>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Good afternoon and welcome to the RespectAbility webinar for June 23rd, 2021. My name is Philip Kahn-Pauli, I am the policy and practices director for RespectAbility and I am so delighted that all of our audience members are joining us today. I'm so delighted to have Pete and Meg and Frank joining us to talk about the state of disability employee engagement. Just as a quick accessibility note, we are short in ASL interpreter today. I am so sorry, we are trying to track them down and get them online but for now we have captioning. Once you can enable on the bottom of your zoom screen. So I just wanted to give you a heads up on that. So as I said, the topic today is the State of Disability Employee Engagement. And brought to you together today some really world-class leaders on the issues of disability, employment, inclusion, equity, and corporate hiring. The wonderful folks at Global Disability Inclusion and Mercer have recently published a really groundbreaking report. And I don't use those words lightly. I read a lot of reports, I write a lot of reports but there was something really special about this new Mercer report that really digs into some pretty big data sets to really get at the heart of where things stand for employees with disabilities and where things are going. And so we're gonna be digging in deep today to really talk about the state of employment for people with disabilities, where best practices are pointing. And I think there's some really valuable lessons to be shared with our partners in the nonprofit sector, leaders in the business community and even leaders in the public sector, in state and local government who are also trying to hire the best talent possible and oftentimes the very best talent that you're gonna be able to hire are people with disabilities. And so I'm so glad to be here with you today and I'm going to start sharing my screen and bring up our slide deck for the day. And as I mentioned, I am joined today by Meg O'Connell, President of Global Disability Inclusion and Dr. Pete Rutigliano, Senior Principal at Mercer and here is their bios. O'Meg is the CEO and founder of Global Disability Inclusion. She's an internationally recognized disability employment and inclusion expert with over 25 years, have experienced in capital management, talent acquisition, performance inclusion and engagement marketing and customer service programs. Her team has worked with some of the world's most recognized brands and she provides strategic programmatic advice, development, implementation, disability employment plans for global 500 companies, cut federal contractors seeking to meet their requirements under OFCCP, colleges, universities, nonprofits, and foundations. She is also the winner of many awards including but not limited to the Sherma Innovative Practice award. And Dr. Pete particularly I know has over 25 years of experience in external consulting, providing data analysis, interpretation, recommendations to advance organizations across many different industries. He's been with Mercer since 2007. And during that time he has really worked with client organizations to drive change through engagement surveys including onboarding, exiting, 360 surveys as well as others. He's a trusted advisor to fortune 500 companies throughout North America, and has the ear of many CEOs and corporate executives. He manages the Data Analytics Group which maintains the company benchmark database. And he is also in the corporate advisory board, Hofstra university, as well as a Zane member of the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology and has over 90 different publications out in the world. So those are the credentials of my illustrious guests today. We are also going to be joined at the end of this presentation by Franklin Anderson, RespectAbility director of development in nonprofit inclusion efforts. And so how the run the show is gonna be is I'm gonna turn the wheels over to, I'm gonna turn the wheel over to Meg and Pete and then they're gonna go through their slides, they're gonna share some of their key findings with us. And then at that point we will switch to Q&A section where our lovely audience members can ask their questions to our experts today, drop them in the chat box, put them in the Q&A box and we will get to them after we go through these slides. So Meg and Pete, the show is yours.

>> Meg O’Connell: Great, thanks Philip I appreciate it. Yeah, let's go to the next slide and we'll jump right in. So if you guys have joined this call, you obviously have an interest in disability inclusion and we know diversity, equity, inclusion are the forefront of all talent management strategies for every organization around the globe. And you also likely know that DEI readily focuses on race, ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation. And with 2020, we saw a significant focus on racial, equity and justice. Yet even with all of these discussions and knowing that talent management strategies have a large focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, disability is still all too frequently left out of the broader diversity and inclusion conversation. So that's what we're here to talk about today, why that is what we're seeing and what we're seeing about the employment experiences of people with disabilities. So next slide please. So people with disabilities are the largest minority group representing 15% of the global population. That's a massive number of people, it's a billion people worldwide. 15% globally and in the US, it's 26% of our population. So there are 61 million people in the United States with a disability. And about half of those, 33 million are working age Americans with disabilities. And then if you look at, 'cause we often hear the statistic of everyone's aging into disability, we will all if you don't have a disabling condition currently, you will have one at some point in your life. So these last two statistics are really telling because we know that disability is not just an aging issue. It is an issue that affects all ages. So we have 785 million persons, 15 years or older that live with a disability. And then 5% of children from in utero to age 14, have a disability and that's 95 million people. So disability is here. It will continue to be a part of the human condition, and we just gotta get better and smarter about how to accommodate it and how to ensure equal opportunity for people with disabilities. Next slide. Pete, I'll toss this one over to you 'cause I know this is a lot more Mercer's data.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah sure. So as Meg had pointed out earlier, well disability is included as part of the diversity conversation, it's not included nearly enough. I am seeing a little bit of an uptick recently but just looking at our data here. So this is looking at a span of data from about 2007 to about 2015. And as part of the work I do as Phil had brought up earlier, part of my job is to do surveys of organizations. I do engagement surveys, exit surveys, DNI surveys, pretty much for the word surveys there, I've done it. And as the benchmark database keeper, I started noticing this pattern that when I looked at the data on the left-hand side, about 90% of companies would investigate differences by gender. They would include it as part of their survey and then on the back end we'd do a certain amount of analysis looking at the comparisons between the groups. We found about 75% of the companies we worked with did some sort of racial ethnic, diversity analysis. Now it varies across the world, most of the work had been previously just in the United States although it has been opening up. But if you look at these numbers, 90%, 75%, those are really big numbers of people that are really investigating diversity differences. Unfortunately, looking at the exact same database, only about 4% of the companies that we were working with at the time even investigated disability as a diversity segment. And that in and of itself was really very discouraging for me, because when you think about what percentage of the people in the United States and also the globe that we're not even investigating, it was really disheartening.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah. It's such a great point Pete. It goes back to what we often say is that disability is often the forgotten diversity segment. So we know disability is massive in numbers, but when we think about corporations, corporate America and corporations around the globe, they have not viewed disability as part of their talent strategies, as part of their marketing strategies. Disability has very much been bucketed into a charitable endeavors, part of their corporate giving, but not as part of their talent strategies and solutions. So it has been viewed as, it's a government problem, it's a nonprofit problem, it's someone else's issue to address, not one that we should be looking at internally within our organization, as well as how do we market to people with disability. So we're hoping to change the tide on this.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yep. Now the good news is the tide is beginning to change. I remember when we first started doing this, I'd say, oh and you're gonna do some diversity analysis. Oh yeah, we'll look into race and gender. And then I said, oh and disability as well. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, disability as well. Now at least they know it's part of the list that we wanna do investigative work with. But since section...

>> Meg O’Connell: 503.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: What's that?

>> Meg O’Connell: 503.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah since section 503 came out, we had been seeing a small uptick in the number of companies that are really investigating. So that's been really exciting. It's slow going and not nearly as many as I would like but at least it's moving in the right direction. So why don't we go on to the next slide? So over time I was collecting data as part of my benchmark duties and Meg has really helped a lot in analyzing and understanding these data over the years. So give you guys a feel for this, these data represent 10 years of data from the US 2008 to 2018. And it represents 12 million employee voices. So we're talking a lot of data here. Just so you guys have an idea of the benchmarks, the data is roughly around 60% US, but we do have some international populations in here as well. So just looking at the data when we investigated some of the differences, we did find some really large differences. So on the left-hand side, I have the freedom to use my judgment in getting my job done. For those without disabilities, we found on average around 86% favorable, whereas on the right hand side you're seeing employees with a disability at 73%, there's a 13 point difference between those two groups. And then on the right-hand side, employees can express their ideas and views but have negative consequences. We found a 12 point difference between those without disabilities and those with a disability. And these are pretty strong differences between groups. And if you think about what the words of those questions mean, right, I have the freedom and use my judgment, well that means you guys trust me to do my job. Or can I express my ideas and views but I have negative consequences, do I feel like I belong in the company? Do I feel like I can speak my mind in the company? And we're finding really stark differences between these groups. Meg, do you wanna add anything to this before I go onto the next one?

>> Meg O’Connell: No, just that these are really big numbers and we're gonna talk about the significance of these numbers as we go forward. But it is important to note as we get through this, we'll talk about some areas where the differences are much less. But in no instance did people with disabilities rate their experience better than their non-disabled colleagues? So that is also a stark reality for us to face.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah, out of 84 questions. There was not one question where people with disabilities scored higher than those without disabilities. And as a statistician, that really bothered me because just through chance I should have found at least one or two questions where it flipped the other way but that wasn't the case.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: So when I first started doing this analysis and I saw these differences, I really started thinking, wait a minute, why is it that more companies aren't looking into this? And when you look at these really large differences and we'll talk about other differences, I'm like wait a minute we're seeing these huge differences how come people aren't investigating this? And the problem was well they didn't know what they didn't know. So let's move on to the next slide, thanks Phil. We did find some other differences as well. So on the left hand side I received recognition for management when I do a good job. There's a large discrepancy there. Another 12 point difference between those with and those without disabilities. And then this question on the right hand side, I see this as being one of the most important of those four questions that we're talking about here. My company takes an interest in the well-being of its employees. There's a nine point difference between those with disabilities and those without. So a good way of thinking about this, roughly around three quarters of the people without a disability feel like my company takes a genuine interest in me. But we're only seeing about 60% for employees with a disability, right? They're not feeling as valued in the company, and that's why I think this is one of the most important of the last four questions. If I don't feel valued, how am I gonna feel connected to my organization? And what does that say about how I feel about myself? But over time, if you don't feel valued in an organization, you're much more likely to move on. You're not gonna wanna stay there. So let's move on to the next slide. So the next two though are showing where we're seeing less of a strong difference. The other ones were between nine and 13% which are by the way huge differences. We typically don't see that, and we'll talk about that a little bit later. But there are areas where we're not seeing as much of an age difference. So on the right hand side, I'm treated with respect and dignity at work. There's still a five point difference there but it's not as bad. So the good news is all right, I may not necessarily be valued and people typically interpret that as valued for my contribution. That means my contribution to the company is not as valued as someone else. Whereas this one is more about respect and dignity, right? This is basically table stakes. Before I feel valued, I first have to be respected. And we do see a bit of a difference there. Again, it's only five points but at least it's better than we're seeing some of the other questions. The other thing on the right hand side, the amount of work expected of me is reasonable. People with disabilities are feeling like the amount of work that they're experiencing is a little bit less reasonable than those without a disability. Now there's a bunch of different ways we can unpack that and think about this. But Meg, do you wanna add anything to that before I move on?

>> Meg O’Connell: No just the point that in the earlier slides we saw that people with disabilities don't feel they're allowed to make decisions about their work, they feel that it's very prescribed. They also feel that their workload is greater than their non-disabled colleagues. So likely as we interpret that means, people with disabilities get very prescribed activities to do and then get a lot of them. So they're not being asked to be really thoughtful or strategic, it's very kind of repetitive activities where there's very specific instructions and they're not really being asked to be thoughtful and strategic. And so, everybody wants to feel that their opinions are valued and that they can add something meaningful to whatever project. Not every project is exciting we all know that right. But everybody wants to feel like they have an opportunity to add something meaningful to whatever it is that they're they're working on and we're just not seeing that.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: And actually let me add a little bit more to that and it makes your points are spot on. Keep in mind that the people who are answering this are those who have an apparent or non apparent disability. So there's the whole breadth of disabled individuals in this database. So there could be an aspect of this that maybe certain activities are a little bit harder for certain populations of people. So it feels like there's less reasonable amount of work being placed on that. But that's something also consider. Meg you wanna take the next slide?

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah I'll take that. So this is another slide that had little differences but still significant. So the first one on the left, I feel my career goals can be met at my company. People without disabilities rated at 71%, people with disability rated at 64%. So seven percentage point difference. You know, this is concerning, right. We all wanna feel we have an opportunity to grow and develop and take on additional responsibilities. And people with disabilities often feel stuck in their roles that they can't really advance and move whether it's laterally to learn different skills or even vertically that they can move up and advance and manage people. The question on the right which showed an eight percentage point difference, my company has created an environment where people of diverse backgrounds can succeed. This is really telling, right. I mean people interpret the diverse backgrounds as part of whatever diversity group that they are a member of. So employees without disabilities rated this 85% and employees with disabilities rated this 77%. So as a whole, pretty good scores in general but we are still seeing it's an eight percentage point gap. So people with disabilities, again, don't feel that their company is creating an environment where they're truly respected and valued and that they can succeed. So again, something that we really need to be mindful of and understand what are the underlying causes of that in individual companies?

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yep.

>> Meg O’Connell: Pete you wanna add?

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah, there is one thing I will add to that and that the fact is that we see smaller differences and more of the local environment. So typically the questions around how my manager feels about me and how my manager treats me, those differences tend to be a little bit less. And the differences that we see that are more global about the company, about my environment, about leadership, we tend to see larger differences there. And I think that's part of an important part of the story here because it has to do with disclosure. Before 503, we were in this, don't ask, don't tell kind of environment. And because of that, that meant I was less able to be myself at work that we didn't want to know about that. And that created some of that distance but I was more likely to disclose myself to my local environment, my manager and that's why we saw smaller scores there. And I think that's an important part and an important distinction of the data.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah. We can go to the next slide Philip. So these differences are really meaningful, right? You know, typically a call to action is a five percentage point difference. And what you have seen is only in one question that we shared, there was only a five percentage points difference. We saw 12, 13%, nine, 10, you know, really high percentages. And we know that companies spend tens of hundreds of thousands of dollars when there's a disparity between groups even if it's just gender. That if men scored five percentage points higher than women, companies rally around what do we need to do to increase satisfaction engagement for our female employees? And so when we see differences like we are seeing with people with disabilities compared to those without, it should be a significant call to action for companies to understand what is happening within their four walls. The great thing about this is it's such an incredible opportunity for companies to have a significant impact on their climate and their culture. We know when you design for disability, when you create programs, products, services for people with disabilities, they're good for everybody. Everyone benefits from them, whether it's closed captioning that we're using on our screen, whether it's curb cuts, automatic doors, various accessibility features, digital accessibility features that we all use now. These are good for everybody. And so the significant opportunity here is really remarkable because of companies start addressing the 15 to 20% of their employee population. We know it will have a significant and positive impact on the rest of the population as well. Pete, anything you wanna add on this?

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah and it's really, I'm gonna speak a little bit to the top right. I was really surprised about this and like I told you guys, I'm a data geek, I'm a statistician. So I had been looking at these data for quite a long time. And to see the large differences that I was seeing for employees with disabilities, and not seeing as much of a difference in some of these other groups. It really was surprising, now by the way just so you guys are aware, I do see some... I will see differences by age and by race and by gender, sexual orientation, but I won't see it across the board like I do for employees with disability. And there's a very stark difference in overall engagement that I see people with disabilities and not the other groups. Yet I do not know any company that I'm working with that doesn't have a plan to work on gender differences or doesn't have a plan to work on racial differences.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah. And almost no company has a plan to address disability differences. All right Philip, we can go to the next slide. You know Pete... And as Pete has said, we've done a lot of analysis on the 12 million data sets over the last 10 years and a question that pops up constantly as well maybe people with disability are just not as happy in general as everybody else. You know that's a common misconception about people with disabilities. We know that people with disabilities live happy, productive lives, they have families, they buy homes, they are engaged in their communities. So we know that they are not generally unhappy people. And so when we looked at this from the data of new hires in the employment statistics, new hires with and without disabilities are equally as enthusiastic at the start of their employment, they feel there's opportunity, they feel there's engagement, they feel that they're going to be valued in the workplace so there's little difference about the perceptions of inclusion and advancement opportunities from the start of employment. However, as employee tenure increases, we begin to see the differences in engagement start to change. And we see that shift where people without disabilities continued to feel more hopeful and valued that there was opportunity, and people with disabilities it starts to decrease. And could be the climate and the culture aren't as supportive as they thought when they were joining the organization. Some of the difference that we're seeing, they're not feeling valued, they don't feel their opportunities to succeed. They don't feel the company is equipped to support them in the manner that they need. So we see over time individuals with disabilities being less optimistic and in fact less engaged where that isn't not, they come in at an equal playing field when they first start with an organization. So Pete, anything you wanna add?

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah. So that really speaks to the fact that, and I think a lot has to do with what I was saying before about feeling like I belong in the organization. If I don't feel like I belong in the organization, I'm gonna feel more disconnected. So the problem that we're seeing is that when you start at a certain level there's this hope that I'll feel I belong. And what happens with most people is, yeah, your scores don't decrease that much because you still feel like you belong. But employees with disabilities are feeling less connected because they don't feel like they're valued and they don't feel like they belong as much in the organization and that's where we're seeing some of the differences lie.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yep, absolutely. We can go to the next slide Philip. Pete this is you?

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah, can we click one more it's missing... There you go. So here's the good news about this, and this is actually really encouraging. The question you're asking yourself now as well, Pete can we make a difference here. And the answer is yes, absolutely. And this is just one example I have of client data where we did work with them over time. And when the first year we were working with them, I made the suggestion. I said listen, why don't we toss disability as one of the demographic groups. You know wow, that's a great idea, let's add that in, I was really excited about that. So after we measured it, I found this six point difference. Now what's interesting is this difference... For overall engagement the differences usually around seven to 8%, so they were slightly better than most of the companies I work with. But the team that I was working with was really, really surprised because just like the rest of my data, they didn't see differences by gender, they didn't see differences by ethnicity but they did see this difference by disability. And they were shocked. They said, well, we gotta do something about it. So they created a really strong disability inclusion program, it was fantastic. And it really hit home and what you're seeing here is when we then did the measure in year two, the score is increased for everyone. There was a whole bunch of things the company did, it wasn't just disability inclusion. But you'll notice that gap was smaller, it was six points in time, one and now it's four points in time two. And then they continued the work and then they decrease that gap to three points. So yeah as long as we collect data, as long as we investigate this, we can make a difference. And that's one of the things I love about my job, if I give them the data, people tend to take the data and make changes with it. And that's what you're seeing here. So by all means we can make a difference and we're starting to see this a lot of companies not just the one I'm showing here.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah, it's such an important point Pete and we see this all the time and say it all the time, right? It's both ways you can't measure what you don't track. So you don't understand where people are and you can't track what you don't measure. So we really need to understand employees with disabilities so we can make forward progress. We can improve the experiences, we can create policies, programs, procedures training that really address the equity and inclusion discussion that we're having for people with disabilities. So again, I think that a remarkable opportunity and I love this example Pete because it really shows the progress that can be made when an organization understands their baseline and how they can begin to address some of the disparities over time.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: And I know I've mentioned section 503 a number of times but I have to tell you that's been one of the greatest changes that's happened around this space. Because prior to that law being enacted, when I would talk to companies about doing this, a lot of times the lawyers say, whoa, whoa, we can't do this. And I'm like why? And the reason they said is well then this becomes discoverable, if it turns out there's a lawsuit with someone who's disabled, now we have data to show that there was a problem in the organization. But since section 503 came out, the lawyers have started saying wait a minute, if we're not measuring this, how do we know that we don't have a problem? And maybe by collecting the data, we can figure out, wow, there is a big difference here, let's do something about it so we don't have a lawsuit on the backend. It's much easier to fix things than worrying until you have a problem and then fix it. So it's a very different conversation now with organizations. It tends to go much more quickly. I also don't tend to have a lot of people giving me pushback when it's international as well, that used to be a bigger issue and now it's become a lot more open and welcome and a lot of it actually has to do with some of the social injustices we've seen in 2019 and into 2020, a lot more people and a lot more organizations are really open to this conversation.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yep. And I did see a question in the chat was our data for the broken down into disability type or invisible versus visible disabilities. And unfortunately it's not. And the reason is because of the timeframe that we were assessing, it was still the very much the don't ask don't tell era around disability inclusion. And so it hasn't been until 503 that we've been having better conversations about disability disclosure, self ID, people coming out with their disability status to let folks know that their disability and really 503. And the fact that the younger generations grew up with ADA. We're seeing very much a movement from the don't ask don't tell to being loud and proud. And people not being fearful to come forward. Now we still have a long way to go, right? It's a cultural shift that happens over time but we are seeing that movement. And in our future surveys we are asking an optional question to disability or no disability and would you be willing to disclose what your disability is. So that data will be forthcoming in our future studies.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yep. I have one thing I do wanna quickly add to that. You know consider where a lot of these data come from, they're from my engagement clients. So clients that are doing engagement surveys within the organization. And I only have so much leeway with them. This survey that I've been doing with them is to look at overall engagement of the entire organization, it's not specifically around people with disabilities. So I'm happy to get the one question I do. I'm hoping I could be able to expand it down the road. But actually that kind of leads to our next conversation, Meg, do we wanna move on to the next slide?

>> Meg O’Connell: Yep, let's do it.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: So what Pete is referring to, what can be done and we have created the first ever disability climate and culture survey. So this will enable companies to really take a deep dive into the disability inclusion and what that looks like within their workplace. So this will not take place of the large strategic or replace the large strategic surveys that go out every year, every two years within a company that have 200 questions on it. What we have seen and Pete you can certainly speak to this as well, is that there's a shift in companies really wanting to understand their diversity segments better. We're seeing shorter surveys for specific diversity populations but there has not been one until now focus on disability inclusion. So this will ask disability specific questions. It'll be a shorter survey about 50, 60 questions. We want responses from people with disabilities and people without disabilities. So at the beginning of the survey, you will be asked, you don't have to give your name and it's voluntary to give what type of disability whether it's invisible or visible disabilities. And then of course people without disabilities. So the first 35, 40 questions will be the same for everybody. And we'll get those responses and then if you checked, yes I'm a person with a disability, you will get disability specific questions around accommodations, self ID, remote working, workplace safety, all of those things. And if you're a person without a disability, you'll get a set of questions around, do you see your senior leadership discussing disability inclusion in the same way they do other diversity initiatives? Do you feel your colleagues with disabilities are treated with respect and dignity? So you get at both the reality of the experience of people with disabilities and also the perception of the non-disabled colleagues. So we are very excited about the launch of this survey. Those of you that are with organizations that want to dig deep in this, please feel free to reach out to me or to Pete. You can get information on the global disability inclusion website about Amplify. The survey will run this fall September 2nd to September 17th, so a three week period. And we chose that timeframe because organizations can get results by October which of course we all know is disability employment awareness month. And it will enable organizations to have data that will help fuel their strategic planning for not just 2022 but beyond. So we're really excited about this Pete, I don't know if there's anything you wanna add about Amplify.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah, couple of quick things. So number one, I've been seeing... I'm in the survey business and I've been seeing a huge uptick in the number of DNI surveys that I'm doing. And what's exciting about it is it used to be like 90% of the companies were US companies. We're starting to see a huge uptake in Canadian companies doing this, we're also starting to see international companies doing this so out in Europe and also in Asia I'm starting to see more companies being interested in this. So the time was really right for this. But the reason we're building this survey is number one to make an easy way to get into this sort of analysis. We're a pulse. But the other thing is the able to get at a deeper level than we've ever been able to do. That the one question someone asked, and we get that question every time which is wow did you break it out by invisible versus visible disabilities? And the problem is no, I hadn't been able to do that and this will be my opportunity to finally collect that data and do that analysis. So that's why I'm very, very excited about this.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yes. And we'll also get further detail if people choose to disclose their disability type, do people feel... We know by the nature of our work that there are people that are comfortable with certain types of disabilities and other types of disabilities make them very uncomfortable. So what kind of disparities are we seeing across disability type within the workplace? So this is gonna be really valuable not just for the individual companies that are taking the surveys and getting that data which will be hugely beneficial, but for the disability field as a whole to get better data about disability types and accommodations and how those disabilities are treated within the workplace. So it's gonna fuel better data across the board for all of us.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Absolutely.

>> Meg O’Connell: So Philip I think that's a wrap, right? We're ready for questions and comments.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: That is correct. So I will say the comment section is out of control, but I wanna bring in one of my star colleagues, Franklin Anderson to share his perspectives in our conversation and a question and answer period now. As I mentioned, Frank is the director of Development and Inclusive Philanthropy at RespectAbility. He is passionate about the fight for equal rights and opportunities for all marginalized communities and his passion in the disability space has really manifested in helping lead our inclusive philanthropy work. And that's exactly why I wanted to bring him into this conversation because he's helped us with our work on ensuring that in the nonprofit space, in the philanthropy space that the disability becomes part of the inclusion agenda. So welcome Frank, thanks for joining us. So we've got... Do you wanna quickly say hello Frank?

>> Franklin Anderson: Sure, sure yes I just will. You've done a great introduction Philip I think you've really checked all the boxes there, I've been in the nonprofit sector my whole career and I spent a lot of time working with a philanthropic grant making organizations as well. So that's where a lot of my expertise come from but thanks Phil.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: All right. So I'm going to dive first into the Q&A box then I have a couple of questions. Folks who are in our audience, please either drop your question in the chat box or in the dedicated Q&A box. So I'm gonna pick up on a question from Michael Hogue who asked, what are some of the key steps that companies in your case study took to close the gap on employee engagement for employees with disabilities? What are some tangible examples of what they did?

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah let me, Meg I'll start with that and then you can chime in. So the biggest thing was simply drawing it to people's attention. After I do any sort of engagement, I'll do a presentation to the executives and just point out the data. And it's wonderful because pretty much every executive I ever showed that to they're like, wait a minute, why is there such a big difference there? And then I talk about it. And that tends to just get the ball rolling. Most of the time when that happens I'll be connected with usually a diversity and inclusion officer of some sort. We'll go into a little bit more detail on where specifically we're seeing the differences or the different parts of the organization. What specific questions are we seeing the biggest ones? And then we'll partner up with their employee resource groups or affinity groups or whatnot to really take decisive action around it. A lot of it has been around simple awareness. Also giving people the ability to identify in their HRIS system has been really, really positive just having that conversation has really moved the dial quite a bit. Meg, you probably have some more stuff.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah. The first piece you're exactly right Pete is that awareness raising, understanding that there's a problem. So we see diversity councils having impact and diversity teams having the awareness of wow, we need to now be focusing on disability as part of our overall diversity initiatives. We see employee resource groups or business resource groups gaining additional power and presence within the organization to really get to that perspective or share their perspectives with the company as a whole. And then just stay good old fashion audit of your policies, programs, procedures at the different touch points where employees are touched by the company. Are we able to support and touch employees with disabilities in the same meaningful way that we do other diversity groups? So those are some of the tangible things that we see companies doing a lot of that are making that forward motion and progress.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Wonderful. Thank you Meg, thank you Peter. So Frank, you and I have worked on RespectAbility projects together for a long time and we've really found that even as nonprofits are making commitments around diversity, equity, inclusion, disability lags behind and so I'm curious from your perspective Frank, really what can advocates and what can leaders do to really push the nonprofit sector itself to become more inclusive in our work.

>> Franklin Anderson: Yeah, thank you Philip. And to your point and RespectAbility's own study of disability inclusion in the social sector, we found that only 23% of organizations are being intentional in recruiting people with disabilities to their organization which is far, far lower than other demographic groups. So before you can even start adapting those other best practices, make sure you're being intentional about welcoming people with disabilities into your organization. Then see if your organization is actually measuring that data. Are they measuring the number of people with disabilities on your staff? If you're a nonprofit, are you measuring the number of people with disabilities that you serve? So that way you have a baseline understanding of what you need to improve and how you can be more representative of the community that you're serving. And, once you've done those larger scale things I think that the next step is doing the things that seem small but can actually help your organization become far more accessible and far more inclusive for people with disabilities. And those things are often making all of your online documents and resources accessible, digitally accessible as well. Unfortunately only 14% of organizations in our study suddenly are always put captions on their videos. And again, this is social sector organizations, nonprofits, foundations, government agencies. So these are professional do gooders but only 14% are always putting captions on their videos so many more need to do that. And you know just other best practices are things like making sure your job applications are fully accessible, you know make sure that your documents are screen reader accessible. And one, I think is really important is including people with disabilities in your marketing materials. Again referencing our own survey data, only 38% of organizations saying that they currently do that. So increasing that would be a big signal to people with disability so they'd be welcome at your organization and they'd be included in... Are welcome to be part of the team as well as being served by them.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yep.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Yeah. I just wanna interject Frank because this is one thing that's come up a lot in the chatbox is you're gonna be able to download an accessible copy of these PowerPoint slides as well as you'll be able to get access to a video recording of this webinar on RespectAbility's website and as I shared with Pete and Meg earlier we hope you will share this message for Mercer and Global Disability Inclusion far and wide. And then we're gonna go back to the Q&A box. (indistinct)

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Just wanna add one thing. And Frank I think your comments were really spot on. I noticed with organizations when they start a disability inclusion program, it typically starts with first raising awareness, right? Gathering some data, figuring out what they don't know. Then from there, they'll start creating a lot of words around disability inclusion. And then frequently at that point when I start collecting the data, again, it'll be that they feel like the company is talking the talk but aren't yet walking the walk. And then once companies go to that next phase, that's when we really start seeing some major changes there. So if you guys are early on in your evolution of your disability inclusion program, don't be too discouraged about the beginning it's just a lot, it feels like lip service. You have to start the lip service before we actually have an exchange.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Absolutely, thank you very much for that Pete. So I was gonna say for the Q&A box, Stephanie Inayat had a question about have you completed IRB for the September survey? And then secondly, are you considering mapping the types of disability that the federal government counts so you have another point of comparison.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: So I'll speak to the IRB because we're not a university, we don't need IRB approval. So, and I'm the head of research so I feel pretty good about our ability to do that. So the survey is actually pretty much done. There's a little bit of tweaking that Meg and I are doing, we've been socializing with various groups and getting some feedback and we've been making some minor changes to it. So I think we're very much in a good place with that. For the second part of the question, Meg are you able to answer the second part?

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah, we are going to do, and it's a good point. The idea is in the disability demographic, we're gonna use the broader categories of mobility, disability, neurological, intellectual, developmental, learning disabilities so the bigger buckets, vision, hearing all of that. And then there'll be an option if folks wanna describe it in more detail. So that's the approach that we currently have now. Certainly it's a good point to reference what the federal government is using and see where we have an opportunity to make some additions or some changes before we launch.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Yep, great. Thank you. And so this next question is coming from me and it's directed to Meg and to Frank. Both of you have a lot of experience around leading nonprofits and really advancing the disability employment space but I'm really curious what do you think makes the biggest difference for making that leap from, just talking to a company or a non

>> Peter J. Rutigliano:ofit about why disability is important and how do you get them to really embrace it and how do you make that change happen? So, Meg let's start with you.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah, the light bulb turns on at different times for different people, right. And I think it's really making, helping both non

>> Peter J. Rutigliano:ofits and for

>> Peter J. Rutigliano:ofit sector really understand the business benefits of disability inclusion. That it's not just a nice thing to do, it's not just the right thing to do. Yes that is both of those things. But the business benefits and the positive impact of the bottom line disability inclusion has to be organization and I think as you talk to senior leaders within companies and educate them on that, they see the opportunity. So that would be the first step. The second step is having a deliberate and committed approach to disability inclusion. So assigning someone who's gonna lead it, it can't be... It's kind of like, when the... I'll use Florida examples since I live in Florida you know when they say, you've got kids in the pool and there are a hundred adults around, if everyone's watching, no one is watching. There has to be somebody dedicated that in 15 minute intervals or whatever make sure that someone is watching the kids and making sure that they're safe. Same thing for your disability inclusion effort. If you have 100 different things happening and everybody's responsible for a little piece of it but no one's steering the ship and where it needs to go, that's gonna be a mess and you're not gonna have that deliberate and dedicated approach to disability inclusion.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah and I'll even add one more piece to that. I find in organizations and this isn't just true for disability but any diversity group, the more you have an executive sponsor who's connected to it, and ideally an executive sponsor who has a disability, the better it will be implemented within the organization because people can tie what we're doing to that specific person. Sometimes when you say all people with disabilities, it feels very far away for people without disabilities. My goal is to make sure it's part of everyone's conversation. And I see that in organizations, if I have a senior leader who's black, I'll see much better scores around diversity inclusion for black employees. If I have a senior leader who's gay, then I'll see much stronger scores for people within your organization who happened to be gay or lesbian. So having someone identified in the senior group who has a disability works wonders for helping people connect the dots between what we're doing, why we're doing it and the impact it has in an individual personal level. And I've seen that very consistently within groups.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Gotcha, thank you Pete. And Frank?

>> Franklin Anderson: Yeah, this is often where I start. I just like to start off by saying that working with and managing people with disabilities isn't necessarily always that much different than managing or working with anyone else. To be a successful manager of anybody, you need to ask employees things like what do we need for you to succeed in this job? What can we provide to you to help you succeed? How can we work more efficiently as a team? So making sure your leadership is asking those questions regularly will yield better results for people, employees with disabilities as well as employees without disabilities. And it helps get to those answers that can help those people with disabilities on your staff, get the things they need to succeed. And, beyond that I think often the simple answer is the best answer. Once you do have people with disabilities on your team and you know they feel welcomed, they feel welcomed, included. They feel like they can speak up. They know the solutions that work best for them, they've been working with a disability their entire career, you can trust them to come up with the right solutions and think creatively. So I think disability, employee resource groups, ERGs, I think they're a great idea. I think just find a ways to solicit that feedback, it's again good all around for your company or your organization but also great at giving that specific feedback that can help your employees with disabilities too.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yep.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Fantastic Frank. We had a question from Joanne Fluke who was one of our audience members about whether there are people with disabilities who go in and talk to corporations about including disability in their agendas and I would just give a quick shameless plug that RespectAbility maintains a very active speakers bureau where we are supporting and recruiting diverse people with disabilities to set themselves up as those pinch hitters that can go in and talk to an ERG or talk to a company or advise in some kind of consulting capacity. So check out RespectAbility's website for that. So, just shameless plug if you don't mind. But I wanna bring up a question from a former RespectAbility Fellow that's directed to Meg. So this is from Chinyere Azike who's a recent graduate and a recent alumni of RespectAbility Fellowship program. And Chinyere would like to know, Meg, how does Global Disability Inclusion support organizations that drive disability inclusion in the workplace?

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah, great question. We do a lot of strategy work. So a lot of times companies will come to us and say we don't know where to start. So for us, it begins with an assessment, understanding where they are. I've got an HR recruiting background and I also ran an employee resource group for a major fortune 500 company for four years. So, we started that assessment of looking at the policies, the programs, procedures, and then we do strategic planning with the organization. Here's what you're currently doing. Here's what are some best practices? And let's talk about where do you wanna go, where do you wanna be a year from now? Where do you wanna be five years from now? And we create a strategic plan for them that will take them on their journey and really create a roadmap to help them get to where they wanna be in three to five years with their disability inclusion efforts. So we have three main focus areas and it's the workplace. So the infrastructure supports how are you supporting people with disabilities, the workforce, where are you finding your talent? How are you supporting them once they're in the door, and the marketplace. Most companies are B to C. So what are you doing to market to people with disabilities to understand what their needs are? How are you supporting them with your customer service initiatives? So we really try to look at it from a holistic approach. Every company is a little bit different. So we do customize our approaches based on what the company needs but in a nutshell, it's that assessment, that strategy and really creating an implementation plan for them.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Great, now I think that's a great perspective and thank you for getting us filled in on your work. So last Q&A box was from Stephen McNeil who talked about the four phases of recruitment and hiring human resources and how organizations are often successful in phase one and phase two where you recruit, you onboard and you train your employees, but they fall short in phase three where it's advancements and promotions and then maybe in phase four where an employee leaves the organization. So I'm curious, what do you think companies can do to change course between onboarding training and then giving employees with disabilities opportunities to advance and become leaders?

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah, and we saw that in our data that employees with disabilities start with the same level of enthusiasm and energy when starting with an organization. So, the recruiting, onboarding, all of that's pretty much a well-oiled machine and most companies, it's a defined process for how to get people in the door where it starts to lose steam is that individual moving on to a different department you have different managers, different expectations, different experiences. So, and I would completely agree with you Steven, this is where organizations loose steam because there isn't as much structure, there isn't as much information around training for employees with disabilities, how to have better conversations, even how to support people within the various departments, there's a lot of inconsistencies and approach about that. So I think as we work with companies we really try to take some of the guesswork out for individual managers so they know where to go for their various supports and how to support people with disabilities in the workplaces. So, a lot of work to be done in that space but I am seeing good progress which is the positive note on that.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Gotcha. So I know we're running out of time but I wanna ask one final question for all three of you, and let's go Frank, Pete and then Meg. And my question to you is, with what do you see as being kind of the companies, the nonprofits or the foundations that are really at the forefront of this work and doing, making a critical difference on disability and inclusion issues. So, Frank.

>> Franklin Anderson: Yeah, thanks so to start and just pick out one example I think there are many, but I think a great example lately in the field that I've worked in philanthropy and nonprofits has been the MacArthur Foundation. Lever For Change which is an affiliate of MacArthur has been including questions about being accessible and disability related questions in all of their grant programs, not disability specific grants but just their grant making in general. And they even go so far as to ask questions about accessibility costs and talking about including accessibility in their project budgets. So, for all the grant makers and foundations out there I think that's a great best practice. You know, it's great to make your grantees and potential grantees think about accessibility before they launch the program. That makes it easier, it makes them more likely succeed, it's cheaper. So I think that's definitely something to emulate. You know you don't need to form a totally separate grant making area for disability. You're serving people with disabilities no matter what you're doing by the nature of how we're represented in society, we're in every minority groups. So you don't need to do something differently. Just include them in your general grant making programs and the general services you do. Yeah I think that's the best practice that I'd like to see more grant makers emulate.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Alright, Pete, Meg, any specific examples that you'd like to highlight?

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: I have one very quick one and it dovetails what I was speaking about earlier, I working with this one company and their results came back, and it was very much where we're talking the talk but not walking the walk and they took this very, very seriously. And then when I mentioned to them about, can we identify someone in your senior leadership team while there was someone on the senior leadership team who actually came out and disclosed this disability in the meeting? And they said, wow, Tim, it would be great if you would then be the champion for this. And at the beginning, he was a little reticent to do that because he didn't wanna necessarily be associated as someone who's disabled. But after some talk about it, he did eventually come out as having a disability and became a bit of a champion for this and it made a huge difference within the organization. That level of connectivity. And plus also him coming out and disclosing that when he hadn't disclosed it in the past made a huge difference in the organization. And Meg.

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah, I'll just dovetail on that but the better conversations that we can have on disability, inclusion, disability status and being open and welcoming to those conversations and not being put off by them and knowing how to handle them when someone discloses. I often I have epilepsy and I've always been open and disclosed and I often joke, if I had a dollar for every time someone told me that their pet had epilepsy, I would be a millionaire at this stage. So get it, they're trying to empathize and show that they have understanding but not really inappropriate workplace conversations. So know what to say when someone discloses and have those better conversations.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Gotcha. Well, we are practically out of time and there's some really great questions we didn't get to today from Nikia Sims and Stephen McNeil and I apologize about that. So, Peter, Meg plug your pluggables, where can people find you and where can people connect with you to bring this work forward?

>> Meg O’Connell: Yeah, absolutely. So if you go to the Global Disability Inclusion website, www.globaldisabilityinclusion.com, you can download the report that Pete and I have been referencing, it is on our website, it's downloadable for free. There is information about Amplify on our website. If you wanna sign up and learn more, you can send an email to me personally meg@globaldisabilityinclusion.com and happy to talk to you and share more information about Amplify and the work we're doing.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Yeah, and I'll just point out that I work at Mercer. However, finding me in a company of 50,000 might be a little difficult. So just go to LinkedIn, there aren't a lot of Peter Rutiglianos out there so just find me and you can reach out to me that way.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Great. And Frank let's plug your pluggables as well. Where can we find out more about you and where can we find out more about your incredible leadership around RespectAbility's Inclusive Philanthropy work.

>> Franklin Anderson: So let's start by going to RespectAbility.org, getting familiar with everything we do. But when you click on the resources tab, if you scroll down there's a mountain, I can't describe it as anything less than a mountain of resources there for everything we've touched on. It connects to things like Meg was just saying about disability etiquette and having the right conversations and all of the data and research that I cited earlier comes from our Inclusive Philanthropy study so you can find information there and just a lot of details on best practices, things that you can adapt I should say and bring your organization and make you a more successful and more accessible.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Well, I wish we had an hour and a half more 'cause I think we could dig in and change the world, we're gonna have to go and do that on our own and we will connect online. We will follow up with everybody, we will make sure you get the slides, we will make sure that you get certification if you were looking for continuing education credits. Again, Peter, Meg, Frank, thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you audience members for your fantastic questions. If we didn't get to you today, please track down our emails and follow up with us, we will keep the conversation going because inclusion doesn't happen if we don't keep it happening and disability issues will not advance unless we are all working to ensure that nothing about us, without is a reality and not just a catch phrase. And so with that, we are gonna conclude today's webinar. Thank you very much everybody.

>> Meg O’Connell: Thank you Philip.

>> Franklin Anderson: Thank you.

>> Peter J. Rutigliano: Thanks guys.