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Yes, Okay, great, Thank you. Okay, So i'm about to go live

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The webinar will begin momentarily

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Okay, Looks like we're ready to Start thank you so much, Jenny, for getting it all together.

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Good morning, Everyone i'm Kelly curtain Executive Vice President of membership and Destinations services for Nyc.

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And company, and I want to thank all of you for joining us this morning for our July. Nyc.

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And Company talks, as you know, Nyc. and company talks is the name of our educational series for our members and partners, and, as i'm sure you also know, to say, mark the 30 s anniversary of the Americans with

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disabilities. act the ada so we're really pleased to once again in July.

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Focus on on accessibility. this is actually our fifth annual talk on accessibility, and and our sixth talk overall and in the past we've covered topics like welcoming guests with with disabilities.

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We've covered web accessibility. and today's topic I think is is really relevant.

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We keep hearing about all these businesses that that need workers.

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Everybody needs employees it's very hard to find people and Today the topic today is 88, 32 learn share and higher, and the goal today is to learn how to tap into an untapped population for our workforce and we're

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honored to have amazing speakers, as we always do. led by Peter Slayton, who is president of the Slatan group.

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He is a longtime consultant on disability and accessibility to Nyc.

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And company. Peter is going to introduce all of our esteemed speakers today, but there is one I want to call out in particular, we're honored to be joined today by Lax me Lockman Prasad who is the Founder

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of accessible travel. Com. She is an nyc and company board member and we're so excited for her because she was one of the recipients of the 2022 ada sapline awards and she just

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received a beautiful award from mayor adams this week so we're thrilled to have latch with us.

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We're always thrilled to have Peter with us we have other great speakers.

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But i'm gonna turn everything over to Peter thank you so much.

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Thank you so much, Kelly, and thank you and Lyc and Company for bringing us back to do this again.

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We love hosting these these discussions and I think as Kelly said, This one is particularly relevant, and of course, congratulations to lacks me.

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I'm thrilled at her news and she really deserves this special award.

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For her public service commitment which is really extraordinary.

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Is any of you who know her? No. And her website is actually accessible.

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Travel. Nyc dot com sorry kelly so we do have a wonderful panel today, and i'm really thrilled that i'm honored that people that this group has joined us i'm gonna start by

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introducing someone. I consider a mentor and long time leader in this space. Alan Mo.

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Meyer, the chief Human Resources emeritus of Lows Corporation, and I certainly don't mean the department store.

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I mean the great hotel company and and conglomeration, Multinational company lows corporation.

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Many of you know it's great hotel the flags if avenue regency and many other hotels across the country, and and growing, and along with Allen.

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We have a wonderful resource for New York, City, Martha Jackson is the acting commissioner of the Mayor's office for people with disabilities or Mo Pd.

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Which actually conferred this great honor. last week, along with the Mayor and and really happy to have Martha with us, to tell us really about what the city is doing to help folks hire people with disabilities.

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And finally, we have a wonderful sue crystal Mansur was the Vice President for program impact at the National Restaurant Association's Educational Foundation.

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Based in Dc. and Sue is an amazing researcher research scientist.

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And all around incredibly well, well educated person who just has a lot of experience in in this area, and many more is really gonna give us some insights into some of the latest research from the Nr Aef and its

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partners so thrilled to have everyone here just quickly, you know.

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As as Kelly said, this is a very important time everyone I meet in in the hiring world in in the hospitality world is really concerned about the the challenge of finding people to work.

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And i'm Sure, that's why you're all joining us here, eager to find new resources new places to seek out potential employees, and of course, the world of people with disabilities is right there, right

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here in waiting and eager to work and I think one of the interesting things that's happened during the pandemic, you know.

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For years the disability community has been waving our arms and jumping up and down, and shouting literally and figuratively, about how we want remote work, because even in New York City public transportation as good as it

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is, is still extremely challenging for many people with disabilities.

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So we want remote work. We want hybrid work.

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We want flexible scheduling, and all of those accommodations that are reasonable, and it's only with the arrival of the pandemic, and the need for people to remain home that remote work

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finally became a thing, and we're grateful for that if maybe a little annoyed that we weren't listening to before.

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But i'm Glad the world has discovered it but it is opening up new ways to hire in my travels around meeting with people in the hotel industry and in other areas of of the hospitality and entertainment world.

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I'm pleased to be hearing both just anecdotal stories about new hires of people with disabilities.

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I was speaking to someone at the one hotel south beach. Now that's a pretty prestigious hotel.

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They've just hired 2 blind people to work in one is a steward.

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I'm not sure what the other one is but they're welcoming them.

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Working through the Miami lighthouse for the blind, That's they found their folks so I think it's always great to know where resources are.

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I was just i've just returned from New orleans, where I spoke on a panel called Hospitality without barriers.

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At a conference called Tails of the Cocktail.

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And so yes, it was 3,000 people interested in the restaurant interest industry in the bar industry.

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On my panel was the panel was put together.

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Bionic Benjamin of Contento, the owner of Contento.

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Here in New York which hosted our discussion last year and Yankees wheelchair user.

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I'm blind, as many of you know there was a profoundly deaf person on the panel with his colleague.

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Together. They have an organization called uncorked Access dot org, and I recommend that you check them out.

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They do much of the same thing that we do at Slaton Group with Lax.

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We on accessibility, awareness, and how to serve with and join with people with disabilities and workplace course.

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They focus on the wine industry and there was also a mythologist from content to who was able to overcome her her anxiety, and let her colleagues know that she has adHD that's a

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significant, invisible disability, and that she was able to do this and that they were able to devise ways of working with her to maximize her ability, and she's the headmixologist.

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There, and so we were really pleased to have her on the panel.

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So quite a diverse panel speaking about this really important issue, and I think there's just a lot for us all to learn.

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You know i've heard one one stat if I get it right that for every 100 jobs in in hospitality in a hotel there are something like 50 roughly 50 applicants which is not a good ratio

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and I hopefully, that will improve But here we're happy to bring forward a great resource for you all.

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So with that i'm gonna turn it over to the panel and start with lax meat to give us some background lacks me.

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Take it away, and thank you very much. thank you Peter It's nice to be here today, thank you, Kelly.

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Thank you, Peter. Thank you, Martin. Thank you to the travel industry that Peter rallied up to

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Get my support for the sappa lane awards which i'm.

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Happy to showcase the certificate from the mayor.

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So without much ado. you know Peter and I have been on this journey together, working with the industry here, especially in New York, and how to welcome people with disabilities.

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But we've also been very active in trying to get these members like yourselves here today, and hiring people with disabilities going to give a brief outlook, and some information as from our accessibility blueprint

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and then i'll turn it over to the rest of the folks here today, which i'm just really happy to be around.

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So the labor market outlook it's that only 33% of working age.

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Americans with disabilities are employed and it's the third largest market segment with over 10 million people who's able and ready to work.

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So what are some of the barriers for hiring people with disabilities?

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It's a low expectation concerns, about disruptions, fear of costly accommodation, high maintenance, and low productivity.

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A workplace culture of not welcoming disabled workers, which was something I heard the other night from the Frick Museum resources for hiring people with disabilities who are excited to have market today here from the

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Mlpd's office, and she's going to talk all about the at work program.

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You can also get in touch with commission for the blind and advocacy.

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Organizations like United's final organizations national federation for the blind autism speaks and Job path.

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I'm sure Kelly will be able to share some of these listings with you Afterwards, too, How do we support employees with disabilities in our work, working atmosphere?

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We can ensure that physical and digital environments are accessible, and we can build an inclusive culture through social accessibility. training Some of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities are tapping into different perspectives and lift

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experiences increased diversity and reinforce brand identity.

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Diversity, of course, tribes innovation which is what we've been hearing, and of course it's filling the job positions that you have

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Peter, do you Wanna take it away? Sure thing. Thank you. Latch me and appreciate that background.

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I want to say, you know I remind everyone, we will have. Q. A.

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Afterwards you can enter questions in the chat or just raise your hand if you want to interrupt.

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During this talk. If you have a very relevant question to ask on the spot, just raise your hand, and Kelly or Jen from ny seem country will respond.

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But we will have about 10 min at the end for Q.

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A so, Alan. you were at Lows when the Ada was past, and and came into force.

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I think it came into force really in 1992.

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And well, first just talk about your experience your your experience goes well beyond Lows.

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You've been active in so many. things and one of the things I've learned from you is how to just take nothing and turn it into something. frankly.

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And so yeah, tell us about what you what you've done and in this area, and what you've seen change.

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Thank you, thank you, Peter. there's have been plenty of change.

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Just for everybody, so that you know my title.

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You all know what ca ro means emeritus means i'm unemployed.

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I i'm probably the only person on the panel that's unemployed.

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I'm unemployed because intentionally I retired 6 years ago.

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I and I devoted. my life to having fun and also maintaining my involvement in the world of work in in very limited ways such as today. If I think that i've got something to offer then i'm really

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happy to to do this. you can. You can follow my retirement.

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By the way, anybody who's close to retirement I have a blog.

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It's called Hello pension goodbye tension so just log on.

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Sign up doesn't cost the thing let me address the question that Peter raised.

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What were things like? 30, 31 years ago, when Ada was passed, it was not openly welcomed by the world of employment.

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It was seen as somewhat of a burden by many, many employers.

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Not an opportunity button there was an overall view that people with these kind of disabilities couldn't do the work, and that's why we didn't hire them.

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And it was put on human resources, of course, to put shoulder behind.

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The Ada, and to make it applicable and to make sure that the employer's behavior was legal.

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It was not seen as fundamentally more favorable to the employer as some of the other regulations that they'd come out of the Federal Government having to do with race and gender.

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Those were not very warmly welcomed either by many in the in the world of work.

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That is probably the thing that I think has changed the most in the last 30 years.

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That initially human resource was given the job of

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Managing the accommodation of people with disabilities.

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We did all sorts of things within our own departments to make sure that we were doing that we did things to train our people like hire consultants like Peter Slayton to come in and teach our people you know, the

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difference, and the things that they need to do differently in making sure that those with disabilities were given the opportunity that they deserved, and that they were capable of performing a job.

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So the accommodation that, was the word that I would use to describe the reaction.

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31 years ago, I believe, has fundamentally changed and it's changed recently.

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I, the the momentum has begun to swing in the direction of the population that we're here to talk about today.

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I. we have been more advocates than accommodators and that's essentially so, because there's also been a different outlook about hiring people that have disabilities I would say that outlook is that the

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focus is not so much now on the disability as it is on the ability.

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Does that person have the essential job skills to do the job that you're hiring them for people didn't even look at that and consider it because they just thought when you've got that disability you can't do the

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job, and people are starting to look at that very differently.

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Now I see all of you I looked at the list of people who are on this webinar today, and you're all in a position where you need to be advocates.

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You can't just be administrators. I thought latch me made the point extremely well.

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If you moments ago, when she said that we still are only at 33% of people that have these qualifying disabilities are employed.

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That means that we've got a lot of work to do. but I would want to urge all of you out there to look at yourself as an advocate to get that 33% number up.

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I the reason that you should do it. is because there are a lot of qualified and talented and valuable people out there that yes, they may have disabilities, but that doesn't mean that they can't do the job I

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I created a a lecture series at the University of Pittsburgh, where I went to graduate school.

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I did in my mother's name by the way because my mother was a an advocate for people with intellectual disabilities in her time, known as the mentally retarded she helped to mainstream them by suing the

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commonwealth of pennsylvania for fair to provide free public education to the mentally retarded bye they weren't in public schools.

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Back then, not just Pennsylvania, but the other 50 States as well.

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She won in the Supreme Court. It went to the Supreme Court of the United States, and they refused to hear it because it was self-evident to them that all means all free public education, for all is what the State Constitution

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says So I created this series. Our first speaker was a woman named Haben Gearma.

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Now you may know of hopping because she's written a book and she's famous.

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She's the first deaf blind graduate of Harvard Law school, and she is an inspiring speaker about this very topic.

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The way to decide if somebody's gonna fit into your workforce is, forget about the disability focus on the ability and make sure that your interviews, your questions.

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Your main inquiries. Everything is getting at what that person can do, not the blockages, but what the person can do this.

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When I say the momentum is, the pendulum is swinging our way.

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I do mean that. But, boy, do we have a long way to go because if we're only at 33% there's 67% of the people out there that may have disabilities, but that doesn't mean they

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don't have abilities that's your job all of you in human resources, finding them finding out what their abilities are how they match up with the jobs that you have open and help you to do your job, and get the right talented people into

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your organization.

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Thank you so much, Alan. and really appreciate that perspective.

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And just the fact that we are moving forward is great to hear, and and that there is still a long way to go that's what progress is.

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And I neglected to mention to all that. I was happy to be present in Limey Beach.

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Months ago, when at the Cornell university's Hr.

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And Hospitality Conference. Allen received a lifetime achievement award from the Company Hotel administration at Cornell.

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So next i'd like to turn to sue crystal mansur at the nra the other nra ef Educational Foundation, and I think she has some interesting research to share that Will buttress a lot of

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what Allen is saying, both in terms of the changes that are being made, and the way that employers are beginning to look at and welcome people with disabilities and and the challenges that remain so soon.

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Please proceed, Thank you, and i'm so honored to be part of this panel, and to really bring forward this discussion, I'm actually going to lead with what I was gonna end with which is sort of tones and notes from the

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industry just based on what Allen just spoke about, and his sort of look at the job.

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Look at the ability, and I was in pulling together a set of information to come today.

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I was pulling quotes from industry about working with people, with disabilities, and from us foods.

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There was a phenomenal phenomenal quote that said, Don't look at impairments as an inability to perform, but rather an ability to perform differently.

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And then really going back to what latched me smoke about which was creating an environment of inclusiveness.

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And this ability to look at how people get the job done rather than the prescriptive way of doing it, creates an environment For all that.

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Everybody leans into and what i'm hearing as I work with our partners around the country is there's a lot of work that's going on in our industry working with individuals with disabilities, and there's a lot of pride in it

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but it's not a unified work and a unified voice for this.

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So last year we did a survey, looking at diversity, equity, and inclusion and accessibility, and we surveyed representative samples of current and former employees.

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And then we also did a separate survey of organizations.

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These weren't necessarily employees of the organization. and we asked them to for the individuals to self identify.

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Tell us about your race, your ethnicity, your gender and your disability status.

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And then we asked organizations to comment on who worked for them, And then we asked about knowledge and awareness of deia policies and practices beliefs about how effective they were.

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Job satisfaction in the restaurant and food service industry and also looking at the ability and feeling of support and and ability to advance.

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And so why did we do this research? as a foundation?

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We are all about changing the trajectory of people's lives leveraging the restaurant and food service. industry.

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We are a foundation that focuses on workforce development and all of our programs aligned to an industry-informed. competency, based pathway that can take an individual from just the beginning and the entry levels up through professional

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supervisor manager, and then executive positions.

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We love our industry because we believe that for entry points there's a pretty low barrier to get into the work, and the trajectory and the pathways that you can go along are innumerable and that most of

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the executives in the industry, like 90% started out at that entry level.

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And things, such as dishwashing and and long. That in my title, the Vice President of Program Impact.

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The impact is the important part. Because why? we do so much research is We're always looking at for the populations that we serve.

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They're on ramps to this pathway what are the barriers to that, and then to their advancement.

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And that's where this research falls in so what did we find well, the really, really great news is the one We look at the employee level that about 14% of the respondents who are currently employed identified themselves.

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As having disabilities, and we saw this consistently across all of the levels of the interest industry.

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We saw it at entry. we saw it at professional supervisor manager levels.

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So we're, seeing the consistency and that it's, not diminishing as they move across these employees, self-reported, being very, very satisfied with their work, environments, feeling very very supported in their work environments, and

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seeing their pathway for advancement. So this is really great news that those individuals who are identifying as disabled are very satisfied.

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So what are some of the things that we just wanted to take note of?

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When we asked organizations what percentage of your employees have disabilities they've replaced 35% across all their levels as well and very consistent.

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And so this all of a sudden sets up what an organization is identifying somebody as versus how somebody self-identified. And And why is this important?

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Well, it's important, because what you want to do is you want to be reflective of what somebody's lived experiences.

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So if an organization is reporting that they're one thing that this is their environment, and they're communicating that out.

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And that's really important for a attraction and retention and advancement of individuals.

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But somebody's lived experiences something different that disparity actually causes this satisfaction, and may not have organizations reacting.

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And as both Allen and Peter said, You know we can do more.

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This is great, but we can do more. It may not be that call to action that people are taking. With that.

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I think another really key point here is so I said yeah there are all these groups that are out there that are committed to this space.

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But there's not this unified force so how do you do it, and and why, you know, sort of what are some of the hesitations.

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I think it goes back to this understanding of what can they do the job, or how will I accommodate them?

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What do I know? and what I don't know education around this is really really key?

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And I think at the end of the day this is all about sector strategies and partnerships, we can't each all.

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Do you know everything? So you a restaurant or a hotel or hospitality?

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Can't be all things to all people but in partnerships with really phenomenal organizations who do, who help us to educate on accommodations? who can look at a job and look at how it can be done

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differently. Who can bring in this workforce who's willing and able to work and then work with an employer to link in and lean into it in order to get them in those jobs that working together, that sector strategy is really how

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we advance a really big thing with disability is that willingness to self-identify for looking at physical disabilities.

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That's one thing if we're looking at physical or mental or cognitive.

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Any other disabilities which aren't as much seen people may be more hesitant to identify.

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They may not be applying to jobs, because they may not feel that they would be allowed to be let in or accepted for who they are.

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And I think you know, when Peter was talking about the meeting last week, he talked about that the person had the courage to come out and say that they had attention, deficit.

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And then again they looked at How do we accommodate?

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And this person then excel to bring their best self to work, and I think so.

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It's all about creating environments where people feel welcome and accepted and supported, so that when they bring forward these things, everybody can sort of look at the environment and say, How can this person best perform where we are today?

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You're muted Peter, thank you, so much sue you really put the the hammer on the head of the nail there with it's about support, and, as you know, actually mentioned a situation someone from the frick mentioned

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to her that the challenges their employees with disabilities were finding was a workforce attitude of their colleagues.

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And it does take partnership. it does take more than just bringing someone, and people have to be educated and informed and shown that this is going to work and allowed to see that it will work. They have to be given the tools.

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Learn the tools for accommodating on their own something that they haven't considered, and in that vein 2 i'm curious.

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I assume this was the first time you've that Nraef put together such a survey.

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And also can you remind us of who your partner was on the survey?

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Absolutely We had multiple partners. It was a really exciting survey, and we continue to analyze.

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It was the National Restaurant Association, Educational Foundation, the National Restaurant Association, the Multicultural Food Service and Hospitality Alliance, and then Cornell University School of Hospitality in Business and we all came together.

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To do this research. We were sort of working in different pockets, and and came as a unified source to do that. and it was the first time that the foundation really came into the space to do the base. research.

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We in our What was the catalyst that they said, Oh, we should look at this space because we haven't you know.

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So, going back to the we as a foundation or all about looking at the barriers and the biases that prevent people from entering a workforce development pathway and advancement.

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That's it. in our strategic plan that we really put in motion in 2,020 for the foundation.

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It was absolutely essential we have a whole part of it that is about Dea, and if we're committing to that, it's to first know what's going on out there, what does our landscape look like in order

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to change that. And what do we know and what don't we know, so that we can start being effective in terms of what resources we put in place.

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So, for example, we're now focused on looking at our programs, both in our beginnings of our pathway, our work entry.

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And then, as we start to move up the pathway and we're looking at universal design, so we're very interested in knowing who is participating, staying in and advancing in the programs, and then looking at how you can create

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the tools and resources that then work with the organizations whomever they're working with for that inclusivity.

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So it's really important to us as we look at the industry as a whole to help.

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Employers as well as help organizations who are training in education to meet the needs of that population.

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And it all starts with with knowing where you are today, so that you can advance tomorrow.

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Thanks, and you know it's interesting universal design has been around for as long as the Ad.

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A has been around and since before, and yet there's still plenty of places that aren't really there, and Now i'd like to turn to Martha to give us some practical right Now, available. resources that employers in New

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York City can turn to immediately. and really there's there's a place to go mo Pd has it, and it's just going to get better.

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It's already gotten better Martha Tell us when It's called Nyc.

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At work. Tell us about it when it was launched how it's changed. Go for it.

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Thank you. Thank you, Peter, and thank you everyone for joining us today.

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I am Martha Jackson, currently the acting Commissioner for

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M. O. Pd her at the mayor's office for people with disabilities. But I actually started 70 years ago last month really to create a workforce development program for New Yorkers with disabilities, and the reason simply is because what

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was existing was not really working. And we needed an alternative to that.

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The 70%, 73%. But when I came on board it was 78% of miracles with disabilities were actually jobless.

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So we had to look at things differently. And how do you do that?

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Well, what if we ask the businesses? because the one thing i've found for so long in my workforce development work is whenever anyone's talking about jobs, you know the businesses?

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And the employers are not at the table, so we really needed to think quite differently, and I wanted to design something that really was person centered for our job seekers.

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But business driven. So we started with focus groups. in all the sectors, including hospitality, and we asked everyone the same question.

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Number one. You know. what are the challenges? Tell us what the challenges are.

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No matter the sector. this is what they all told us in various forms Number one.

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We don't know where to find the talent number 2 We don't have dedicated resources like we do, with sort of the gender race. Lgbtq initiatives.

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That we do have you know in other aspects of of our business.

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We also don't have dedicated staff and We don't know very much about just philly etiquette and awareness.

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The other thing is the human resources. would often stop the process of the door, because of all the reasons we don't know where to get the talent.

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We don't have the staff and resources and we don't really understand disability, etiquette, and awareness.

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And then the last piece which has already been spoken about today is that when someone does get a job that's where they stay there's really no chance for career growth.

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Well, we know that's not true. in the hospitality sector so let me go back to how we responded we don't know where to get the talent, but we did So we created a talent coalition.

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We have currently over 65 nonprofit.

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Vocation, rehabilitation, Q. and a private colleges.

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As part of this talent coalition which is where we go to find the talent they don't have dedicated staff and resources.

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So we understood that we started this in 2,015.

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It took us about 2 and a half years to build. We received about close to 2 million dollars from private funding to be able to bring on professional staff and workforce development and disabilities to create.

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And I see it work. So we acted as that connection to the businesses.

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We were able to help them with this process We don't understand disability, etiquette. we're in this training we actually created and still have a disability etiquette and awareness training that members of our

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staff. those of us with with disabilities and lived experience actually present. We've been doing it virtually for 2 and a half years, but before that we would do it in person. and one of our goals is actually to have that on

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our website eventually. so it can be shared by everyone. but if anyone is interested in that.

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You know we're happy to present that to you when they said, human resources stops us at the door.

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This is where we found it really important to create a Business Development Council mostly comprised of people in human resources, so that we could really work together to understand the needs and that share best practices which is what the the you know the best thing that I

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think has come out of Nyc at work for businesses.

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And then, finally, the career growth will both in the public and private sector We've been able to work with both our job seekers who are now employed helping them to find either the next best opportunity where they are or to find the next

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best opportunity somewhere else, so I will be very honest with you.

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I did not know where this was gonna go And for 3 years before Covid hit, we were able to to connect close to 400 individuals to all kinds of jobs, and both the public and private sector a lot of people thought that maybe

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it was going to be part time to be able to keep people on benefits.

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But what we found from our job sequences that complete opposite.

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Most individuals are looking for full time, employment with benefits and career growth.

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So right now we are coming out of Covid. And during Covid we found that many of the folks that we helped connect to jobs.

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Were the ones on the front lines. They were the essential workers, and many times they were the first

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They were the last to go. by the event, many of them eventually do lose their job.

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So now, during this covid period in this this research, and some coming back, you know. Peter mentioned that most people were looking for remote jobs for a very long time, and in some cases that's still true.

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But for many people with disabilities, You know having a job in a career is not just about a paycheck.

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It's about really contributing to society it's about being able to bring them best selves about being able to be an environment that's respectful about being to serve people in whatever way they're capable of doing

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so, and the one thing I can tell you is when we start working with a business, and it's it's always as the business needs.

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We know this is not here's a person hire them good luck? We actually start from the very basics.

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What do you need to be able to find the talent?

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How can we support you and your staff to be able to be a respectful and educated environment, so that you feel comfortable and confident in and bringing all people?

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We believe that, you know disability is diversity, and sometimes people just need help figuring out how to make that work.

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One of the first things we do is provide a disability, education, awareness, training, and oftentimes we'll bring in other partners to be able to to do that successfully.

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We hold career events, career, exploration events. We have businesses come into zoom.

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It used to be in person. but now it's virtual to be able to talk about the businesses.

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This is what we do. This is the kind of people we're looking for.

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This is what you need to be able to do the job, and then provide some of those career exploration, opportunities, and career events where we can bring people then for targeted recruitments.

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What I also can tell you is that we just don't send people off to a job.

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We are very person driven and business centered. So when someone comes to us we do an assessment.

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We have them join an orientation to understand. You know this is really a voluntary program, and we need to make sure that you are dedicated to wanting to find your own career.

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And we want to help you do that. We do not do the work for individuals, but we help them find the best, and navigate the best way.

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We also help them look for all kinds of opportunities. What are you looking for?

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What is your interest? and one of the things we're businesses can be really, really helpful Is this a lot of folks might not have a lot of exposure to the world of finance.

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The world of hospitality. but what every business has it's like a city.

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Everyone has opportunities within their own business. finding out what those opportunities are, and where the connection could be.

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We never send someone into a an interview without 100% of the minimum number, requirements, and 75% of the preferred.

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I'll run to that. We also help in hr with any conversations that might need to be had in advance about any reasonable accommodation.

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But our focus is really to have our individuals understand what's they need to ask for when they need to ask for it, so that they can really perform their best on the job to date.

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We've helped now over 525 individuals

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To business business opportunities, and I will tell you something i'm really surprised at this New York city.

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Actually has taken the lead. and for many of you that might know that you believe that the people who live in the city and should look like the people who work in the city should look like people who live in the city, and that means all

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of us So we actually took a program that exists in city government.

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It's been around since the seventys but nothing was happening with it.

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It's called a 55 a civil service program, but it's a way for New Yorkers with disabilities to gain access to city government jobs without having to take a civil service, exam and the reason I bring this up is because

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I wanted to show it as an example. We worked very very closely with city agencies on exactly what it is that they're looking for, and between 2019 and currently 103 folks have been hired previously 0 to 4 would be higher per

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year. The reason I bring this up is because it's a strategy we find the strategy that works for everyone from creating internship opportunities.

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To the interview process. you know offering the position and we don't go away.

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The people that we brought on through those private phones are now baseline into city government, and Yc.

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At work is a consistent, reliable workforce development program, and one of the things I can tell you is one of my favorite sectors.

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To work with always has been the hospitality sector and for a very long time.

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We're able to make great connections so I look forward to be able to working with any and all of you.

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To be able to create a diversity. pathway for you that's gonna work for your organization.

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Thank you.

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You're on me you Peter, thank you so much martha you really do provide an amazing resource for everyone. and I think if there's one takeaway from everything that has been said today, it is about

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cooperation and collaboration you can't do this on your own and that's true with anyone you hire.

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But when working with someone with a disability and starting from a a long history in this country, and really everywhere around the world of ignorance, misunderstanding stigma, shame, shame, on all sides on both sides and

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and just lack of awareness, The more cooperation and collaboration you can get in educating yourself and your workforce.

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The more support. you'll have the better the result will be and in fact, it really does lift everyone it's not just a cliche.

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But as you know there's when you introduce someone with a new perspective.

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You're going to get new input new ideas freshness and creativity.

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And that's really the bottom line martha I'm.

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Curious how no go ahead i'm curious how you've seen both the applicants, you know the candidates seeking employment, and the employers have changed in in the way.

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They present themselves over the life of and I know it's relatively short life of Nyc.

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At work. What kind of changes have you seen so a lot?

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Because of Covid. i'll be very honest with you but let me talk about the the employers first.

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I've been really, I I guess pleasantly surprised recently by the number of businesses.

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In arts and culture in tourism and hospitality, as well as other sectors that have reached out recently, because we do understand that it's very difficult to find talent right now.

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And a lot of folks who were working have either relocated or decided to do something else because of the nature of Covid and what their experiences are.

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So we find more than any other time that there's a real interest in this diverse workforce.

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The bottom line, Is it's what you can do that matters and work in life.

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It's just what you can do that matters and so you know breaking down the barriers.

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And sort of demystifying all the mists that come with it.

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The one thing that I find really important is that dual exposure, allowing you know, an individual or individuals with disabilities and prospective employers to have connection before there's even you know an interview at stake so to

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speak and one of the things that we've been able to do with our job sequences to create that opportunity.

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So that this feel more comfortable because oftentimes the only time they've had this interaction is add a job interview.

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So, knowing what they need to know beforehand, not just from us, but from the business, really changes the way things can go forward for our job seekers.

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We had very few people looking for work for a very long time.

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Our real focus during Covid was keeping people optimistic and yes, helping them find those remote jobs that they were looking for.

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But now people want to come back you know but it's been hard on everybody, including disabilities.

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So I think it's really important that people know that There is a very eager workforce out there a very talented workforce.

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Most of our folks have either an associates, degree, or a or a college degree.

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Most have work experience in the areas that they're interested in working in. And so it's not you you're not getting people that are coming in cold.

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You're getting people in many cases that have skills experience that would be very beneficial to where everything whatever company they work for, and just a few other things that you need to know in terms of productivity and longevity steps studies are

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out there. i'm sure that su could probably Peter probably a a you know.

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Support me in this, between 75 and 8% of people's disability stay on the job for 3 to 5 years at least.

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And one of the other things, that when you have partners, when businesses are working with partners that help them resource, the talent, help them navigate this process, have a higher higher degree of success and finding the right talent and keeping

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the right talent. So right now, everybody's eager both the businesses and the job secrets.

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So this could not be coming at a better time, Peter, can I make a couple of points in support?

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Of course, please. Mark Martha, and I I My major nonprofit activity these days is on the chairman of the Board of Jobs first New York City which is in the workforce development field Any of

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you who knew our New Yorkers may know. We were formed in 2,008 when New York was falling apart.

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There were 400,000 out of school and out of work.

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Young people between the age of 16 and 24 this is 14 years later.

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There's half that number now, half that number that means that corporations and the city and the nonprofit agencies are working together much more effectively, and the thing that that the unemployed the out of school out

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of work, and people with disabilities. population have going for them.

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Remember, I said the pendulum was swinging.

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Employers are very much in need of People these days and it's harder to find.

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The right people than it has been in a while. So while that population has gone down from 400,000, 200,000, the ones that are still not getting the same 50% reduction in unemployment are the people with disabilities so

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that just underscores the need to do for all of you to be their advocates.

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So point number 1 point number 2 How you define a disability sometimes sometimes it's not a disability.

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Sometimes it is an ability. So somebody mentioned detention, deficit disorder.

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You know we think of that as a disability you know There's some jobs that unless you have an element of the ability to change your focus on quickly and move from one thing to another, and think differently, which is what people with attention

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deficit disorder can do Then you can't do that job you need to have that kind of mental flexibility.

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So somebody comes into you and they've got add you know you might think about what kind of job do I have?

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Where that really cannot be a disability, but that can be a strength.

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I I know personally in my own job. I used to tell people you know les was a conglomerate.

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We were in the the hospitality and insurance and watch business and tobacco business, and offshore oil, and so forth.

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If you didn't have the pension deficit disorder when you got into my job, you'd have it when you got at it, because you couldn't do the job unless you were able to change focus Now that's an

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executive position, but that doesn't mean the same thing is not true of certain positions, particularly in hospitality, particularly where you have guests, and you have all sorts of different things that need to happen in that hotel or that restaurant to

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make that guest or the der happy. you better be able to change your thinking very, very quickly.

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So don't think of everything as a disability thank you so much, Alan.

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I'm gonna we're we're this has flown by

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We're almost out of time. but I want to say one thing, and then i'm gonna open up for questions.

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I wanna just urge anyone who who uses their website to help attract talent.

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Please make sure your applications and your whole website. but your applications are digitally accessible.

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It's really critical that you Do that and if you have questions on that.

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I know Pd can also help you on that.

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And with that first, are there questions? Does anyone have any questions?

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Just raise your hand or unmute yourself and jump in, Peter.

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This is Kelly. I see a question in the in the Q.

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And a function can I read it to you so the question is, how can companies track the number of people with disabilities at different levels by being sensitive to this, to the disclosure of medical information well that's a great

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question. and it's challenging you can ask people to self identify.

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Now, Martha mentioned no i'm sorry sue mentioned this earlier, and it really is important.

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When people feel they can First, self-identify and they'll self disclose self-identifying is when you record that you have a disability which not all people with disabilities will do or want to do and then when you

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disclose to your manager your hiring manager, or your colleagues.

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Yes, I have adHD, or something else, you know, When I was younger, and had more, much more vision. to me it was much more vision.

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I'm still legally blind. I would try to pass at a couple of jobs where I I would try to pass as a cited person until I was unable to do so.

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And it was pretty obvious that, I was pretty clutsy among other things.

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But I had to come out of the closet so to speak and say i'm blind, or i'm going blind and I need support.

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So. if you create that supportive atmosphere, that says we don't want to we will not invade your privacy or disrupt it.

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But you can trust us and mean it because if you break that, of course.

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You're going to be in trouble but as long as you set that encouraging and supportive atmosphere.

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I think that's how it's going to go people will be more feel more Abel, more enabled empowered to disclose and come forth and seek the support they need to succeed especially if you're

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prepared to to offer it. and I just need to plug you know. Martha mentioned that they're available for disability adequate etiquette. and awareness training for people on the job we support We provide

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that at slat and group with with lacks me on customer service, because that's where we saw a need 10 years ago.

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Because of all the people with disabilities, who want to be out in the hospitality we're all taking advantage of it. and unless you're employees understand that dynamic they're also going to be failures, so as

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there another question. Actually, Peter, this is Sue. and if I can just add to what what you said, I think in a really interesting thing to chart.

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You know the data geek and me is not only the percentage report of disability.

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But it's an optional question you can never force somebody to disclose and optional question.

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There are 3 options as that responder. You can say no, you can say yes, or you can leave it blank.

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And looking at the change in the number of people who are choosing not to answer over time is a reflection of environment.

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In order to do that, and I think something else that was really really important.

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That was stated here by Allen which is we call these things disability.

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I'm dyslexic it was called a learning disability

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But I will tell you I learned differently, and there are talents associated with that difference in learning.

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But I had to conform to the educational system as it sits, which was not accommodating in the seventies and eighties and nineties to somebody who learned differently.

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And I think that when we sit there with and what we call disability what we're saying is not conforming to the system. and I really agree is that it's a different ability, they're differently able and well.

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i'm i'm gonna push back on that sue because mostly the disability community has come to say we're we're disabled.

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We don't mind it being called a disability so and it's it's doesn't have a stigma. it's we want it to get rid of that stigma that comes with it and differently able

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we understand it, and the reasons behind it but it also can seem like oh, someone doesn't want to say disabled. so they say, differently able To me it's a disability.

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And we are we, we have. This is disability, pride.

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Month, after all. So you see, this is the interesting thing about how language affects the way we look at the world.

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And so here we are. Peter, this is Martha.

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I I think one of the things that really helps people to kind of clarify is that disable does not equal unable.

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Thank you that's that's the one thing I have learned through my experience.

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It simply does not. and I just go back to what I always say it's It's what you can do that matters, and I think understand that you know there's a great relief on all parts because we have to we can focus on the

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the what needs to be done rather than You know all the sort of the noise that that people have their heads about.

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What? what is a disability? And is it going to cost me money?

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And the truth is, most accomplishments really don't cost anything.

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Something as simple as you know a bit of a shift in a schedule.

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If someone's working in an office, and needs a little bit more quiet space, just some, you know, noise cancellation headphones or or you know, in in my case I have a little stool that I can put my foot on I

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mean you just have to think about the individual and the other part of it is.

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Yes, there's the ada and there's all of that but if there's no humanity behind any of this we're never gonna make any difference, and you've had you had close to 90 people on this

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session. which indicates to me there's really interest and you know I thank you for allowing me to be a part of this today. Well, i'm really glad you joined us and i'm really grateful

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to to all of you lacks me. Allen, Su and Martha, and I think you know this is an evolving conversation.

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I have a feeling only the last we talked about this I think everyone for joining.

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And i'm just really pleased that we're here and moving forward.

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And I think also, Martha. And just to conclude, you use the word relief, and I think we relief is really a great word.

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And what are relieved of when we learn all these things and move.

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You know, become welcoming and inclusive we're relieved of the fear that builds up about.

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What are we going to do? I don't know what to do I don't know where to turn?

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I don't know how to proceed and once we begin to take action.

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We learn that those barriers that we thought of as instrument insurmountable are not really barriers barriers at all.

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So with that. i'm sorry we have to wrap up because we'll keep going.

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But thank you all for coming. really. appreciate it. and thank you, Peter.

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Thank you and Peter. I just in in closing I just I'm.

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A half. M. my seeing company. I want to thank thank all of you for for sharing with us today for sharing with our audience.

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This was a great conversation. and and I think it does speak volumes that that we're at time, and there's still 63 people on our zoom, because oftentimes folks drop off at the very end so people are really

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engaged, and they're interested to hear about this We will be sending an email a follow-up email to everyone.

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All the participants who joined us today, all of our attendees and we will send the contact information for our panelists, and we will also send a couple of the links that latch me referred to early on in the