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Why neurodivergent founders can excel at building complex systems

Varun Cruz, founder of NEUVIOR, says in pharmaceuticals and AI, the hard part is rarely the idea - It is turning fragmented information, regulation and execution into a system that can deliver

**in** Varun Cruz

founder, NEUVIOR

It was a Wednesday when I sat down to make sense of the published medicines datasets we wanted to work across: the NHS dictionary of medicines and devices (dm+d), English prescribing data and pricing references such as the Drug Tariff.

This meant opening spreadsheets, reconciling codes and translating fragmented signals into something an intelligence platform could use.

When I next looked up, it was Saturday morning.

That experience stayed with me because it captured a truth about company-building. Most startups fail because the founder thinks they are building a product. The companies that reshape industries are building systems.

In complex sectors such as pharmaceuticals and artificial intelligence, the hard part is not a launch. It is connecting fragmented information, decision-making and infrastructure into something coherent. This rewards a particular way of thinking, and in my experience neurodivergent founders can have a real edge there.

Pattern recognition across chaos

Traditional organisations reward predictability, structured communication and incremental work. Complex systems don't behave like that. They reward pattern recognition, curiosity and the ability to hold several layers of a problem in your head at once.

In medicines, information is rarely neat. Product definitions, prescribing behaviour, pricing signals, regulatory requirements and operational constraints sit across different environments and move at different speeds. I must read that complexity, and structure it.

This is part of what led me to start NEUVIOR and begin developing PHARMORIS. The opportunity is not simply to analyse one spreadsheet faster. It is to turn fragmented pharmaceutical intelligence into something decision-makers can use.

Hyperfocus is not enough

Another trait associated with neurodivergence is hyperfocus. In the right context, it can be an advantage. It lets you stay with a problem long enough for the architecture to reveal itself.

But cognitive intensity is not enough. Left unmanaged, it becomes chaos.

That is the lesson I learned as an ADHD founder building in a regulated market. Healthcare doesn't reward charisma. It rewards reliability. You can have the right insight and still fail if your operating system is weak.

Systems turn intensity into execution

For me, the answer was not to try to become a different kind of founder. It was to build the company around systems that make delivery less dependent on mood, memory or momentum.

We run a single operational ledger across decisions, risks, deliverables and owners. Every meeting ends with a decision. Every decision creates either a deliverable or an obstacle to be cleared. We work in gates, not vague goals. The question is not what we built, but what uncertainty we eliminated.



Why championing women in tech is more important than ever

As we look ahead to this year's everywoman in Technology Awards, I find myself reflecting on how far we have come, and how much opportunity still lies ahead for women in tech. Celebrating success has always mattered but right now it feels particularly important. Women make up 24.8% of the UK STEM workforce, a figure ...

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I also treat compliance as an operating capability. In healthcare, compliance is part of the product. Once you accept that, structure stops feeling like friction and starts feeling like leverage.

That matters beyond one company. NHS England ADHD management data suggests around 2.5 million people in England may have ADHD, including those without a formal diagnosis. Clearly, neurodivergence is part of the talent organisations rely on.

Yet most companies still approach neurodiversity as a culture topic first and an operating question second. I think that is backwards.

If ownership is unclear, priorities change by the hour and urgency becomes performative, neurodivergent talent does not suddenly become less capable. The system becomes harder to work inside.

During Neurodiversity Celebration Week, we should note organisations wanting to benefit from neurodivergent talent need clearer communication, explicit ownership, predictable workflows and environments that reduce friction.

Neurodivergent founders don't need romanticising. They need systems to turn cognitive range into consistent delivery. In complex markets, that is often where the advantage lies.

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