- Although having largely Melbourne metro site locations, Alpha currently services participants from regional areas of Victoria

An overview of how we operate

Alpha provides assistance and guidance to participants seeking work, or further study

Alpha assists its participants to:

1. look for work
2. maintain existing employment
3. provide opportunities for up-skilling or training
4. provide support and promote independence for our participants
5. general advocacy for our participants

Alpha's point of difference in Disability Employment Services

One of the beliefs at Alpha is that we want our participants to have as much faith in the quality of the service and program we provide as we do

We provide our participants with options. These options begin from initial consultation, and are designed to give the participant the most individualised and tailored service as possible

Participants are explained all the ways in which we operate and provide support, and have a say in how we develop an employment plan tailored to them

Alpha's Partners

Alpha enlists support from specialist individuals prominent in the wider ASD community, including Psychologists, mental health experts and other related professionals. Alpha sources this support so that Alpha participants are able to enhance their overall experience, and promote better overall employment outcomes for our participants

We have exciting programs operating with dynamic organisations such as the ANZ Bank. ANZ's Community Relations Department and Alpha coordinate staff from the ANZ to volunteer their time to offer Alpha participants the opportunity to sit through a practice job interview

In our current partnership with Infoxchange & Social Firms Australia, Alpha will be providing recruitment, training and support for a Social Enterprise based around clients with ASD working as software testers in the open employment market

Common issues or difficulties for participants when job searching

Many participants when conducting job searching activities use either one or a combination of methods to search for job vacancies

- Online sites such as Seek or Career One
 - Australian Jobsearch Website
 - Newspapers

In a recent poll of Alpha participants, almost all of them chose Seek as their preferred method for independent job searching

Only 1 out of 5 participants found available jobs that suited their skill set or previous employment background

Common methods for job searching

Alpha found that the majority participants with computer literacy were searching for roles based upon pre-selecting first a generalist job category, or industry, followed by a location relevant to them.



The screenshot displays a job search interface with a blue header and a white search area. The header includes navigation tabs: "Job Search" (highlighted in blue), "Executive 100K+ Jobs", "My Account & JobMail", and "Salary, Advice & Tips". A pink button labeled "ADVERTISERS Post a Job Ad" is located in the top right corner. The search area contains several input fields and dropdown menus: a text box for "Enter keyword(s)", a dropdown for "Administration & Office Support", a dropdown for "Data Entry & Word Processing", a dropdown for "Mel.", a dropdown for "All Melbourne", a dropdown for "Part Time", and two dropdowns for salary ranging from "\$0" to "\$100+". A pink arrow points to the salary dropdowns with the text "Add salary to your search". At the bottom left, there is a blue button for "Advanced Search" and the text "or search by employer and recruiter". A pink button labeled "SEEK" is positioned at the bottom right.

Common issues or difficulties for participants when job searching

Participants would then 'screen' or 'qualify' the resulting job ads according to what jobs may be relevant, suitable or worthy of applying for. In many cases, participants would apply for positions based upon the title of the vacancy and the information provided in the short description

11 Part Time Data Entry & Word Processing jobs in Melbourne

0 jobs selected → Save Sort By: Date

- Junior Accounts Clerk** Australian Commercial Catering 11:32 AM
Melbourne Eastern Suburbs Junior Accounts Clerk
\$31,200 plus super Administration & Office Support > Data Entry & Word Processing
- Clerical Administration Officer** Egans Asset Management Tue 20 Jul
Melbourne
 - Full Time - 8am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday
 - Freindly and supportive working environment
 - Inner west location of FootscrayFull time role in Auction house administration - Work with a great bunch of people, professional yet relaxed environment.
Administration & Office Support > Data Entry & Word Processing 
- Audio Transcription Typists** Auscript Australasia Pty Limited Tue 20 Jul
Melbourne CALLING ALL TYPISTS!!! Permanent full-time and permanent part-time positions available! If you love typing, apply today!
Administration & Office Support > Data Entry & Word Processing
- Product Database Administrator** Private Advertiser Mon 19 Jul
Melbourne Eastern Suburbs * Respected National Market Leader * Eastern suburbs location
\$35,000 - \$39,999 Administration & Office Support > Data Entry & Word Processing
- Part Time Data Entry & Customer Service - Drawdown Officer - Big 4 Bank!** TSS Westaff Sun 11 Jul
Melbourne CBD & Inner Suburbs
 - Start Date ASAP - Interviewing now - APPLY NOW!
 - Monday to Friday 4pm - 8pm Shift
 - Ongoing Temporary Role - Possibility of permanency down the trackIf you'd like to utilise your processing experience attach your resume for this truly great opportunity to kick start your banking career.
Administration & Office Support > Data Entry & Word Processing 

Common issues or difficulties for participants when job searching

- Even for those few participants that did manage to create interview opportunities for themselves, seldom did they result in being offered a job
- Alpha identified that in some cases, it was clear that participants were not confident in navigating their way through the searching and screening process when they were looking for work.
- They often found it difficult to distinguish differences between one job description and another, particularly for positions with similar job titles.

Common methods for job searching

What we learned

- There were very few quality job search matches for participants
- Participants often became disheartened in the job searching and application process
- Instead of job searching being a positive activity for a participant, it actually became more of a laborious activity, and in some people, it made them quite anxious and fearful
- Some participants began to demonstrate 'desperate' type of activity where they would apply for work that was clearly unsuitable to their skills and abilities. The action became part of their 'routine'

Alpha introduces E.R.N.I.

E-R-N-I is Alpha's own job search enhancement tool. It is offered as a standard feature of Alpha's pre-employment training program, and is often used by our consultants to better assist participants and promote better quality job placements.

The E.R.N.I. letters help us to identify a participant's current **Employability**, **Retained**, **Non-Competent** & **Identifiable** skills.

Alpha uses E.R.N.I. to assist our participants in the following ways:

- To re-build a resume to best reflect current skills and experience
- To begin searching more effectively for jobs that match current skills
- As an aid to write more effective cover letters and job applications
 - To promote confidence in a participant's abilities to job search independently, even after they may have ceased their relationships with Alpha

How do we use E.R.N.I.?

E skills

- these are the **employability** qualities that an employer may find appealing about us

R skills

- these are **retained** skills - specific and current skills we have learned in the past that we can do competently, and where would require minimal additional training

N skills

- these are skills we are **not competent** in - we may have been shown them and have done them in the past, but we would need some training or practice before being comfortable doing them in the workplace

I skills

- these are the more personally **identifiable** skills and characteristics we possess not only as employees, but as people

E.R.N.I. Case Study - Ben

Putting E.R.N.I. into practice

E.R.N.I. Case Study - Ben

- Ben was employed with the one employer for more than 20 years, before being made redundant
- He was in his mid 50's when he is first registered with Alpha. He has a formal diagnosis of having Asperger's Syndrome, and was quite keen to get back into employment. Ben had a current resume, which was quite a good reflection of his previous employment
- The industry that Ben was employed within had suffered a significant downturn in Australia due to the GFC, and as a result, it would seem unlikely that there would be employment opportunities within the same field for Ben to connect with in the future
- Ben has basic PC literacy, and used Seek to look for work. He had been searching for roles using the drop down box categories with no luck. It was becoming apparent that prospects in his desired field were very limited based on job search results

E.R.N.I. Case Study - Ben

- It was more than a month before Ben, with the assistance from Alpha, secured part time work, however in an unrelated role
- The employment was collecting supermarket trolleys, and although not an ideal situation, it provided Ben with some income to supplement his DSP and give him peace of mind to be able to maintain his basic cost of living
- Ben understood that it is important for him to be involved in some activity rather than none at all.
- Ben would remain to be supported by Alpha, and in addition to his job, Ben agreed to meet with his Alpha consultant on a fortnightly basis to continue to search for other forms of employment that relate closer to the skills he has learned in his previous job.
- Ben and Alpha implement the use of E.R.N.I.

E.R.N.I. Case Study - Ben

We asked Ben to record some the skills he felt he identified with using the four E.R.N.I. skills identifiers

retained skills

Grinding using electric and air tools	Factory cleaning
Using sanders and grinders	Using pencil grinder for finishing
Excellent factory OH&S knowledge	Making castings

non-competent skills

Using pressure testing equipment	

identifiable skills

Good eye for detail	
Ability to prioritise tasks	
Excellent memory	

employability qualities

Good attendance record	
Always punctual	

E.R.N.I. Case Study - Ben

We applied a combination of Ben's findings to Seek.

The screenshot shows the Seek job search interface. The search bar contains the text "clean floors". The "Any Classification" dropdown is set to "Any Classification", and the "Any Location" dropdown is set to "Any Location". The "Full, part-time, contract & temp" dropdown is set to "Full, part-time, contract & temp", and the "Any Sub-Classification" dropdown is set to "Any Sub-Classification". The "Any Area" dropdown is set to "Any Area". The "SEEK" button is highlighted in red. A red arrow points from the text below to the "clean floors" search bar.

- In the keywords section, we entered one of the R-skills. Upon hitting the search button, we received a list of matches, based solely on this key word search. We then repeated the process for all of the R-skills that were determined. We were then able to refine the search by selecting the City, area and what type of hours of work (full time, part time or casual)

The screenshot shows the Seek job search interface with refined filters. The search bar contains the text "clean floors". The "Any Classification" dropdown is set to "Any Classification", and the "Melbourne" dropdown is set to "Melbourne". The "Part Time" dropdown is set to "Part Time", and the "Any Sub-Classification" dropdown is set to "Any Sub-Classification". The "Melbourne - East" dropdown is set to "Melbourne - East". The "SEEK" button is highlighted in red. Red arrows point from the text below to the "clean floors" search bar, the "Part Time" dropdown, and the "Melbourne - East" dropdown.

E.R.N.I. Case Study – Ben

Outcomes

- When searching for roles using key words such as ‘grinding’, ‘air tools’, ‘castings’, etc, there were limited results of available jobs that actually matched Ben’s previous skills here in Melbourne.
- What we were able to identify is that there were a significant number of jobs available in regional Victoria that matched Ben’s skill set very closely, however these were ruled out as employment options.
- Despite the search results showing jobs available in Melbourne that weren’t suited to Ben, we did discover through some further research that at least 6 of the employers who had advertised for staff did employ people with Ben’s skills.
- We began cold calling those companies, based on Ben’s skills that came out of the E.R.N.I. exercise and found an employer willing to meet with Ben

E.R.N.I. Case Study – Ben Outcomes

- Ben was successfully offered a position as a factory hand and was placed on 38 hours per week for a 3 month probationary period
- After 3 months, Ben was offered a permanent, full time position.
- Ben requires little support in this role, as he is once again in a position that he is familiar with, and feels that he can make a great contribution to his new employer.