>> Graciano Petersen: I will introduce you to our next speaker who is going to be taking over and talking to us about some related things is Ashley Nyaley. Ashley is RespectAbility's Senior Director for Marketing and Communications. so thank you all for being with me, and Ashley, please take over.

>> Ashley Nyaley: Thank you Graciano. Well hi everybody, and thank you for the introduction Graciano. My name is Ashley Nyaley. Like he said, I'm the Senior Director of Marketing and Communications here at RespectAbility. And I've worked in the disability space for a little over five years, but I also have experience doing marketing, graphic design, communications, public relations, public speaking for very large businesses, very small businesses, as well as doing consulting. So I encourage everybody to ask me questions, to stop me along the way. I will be checking the Q&A as well, and I really just wanted to give an opportunity to show what's out there that can be very helpful with getting started in a competitive environment. Most of the careers out there are competitive, especially with the introduction of remote work. You are no longer just competing with people that are in your area, you're competing with people nation-wide. However, I want everybody to know that you are just as competitive as anybody else, and not to be discouraged in your job search. So I have just a short presentation, and then I just wanted to kind of have a conversation with you all and talk about some of my experiences, or answer any specific questions that you may have about maybe different ways to get jobs or get in contact with employers or set yourself apart. I've had to get very creative along my career, getting jobs and landing specific gigs. Just as a quick visual description, I'm a black woman wearing red glasses, a black jacket, and I have, I guess, a black afro as well. Sound a bit like Graciano. But I'm going to share my presentation. We can jump in. Awesome. So one of the first things that I always encourage people to consider is to consider the job that you're applying for. So what are the requirements of the job? What are you particularly interested about the job? And what are the best ways that you can showcase those skills on your resume, or whether it's your portfolio, or in your cover letter? And in this particular area, one thing I encourage everybody, regardless of if you're in a similar background of mine or if you're in anything else, is depending on your industry, creating multiple resumés so you can have an idea of what to submit to different jobs. So an example of that is you may be in a field, for example, like public relations or journalism, and if you're looking for jobs you may want to look up some other job titles that fall within what you're looking for. Sometimes it's a public relations associate, or a journalism associate, and you might want to use those titles instead to separate kind of the skills that you're pointing out on your resume. All these things will still be authentic to what you've done throughout your career, however you'll just be repositioning them for the job that you want. So one thing that I spoke about is we want to get creative when we're thinking about our industry. A lot of people think that marketing, communications, or anything else like that is the only space where you can get colorful or you can have, you know, a bright standout resume. But I guarantee you there's many employers that hiring -- there's many hiring managers that will see your resume if you take, you know, the next step in making sure it stands out. Sometimes it's in the policy space or in the nonprofit space, or you can be doing something that may seem a bit more typical, like a software engineer. Just doing different things that will help you stand out is the goal. They're looking through hundreds, sometimes thousands of resumés, and you want to make sure yours isn't just another Word document in the stack. But good thing is we're in the day and age of technology. And one of the skills and one of the things that -- everyone has as a resource is something that's called canva.com, and I will provide all this information as well as this slideshow and links to Canva in the follow-up email after this presentation happens, after the rest of the summit. Canva has a bunch of free resources. All you need is an email address to access them. So one of the great things about Canva is, when many people are applying for different roles, you might not necessarily have the design skills to make your thing look flashy or stand out or anything else like that. I encourage you to just simply go on Canva.com, type in resumé, and they have over 12,000 templates of resumé templates that you can click on and edit right in there -- no design skills necessary. And trust me, you'll be surprised how quickly that helps you stand out. One of the big things about resumés -- while we do want to talk about ourselves holistically, we want to make sure that we're highlighting the main topics. We're highlighting the background information, the work experience, the job skills. We want to have clear subheadings in our resume to make sure that those stand out to a hiring manager, so they can quickly find what they need, or information about you on your actual resume. And one other tip that I will give you guys -- if you are creating multiple résumés under different job titles -- like for example, as a marketing director, I may look for positions called marketing director, or communications director, or communication and marketing director, I'll have the exact same resume but I'll change small things and I may just make certain elements different colors so it can actually stand out, and I know, okay, I'm applying for marketing director, I will use my marketing director resume. And you don't necessarily have to do too much work to have kind of a standout resume that fits the different types of positions you may be looking for. So just to give an example, you have different things that can vary in how they look, but they give a level of visual appeal to somebody that may be looking through your resume, like a hiring manager. And along the topic of job hunting doesn't have to be boring, we want to think of different ways to showcase our skills. One of the more popular things, and especially me throughout my career, as I've looked for how people showcase their skills sets, using some type of Icon or using some type of visual notification to show how well you are doing in a particular skill set. So like I have over here in the right hand corner the Adobe Creative Suite, I may be stronger in Photoshop and illustrator, but not as strong in InDesign. And for the people that are in that particular industry, they might see that and say okay, that actually works for what we're looking for, we barely use InDesign anyways. And it's just another way rather than just listing something that you can show your different skills. You can do this for engineering, you can do this for public policy, you can do this for public speaking. There's no particular job where you can't kind of list your skills out and use something visual to show where your level of comfortability is with that. And if there's a skill that you don't have, don't draw attention to it. There's no need to necessarily list it if it's not something you have experience with. The idea of the resume is for you to talk about what you are good at, and what you are willing to learn, and what you already can bring to the company. I'm just going to check the Q&A. A question is are there tools to make sure you're using a creative resumé template that will also pass ATS and resume readers? So unfortunately, what I will say is there's no silver bullet into a specific resume that does that. I will say when you are designing your resume to keep certain accessibility things in mind, such as having high contrast, not using too many fonts, using large enough font size, like 14 point font. And if you're ever finished, is going to a free session or somebody that you're comfortable with and asking them to review your resume. There's nothing wrong with asking a second opinion prior to reaching out to people, even if it's somebody that you met in a past experience, or somebody that you did an internship for. You can always say, hey, do you mind reviewing this for these particular reasons? And then adjusting based on the feedback that they gave you. Another simple tip that I just wanted to add here when coming up with some of these visual icons is we want to keep it simple. We don't want to overload the resume with it, but we want to find that one particular niche in your skill set to where you can really showcase how good you are on a scale, and what you're comfortable showing an employer on a scale. So a couple of examples of this is you can see how they're showcasing their computer skills and the particular programs down here on an icon style level, or just using a simple call out where the strengths aren't listed to look visually similar to the other things that are on their resume. So they just -- even though they don't necessarily have an icon or a gauge level, they're calling out their strength here at the bottom. And if I was looking to employ somebody my eye is automatically drawn down there past their name, and say, oh, they're good at doing this, they're good at doing that, they're good at multitasking and problem solving and teamwork. Some of those intangible and valuable skills that hiring managers also look for when hiring someone for a job. One of the other things that I have a suggestion on is to have an online portfolio. Before I move on I see another question pop up. That question reads "what about applying through online platform systems? Is there any ideas for ways to stand out?" So when you're applying on online platforms such as -- such as LinkedIn or Indeed, one of the ways that you want to stand out is they always offer you an opportunity to create your own profile. So this is also where employers may come and look for you based on your particular skill sets. And you can also share your profile with an employer past just -- sending in your resume. So for example, on indeed.com, you can have a link to your PDF, you can fill out all the necessary information: first name, last name, interests, and make sure that that setting is set to open. You want to make sure people are able to see that and be able to share it, whether it's internally or with somebody else if your skill sets match a particular job. You don't want to just rely on having a profile so you can apply for jobs. You want to make sure you go to that little icon that's usually in the top right that says account, and you go on your profile, and you fill everything out, even if it is the same information that's on your resume. You want to make sure that you add a headshot or a logo that is true to who you are, something that's professional. You want to add in any additional information. Same thing as LinkedIn. It is important to have connections on LinkedIn, but you want to make sure that you don't appear on LinkedIn as somebody who's just skulking around for a job, that you care about your business and your background and the things that you've worked on. You really want to take the time to build your profile, to make sure you're add adding in those skills that you have, make sure that you're, you know, adding in employers that you've worked for, universities that you've gone through, or even if you've done a certification program, or you've done any type of thing to enhance what you're doing in your career, you want to make sure you're highlighting those things on your LinkedIn profile. And then that profile is open for people to make connections with as well. I guarantee you when people get your resume, especially when they're interested, they will go find on LinkedIn, whether you're looking for them or not. And it's a red flag when your LinkedIn is just somebody without a photo, there's no information on there. You don't want to put yourself in a position where you look unprofessional, so the best way to show up professionally is making sure all your bases are covered. So even if you don't have a professional headshot, I will always suggest if you have a friend, if you have a parent, or somebody that's around you to find a white wall, tell them get as close as possible, make sure the light is directly onto your face, and just have them snap that picture. You'd rather have something like that that you can lead with and put on different things until you're able to get a professional headshot. Things do not have to be expensive, you don't have to incur an expense for you to look professional. You just want to make sure that your mentality is professional first. So the next thing that I suggest regardless of, you know, what particular background that you have, is to have an online portfolio. One of the great things about having an online portfolio, similar to what we spoke about about having a resume -- it's a great way to share a link that has live examples of work that you've done throughout your career. We know when a hiring manager or an employer sees that you've put in a resume, you may touch on specific things, but your online portfolio is really a place to show those projects. It's a space where you can explain what your role was in a project, what the challenges were, how you overcame those challenges, and what the finished product actually was. Even if you're including visuals of the spreadsheet that you used to come up with that, or the blog that you wrote, or multiple blogs that you wrote on a particular topic, if you did a social media campaign, even if it was for a certification program, even if it wasn't anything that went live with a business, you want to use those things as part of your portfolio, and say hey, I've created a mock social media plan to solve this problem. I used it for LinkedIn, for Instagram, for TikTok. These were the challenges, here's what I overcame, and this was the finished result. Hiring managers aren't just looking for -- especially when you're getting into your career -- for you to have all the experience in the world. Just so that you can be able to showcase yourself professionally, you want to make sure that you have once again that professional mindset. So with that as well is -- your online portfolio gives the employer another opportunity to also share that link with maybe the position they're hiring for. A lot of times, like similar to what Graciano was saying previously, a lot of times a hiring manager is not going to be the person whose team you're working on. They may say, hey, look at their portfolio and they'll send your link to 10 other people that work in there on the team that you may be working for. It's also a great space for public policy work. You can highlight things that you've done in the public policy space, what you're looking to accomplish, blogs that you've written, and really giving the hiring manager all sides of you professionally to be able to share when they're pitching you for a job, or when they're saying this person might be a really good candidate for this particular position. So some examples of what that might include is -- Canva also has a space for you to create an online portfolio. And once you do publish that, you can have it for free. You can have that link that's free to share with anybody. And once again, you don't have to incur an expense to show up as your best professional self. You always want to include a link to your portfolio in your resume and cover letter. You want to make sure that you're giving people ample opportunities to view all of your work. So at the end of your resume, you can put a blurb at the bottom that says "view my portfolio." Include the link or include a short link there at the bottom. In the typing of your resume if it's a Word document you want to include that as well. And most likely for accessibility purposes as well as sharing purposes, you just want to make sure that you also download a PDF version of your portfolio to email out to an employer if they do ask for it after an interview, or they are following up on a job that you've applied for. You want to make sure that you're choosing specific pieces throughout your career that really speak to your expertise, and they don't necessarily have to be pieces that you took the lead on. You can be a part of a larger process. You can say hey, I provided input to the team that was vital in changing the position of the blog, or changing the position of the social campaign that we were running. It doesn't necessarily have to be where you're the leader start to finish. You just want to make sure you're choosing specific pieces that really speak to your expertise. And once again, you want to ask somebody for a second opinion, you know, shoot it over to somebody who can say, oh, that doesn't really look good, hey, I wouldn't include that -- just to get a second opinion to make sure that you're really presenting yourself in the best way possible, and also to review it for grammatical errors or spelling errors. You can't always catch those things on your own, so if you're not in a place where you don't have anybody to bounce those ideas off of, there are plenty of free resources that I will include of people who will review your resume, will review your online portfolio, and help you in that regard. So once again, I really think that a low lift expense wise is the best way to kind of move forward in the professional space. And this is just some examples of what your online portfolio can look like. Like I said, if you choose to go through the Canva route, they have all of these cool templates where all you have to do is click on them and type and change the the copy the way that you see fit. Delete, add things, and make sure. And then you can have a website within the hour. But take your time, make sure that you're reviewing things, make sure that things are spelled correctly, and then go back the next day and review it again with a fresh pair of eyes. So portfolios are a great way for all professionals to stand out in any professional environment. Once again, it is not simply for visual departments like graphic design or marketing. They're literally for any professional employment situation that you're going into. I don't want you to think that you're limited specifically to, you know, being in a space where it only has to do with a visual department. You can literally stand out in any environment. There are a lot of accountants that have started, you know, putting forth these types of portfolios and standing out. I know a lot of people who have worked, you know, in the White House or in Congress who have used these types of tactics so that they can stand out and get a job or, you know, make themselves known in front of a hiring manager. And sometimes even when they see their other skillsets, they might not get the job that they applied for, but the hiring manager may say, oh, you actually might work better for this particular position, as I was looking through your portfolio. Do you mind if I share that over there? So they -- it really presents a lot of opportunities for you to really set yourself up for success when being in a competitive environment. One of the things that I do want to bring out when you are creating these online portfolios -- although they are about you, they are technically not about you. You want to give one image of yourself, unless you're going into modeling or photography, but you want them to just see one visual of yourself, if you choose to include a photo, and you want to make sure that you're talking about things in particular to your career. It's nice to be personable, but you don't want to overly share too much information about your personal life -- one, for safety reasons -- you don't want to share too much about your personal life for safety reasons. But also you really want the employers to be able to see who you are professionally in everything that you wrote. So you want to make sure that even though it's about you, that you're only explaining particular things that have to do with your career path. And this is also a great place to talk about what you're interested in learning, and what other career paths you're willing to take. The last tip that I have included down here is that, on your website if you do use a form, so that's just -- you know, hey, if you want to contact me, put your name and number in this form, and it'll send it over to you -- is just to make sure that you check those things regularly. If you're using LinkedIn, just make sure you're checking your messages regularly. Sometimes hiring managers will reach out to you there, and you might be looking for a response in your email box when it's sitting in your messages on LinkedIn. So last thing that I want to talk about is formatting. We just want to make sure that we're using the most universally accessible things when applying for jobs. While there are many different places that people can access information, people can use different mediums, I know I use Adobe Creative Suite a lot myself, but those files are not accessible. Publisher files are not accessible. And when I say accessible, I mean to a hiring manager. The universal language here in the hiring field is let's use a Word document or a PDF. We want to make sure that we have Word document or PDF, or you're providing an actual link that someone can click on and now access via the Internet. So I just want to speak specifically on using universal formats when applying for jobs. You don't want to create something beautiful and then you're getting an error message every time you open it up. I think there is a question in the Q&A: "the examples of my work are all confidential grants. Any suggestions on how to deal with that?" Absolutely! So one way that -- I am so sorry -- one way specifically for grants that I would do that especially in an online portfolio is to mention specifically that this is -- I've worked on many confidential projects, however during my 10 year working on these projects and these grants, I was able to secure funding, I was able to accomplish the specific goal at the end of it. You don't have to necessarily share what the grant was about, but you can say, you know, over a 10-month period we were courting businesses in order to gain unrestricted funds for the work that we're doing over in the public policy space. I was able to get creative and use my resources and my network to be able to accomplish these goals. If you need any specific information about that grant, that information is confidential, however I was able to accomplish that, and actually exceed the goal of what we were set out to earn. They actually gave us 25% more than we originally applied for. So you're still telling people about what you're able to do and how you accomplished it without kind of messing up the NDA process or the process in which you can't speak about your confidential experience. And it's the same thing in entertainment, it's the same thing in -- sometimes in policy work where you may not be able to share the particular piece that you worked on, but you can say, hey, I wrote a newsletter and had to manage a newsletter for a high-profile Member of Parliament -- I'll just say Parliament -- or of a particular branch in the executive branch of X Y and Z. I was able to accomplish this. It increased in more followers, or I had to manage an internal network that worked with more than 25 team members to give them information up to the minute on the things that were happening in our particular department. So you can workshop your words a little bit to still talk about your experience, sound extremely knowledgeable, without having to share those particular things. I just wanted to share a couple of do's and don'ts when going through the process of standing out in a competitive environment, and as you move through the job process. So if you do land an interview, you want to practice what you are going to say before the interview. You never want to walk in there feeling so confident that you are just able to rattle off your skills without taking a couple of notes and saying, you know, if they ask me about, you know, a time that I wasn't able to accomplish something, what's going to be my response? You can practice those, you can write those things down, it helps a lot with the nerves, but you definitely want to practice before you go into any interview setting, whether it's virtual or in person. If you are going to an in-person -- if you're going into an in-person interview, especially, you want to bring physical copies of your resume or your physical portfolio. And as an alternative, if printing your portfolio like your online website is too much, you can bring a laptop or an iPad with your portfolio already open. That is always one way that I go into in-person interviews, because my portfolio is large, and it'd be expensive to print, and it's heavy, I will already have my website pulled up and have it on my iPad, and I will share that with the people that are there. You never want to go in expecting that they already have what they need, and the people that you are interviewing with are the same people that have access to the information that you applied with. If you have any accessibility needs, you want to reach out to the hiring manager prior to the interview to make them aware of that. I think in a lot of spaces, one thing that I've appreciated is someone letting me know that they do have an accessibility need, and making sure that that is ready for when they come to the interview, whether it is virtual or in person. It does not make the company feel any type of way, it doesn't make anybody, you know, say, oh, I don't want to hire them because of these accessibility needs. It definitely makes companies say, oh, this person is professional. They really prepared ahead of time to make sure that they're coming and getting what they need out of this. So it really helps you show up as a professional. You want to make sure that your LinkedIn is the most up to date, so even if you're in the process of looking for a job, and you're no longer working, or you're in between jobs, you still want to keep it the most current. You don't necessarily have to say you're no longer working at that place on your LinkedIn, but you don't want to have your most recent work experience to be from eight years ago if you've worked three jobs since then. You want to have it -- the most up to date. And then you also want to invest in yourself and invest in your time. So really taking the steps to review all your materials' grammar and spelling, and get those second opinions are so important. I've gone through so many processes where I've read resumés and things that I just could not understand because someone just didn't invest the time to review it -- down to someone spelling their own name incorrectly and submitting that. You just want to make sure you give yourself the time to review all of the materials that you're going to present to a hiring manager, so that way you feel the most confident going in there and you're the most competitive you can be. As well as staying positive -- I know people say it all of the time, but you will get a lot of no's. You will get a lot of no's in any space that you work in, but knowing that you're showing up in the most professional way, you're going to leave an interview and everyone's going to be impressed. You may leave a certain space where someone says, hey, that's not necessarily the person we're looking for here, but they may leave impressed and they may express that to you. Or you're going to leave a lasting impression where you do land a job, or you're able to afterwards, because of your professionalism, when you do get a job, negotiate your salary or say, hey, you know, I think I bring all of these things to the table, and I feel like I've demonstrated those things. I actually think I'm in a position to negotiate my salary. And start those conversations there. Will non-chronological resumés be viewed negatively? I'd rather emphasize with my skills and not the time gaps. So I'm glad you asked that question. So they won't be. Non-chronological resumés aren't looked at negatively when the skills are relevant, which is why one of of those things that I talked about about having multiple resumés can be really helpful. If there was a job that you did that's more relevant to your most recent job, that may be the job that you want to highlight the most. There's nothing wrong with that. As an employer, as a hiring manager, yes, seeing a timeline is nice and seeing a progression is nice, however, we want to say, oh, you're applying for -- example, me working here. I had five years of work in the disability space. I want to lead with that, because I'm now going back to work in a disability organization. That is my most relevant experience, and what I want to speak about the most when it comes to that. So the answer on that is no, but you still want to include the timeline of when you did work at a place and for how long, up to where you feel comfortable. It doesn't have to be month to date, but it can be from 2017 to 2020, you worked doing this. And from this particular thing you work doing that. You can be as vague as you would like to be, but it's still good to kind of give a hiring manager a thought process there. Okay. So some of the don'ts -- we touched on this a little bit earlier. We don't want to share personal social media profiles if they're not connected to you in a professional workspace. I always encourage people to keep their personal and their professional separately, especially when looking for a job. You don't want to Instagram your way out of getting a job. You don't want to go and volunteer information that people did not ask for, and then someone finds something that they particularly may not resonate with or don't like. It's not necessary to share if it has nothing to do with your professional connections, like having a LinkedIn account. And I'm not saying don't have a personal social media, or anything like that, I'm just saying don't volunteer that. You don't have to have your Instagram and your TikTok on your resume. You don't want to connect with the hiring manager on LinkedIn and send a personal note. They most likely will not respond. However, what hiring managers do see is if you follow the organization. If you are interested and you did apply for a job, for the hiring manager most likely, they will have access to LinkedIn. It's better to now follow that organization, and they see that you're actually interested, than writing them a personal note, because they're probably getting tons of those personal notes. And they -- showing, oh, this person doesn't have any interest in the company, but they only have interest in getting the job. So sometimes you don't want to, you know, obsess over sending this personal note to follow up with hiring manager. Follow the organization, interact with the posts, they will see that. They will see your name in the resumés and see what you're interacting with their organization. You don't want to wear clothes that are uncomfortable to an interview. I always always say this -- you know, practice what you're going to wear. You know, if it's a suit you haven't put on in 10 years, you might want to try it on before the day of. You know, that's not the best time to try a new hairstyle or new makeup. You want to be the most comfortable you can be while still looking professional when going into an interview. And I mean that as well in a virtual space. You want to wear pants. You never know where the opportunity may present itself that you have to stand up. So you always want to put yourself in the most comfortable position to have the best interview possible. We spoke on this a little bit earlier, but I just want to bring it back up. You don't want to wing it. You want to practice. You want to practice your part. You don't want to rely on your personality and not account for the nerves that happen -- the very real nerves that happen when you are interviewing with people or you're looking for jobs. And you don't want to request things of employers that you did not provide. It's extremely unprofessional to walk into a space and go, "oh, do you guys have my resume?" "Oh, I'm -- I shared my portfolio with the hiring manager." You want to come in and say "I have my resume for everybody here." "Oh, I have my iPad, I will pass that around for those who want to see." If you have a computer, I don't mind pulling that up. You want to make sure that you are genuinely showing up in your best professional self in these situations. I'm just going to check the Q&A to see if there's anything else. Yeah, and that is the end of my presentation. I just wanted to give some options and some thoughts and some ways to help you stand out in a competitive environment. We have a couple of minutes, so if there are any questions that people have, or specific things that they're -- you're interested in knowing about, feel free to write in the Q&A in the next minute or so. I do want to say that we are also having a networking group after this where a couple of us will be on. If you want to have more specific conversations about where you're at in your career, your thought processes, what you're looking for career-wise, and how we can help, we will be there. One other question that popped up -- "we can ask for disability accommodations, right?" Yes. In any company that you are working for, whether you're going for a large company or a smaller company, it is always your right to ask for accommodations and be very specific about those accommodations. And I always encourage people to do so. Next question: "is it possible to create different portfolios in Canva?" You can! You can. You can create a couple of different free portfolios in Canva and have different links. I will just say if you do choose to create different portfolios and have them online that you make sure you know which one is which, especially when using a free account, because then you can't necessarily change the URL. So if you're doing one that's, you know, Ashley Nyaley Marketing Director.com, you want to make sure that the second one is completely different: Ashley N Art Director.com. You don't want them to just be, you know, super similar, you may not know what you're sharing. But yes you can and have different portfolios in Canva. Was there any other questions? Awesome. Well thank you so much for joining us in the first day of the NDEAM Summit that we're having here at RespectAbility. We do encourage everybody to hop on the networking groups. Eric Ascher did post the link to that. And we will be starting in there around 4:30. So if you would like to join us, we'll be over there. And yes, thank you so much for coming. We definitely appreciate it.