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Welcome to Accessibility Ally. It's a podcast featuring guests with a range of disabilities and social identities. They share provocative ideas and challenge allies to disrupt ableism. And I'm your host, Kareem Allonson. Thanks for tuning in. I'm really happy to welcome Ellen Johnson and Nikki Byrd for this conversation about disability hacks at work. Ellen, can you please introduce yourself?

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and tell our listeners who you are and what kind of work you do in the world. Sure. I'm Ellen Johnson. I am a person with a disability, so I have low vision and I've lived with low vision for my entire adult life. um And my work, I am the regional accessibility coordinator for the five municipalities in Lunenburg County. So my job there is about supporting them to be more accessible in what they do.

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uh And in my kind of volunteer life, I'm the vice chair of the Accessibility Advisory Board for the province of Nova Scotia. So we provide advice to the provincial government about accessibility. And then they also sit as um vice chair for the Standard Development Committee for Public Transportation. So that's the recommendations that will go to the province to help with making public transportation more accessible.

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which is a really big task in Nova Scotia, know, especially for more rural places, right? Yeah, huge, huge barrier. And I'm sure that will come up in our conversation about work. Absolutely. Nikki, tell us about you. Yeah. So my name's Nikki Bird. I'm the manager of human resources at Stuart McKelvey. So I support our management group and all of the staff side of our business.

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um So I support all six of our offices that we are across the land of Canada. um And my role encompasses recruitment efforts from the time that someone has offered a position throughout their career, whether it's supporting them through performance management, providing accommodations, um providing them with resources.

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And then I also, you there's a whole other side to HR that involves, um you know, benefits and all kinds of different things. But um I kind of see myself uh as more of a generalist. So um and kind of a connector for people to, know, if they need supports or resources, um kind of being that person for people at Sturt McKelvey. um But yeah, that's that's kind of a general. And so six offices across the Atlantic, what is the total kind of staff?

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makeup, how many people work in these offices. Yeah, so we are definitely a growing firm. In terms of our staff, I would say we have nearly 400 and then uh probably 200 to 300 lawyers that we're supporting as well. Great. And same thing, guess, Ellen, even in the work that you do across those five. um

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They're individual municipalities? across the five municipalities. What is the population of that area of Nova Scotia? Do you know? oh Well, the areas I support are, and you know, most people will be familiar with like the town of Lunenburg, the town of Mahone Bay. Lots of people go visit those places and they're fairly small with a not huge population, but still lots of infrastructure and, uh you know, things that we think about as pretty typical accessibility kind of barriers. oh

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um And then also the town of Bridgewater um and then the two kind of large municipal districts of Lunenburg and Chester. So basically that whole chunk of the province between Hubbard's and Bridgewater. Right, so the towns but also all of the areas. All the rural areas. the rural areas as well. Great. Everything around the towns, yeah. So maybe we'll start with you, um Ellen. Can you tell me about just your experience with accessibility in workplace settings?

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uh personally or what you're seeing kind of across some of the workplaces that you're supporting as well. Yeah, I would say I'd like to talk a little bit personally because I think it's a good way to get people to understand. um So I mentioned I have low vision and that's been kind of a progressive kind of thing since I was, you know, really young, like eight or nine. And so when I was a teenager and getting my first job,

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um I worked in recreation, so was doing like day camps for kids, you know. And that kind of work, um you know, I was having trouble at that point reading text, but not so much getting around. So I didn't have a cane. wasn't like I didn't have to disclose if I didn't want to. But I was supposed to do research and we went to the library as a group. We're like supposed to research what we're going to do with the kids. And that was really hard for me because I couldn't just like pick up books and read and whatever. So.

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At that time, I don't think I understood that I could ask for support for that. So I just kind of did it myself. I was like talking to other people and say, oh, can you help me with this? And so I just felt like it was my responsibility to deal with all of that. And I think, you know, that was like 20 something years ago. I think a lot of people

going into their first work or even with a new disability are still in that situation. They're like, oh, I got to figure this out. I need to do this. And it's really stressful. And you feel like like

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you know, that extra pressure of not only are you getting a new job or you're doing your job now with different abilities, but you're also needing to figure out all of that on your own. So I think like as I went to university and realized, oh my gosh, there's all this stuff that can help me, you know, and there are people who that's what they do is help me to figure out how to make myself be able to function in this world that's not really made in a way that's good for me or easy for me. Right.

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So I would say, know, kind of fast forwarding through a bunch of jobs I've had where it's been a bit like hit or miss in terms of the support or the comfort level um to my current job, where I found, you know, I knew all the stuff I could ask for. I kind of had a general idea of what would work for me in terms of assistive technology. And just like the interaction with the staff there were kind of like.

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yeah, okay, this is what you need, then this is what we do. Like, and was a totally like, compare that first job to this job, and it's like, wow, that was so different. Like it was such a big, um you know, obviously 20 something years difference, but just, I think in my ability to understand what I could ask for. like knowing my rights was a big piece of that. And then also just our culture has, I think, gotten a little bit better about.

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having that as part of our HR policies and recognizing like, hey, that's actually a human rights thing, right? So yeah, so would say like personally, that's kind of the journey of my kind of, know, comfort level with accommodation at work and kind of working with a disability. uh But yeah, lots of people are in, you know, the situation still where they don't really understand that and don't know what they can ask for. And honestly, lots of employers are still not fully

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understanding what their responsibilities are either. Yeah, that's really kind of the purpose of this podcast, Accessibility Ally, is to uh really talk about what does that mean in our workplaces and with employers, because you bring up these two kind of sides of this. One is your own understanding, awareness, not only of your disability, but also your rights. And then the other piece is

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from the employer perspective, how they've created maybe a safer space, more policies that can actually uh make it easier for people to disclose that they have a disability. So I really like that you've named kind of those parts of, what are those parts of the pieces that really have to come together? Great.

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How about you, Nikki? um Tell me about your experience with accessibility in workplace settings. Obviously, you're coming from the perspective of supporting people in your workplace. um I would say my biggest goal and what our HR team at Stuart McKelvey, we're really focused on creating an inclusive environment um and creating safe spaces for people to feel comfortable coming forward and saying, you know, this is affecting.

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how I work and this is what I need. um And so, we have experiences of providing different accommodations, working with also, we're not um as HR representatives experts on certain disabilities or different things that are affecting people's day-to-day lives and whatever diagnosis that they're receiving. um So it's our job to... m

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research and talk to external organizations and resources and partners. This person, how can we help them? And really creating those safe spaces because from what I've learned in my role is that the best thing you can do is just ask, what do you need? Because my lived experience is very different and I can't assume what someone needs.

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encouraging our managers to be that safe spaces for their staff as well. um And yeah, just kind of keeping it at the forefront and making sure that it is part of our culture. If it's not part of your culture and it's not something you're talking about, um then you do have people with disabilities or with different things that are happening in their lives, whether they know that something that's affecting them and that's going to impede on their success. um you know, people are at the core of every

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business organization and you know that's the work that we need to be focusing on and yeah. So when you talk about so sometimes so I love the language around like a culture of inclusion and safer safer spaces. What does that actually look like in in your day to day or in the systems within Stuart McKelvey because I think that's where sometimes we have a hard time translating inclusion this big idea to okay what what what does that look like in the day to day.

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for a business that's based in Atlantic Canada? Absolutely, yeah. think it's comprised of few different things, whether it's benefits, making sure that we're promoting our benefits, making sure we're investing in the programs and resources that we can provide employees. So uh extensive mental health benefits, different types of services, whether someone needs a chiropractor, a physio, or...

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uh making sure that there's resources there that people don't have to have such a difficult time accessing those things. That we can say, we care for you and this is something that we can provide. uh Wellness accounts are a new thing as well, that giving people money towards different types of wellness things and...

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making sure that you're broadening that as well, not just focusing on a gym membership. There's so many other things that you can be doing in terms of wellness and making sure that self-care is different for everyone. uh And then also for us as well is training. Our managers and staff lawyers are trained on what accessibility means, um making sure that they have an understanding of, you

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different types of supports and things that are out there. yeah, so a big part of my role is making sure that we're facilitating that and bringing those resources in for people. Because yeah, I think it is a lot of just knowledge and I think there's a lot of power in that as well. Yeah, and I know from our conversation, we talked about benefits and one of the questions I asked was, do you do a three month?

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um kind of period where people start work and then it's three months till their benefits kick in and you responded with no we start right away. So tell me more about that and the decision to do that. Yeah I think um you know when we're hiring someone and bringing them they're part of our team they should be supported day one and that's how we feel about everyone joining the firm and making sure that they have access to those benefits um as soon as they start.

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Going months without having that access is, you know, that is very impactful for someone who um is requiring certain services and certain resources. um And, you know, even having like a not access to a therapist for the first three or six months, uh you know, is really impactful on someone. And you want to have a new employee be successful as soon as they start.

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um And the best way to do that and to make sure that someone feels supported when they join a new workforce is to provide them those

benefits and not have to prove anything to receive those. yeah, think it's just setting up people for success. Yeah, that's so key. And now I'm so curious also about the wellness fund because you're like, yeah, it's not just a gym membership.

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What are some of the other ways that people are using the wellness fund to kind of support themselves and kind of promote their own wellness? Yeah, I mean, there's so many things. We've expanded our wellness account to cover just the range is very wide. You know, if someone finds that, for example, I'm just pulling an example that I know someone that, you know,

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needs wants to knit once you know if they're feeling overwhelmed they will go and like they'll reach for they want to do something that's crafty with their hands because it relaxes them and so that's what wellness covers if you want to go to Michael's and you want to you know purchase art supplies that is covered if you need new sneakers that is covered there are so many it really is a range of things that you know and

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Movement, of course, is important and going to the gym is important, but that's not accessible for everyone. Not everyone is going to the gym. There are things that people do that, everyone's lived experiences, we can make it such a box sometimes and not really think about what someone else, their experience of wellness or how they interpret or what self-care they need is gonna be so drastically different from someone else.

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So really trying to put an inclusive lens on when we're looking at our benefits and looking at our wellness to make sure it is supporting all kinds of people. Yeah. Yeah. It would be really amazing to see that expand across workplaces in Nova Scotia because what we know from the Canadian Survey on Disability, which was last published in 2022, of course, Nova Scotia has the highest rates of disability in the country, but mental health.

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is the highest rates of disabilities here in Nova Scotia. So that idea of focusing on great mental health benefits, but also just wellness in general. Because for many people, um medication or a therapist is not the answer to mental wellness. So really love that you've broadened that. um Ellen, what about, again, from your experience in the...

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municipalities that you support, what are some low cost or no cost

accessibility solutions you've seen work well? That I've seen work well. So there are lots that we've of like slid in there, like a lot of things that we've kind of tried. I would say I want to, I think a lot of answers are going to be like.

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it's not one tiny thing. It's like built on something Nikki said about like changing the culture and creating inclusive workspaces or workplaces. um And I think a lot of that comes from awareness, so the training stuff, um but also just like having people with disabilities visible and like in the workplace, you know? And I feel like almost

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part of my job is just like being a person with a disability in my workplace, right? And that seems really strange to be like, oh, I'm like representing and I'm, you know, like I'm the blind person, right? But I think we have all of these ideas about like what disability looks like and...

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I mean, you said about the number of people with disabilities in Nova Scotia, like we're almost at 40%. So if you think about your workplace, there are likely many people in your workplace with disabilities who have not disclosed it. And so we don't see them, like we don't know, like it's not visible. So I think one of the things is representation, like actually having people feel comfortable, know, first of all,

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getting a job in your organization, which comes back to Nikki's comments about, em you know, inclusive hiring practices. um And the idea of getting um benefits right away, like that is a huge barrier for some people. They won't even like consider getting a job if they're gonna lose, you know, three months of benefits. Like that's really challenging. Yeah. m

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So all of those things are big picture things, but they're also like really small things, right? So, you know, like the little barriers that people face, like for me, things like when I get an email that has an image attachment and it has information in it that I can't see. And it's, you know, important. It's my job to see what people are sharing with me at work. But when it's a JPEG, I can't, like my screen reader won't read that to me.

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um So having people start to include the text or do it as a PDF or just like, just not even do an image, just do it as text, right? Like that's a very simple thing for people who use screen readers. And it's not only people who are blind who use screen readers. You'll

maybe hear now lots of people who have other type of print disabilities, like sometimes dyslexia, ADHD, like anything that you find reading text um can be a bit.

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you know, stressful or difficult. And that's a super simple, it doesn't cost anything more. It's just catching the change at the time when you can make the change, right? So I think the bringing the awareness of accessibility through training, through just like proximity to people with disabilities really makes it easier to slowly shift things and make big.

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big difference for people even though they're really small changes. So I know that we're talking about like disability hacks with the goal of shifting the culture. Yeah. But also with that idea, I think that um a lot of workplaces like you can make a shift fairly simple. Like we start benefits day one instead of 90 days in, which might cost a little bit.

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But think about having to find a new person or retrain or losing someone or not getting the right person because you've missed that opportunity. so again, sort of the cost benefit. But yeah. Yeah. So as you say that, I'm thinking like some other things that, you know, when I'm doing training, I'm like, I just have a Ziploc bag full of fidgets. And like we just put that on the tables when we're doing training and that's.

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like a super easy way to make the culture more relaxed and like you need them great, you don't need them great, you know, like it just opens, it's like a visual and concrete reminder that this space is like okay for movement, right? And you know, I think we can do that in our meetings and in our, I mean, we don't have to like, like we're sitting here, you know, at our table.

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um And in meetings, there's this like cultural expectation that we do this, right? But it doesn't really, like it doesn't have to be okay. And how can we signal to people that if they work better when they're moving or they, you know, they're in pain and it's okay to move in a way that's gonna help you manage that or keep you concentrating. Like there are ways we can just signal that, right? Like say at the beginning of your meeting, hey, do what you need to do to take care of yourself when we're No big deal, right?

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And even in the thinking about the meeting space of like, I know for me, I'm sensitive to light and sound and all of those things. And so

I walk into a meeting space with like the overhead ah lights and like, oh gosh, like way too much. And I'm already overstimulated. um So all of these things that are seemingly pretty small things, dimmers, fidgets, all of those things lead to that.

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culture of safety and ability to kind of share and disclose. um Yeah, are there other from the perspective of Stuart McKelvey, like low cost, no cost? Yeah, I mean, I really love what Ellen said about just it. There's so many easy ways to signal that this is a safe environment. And, you know, I especially liked what you said about the fidget spinners. And it kind of reminds me of, you know, training our managers to ask

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their staff, how do you like to be communicated to, how do you like to receive performance, uh you know, what can I do to better support you, um and you know, big thing that we try to focus on is not making assumptions, not jumping to judgment, you know, if there's a performance issue, don't just jump to, oh, they're doing a bad job.

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ask the questions, know, what's going on? Like, it, you know, is there something that is, you know, happening or is there something that is affecting you that we can support you to be better? So I really like the idea of just, you know, really signalling and especially in leadership, I think, of just making it known that, you know, we are an inclusive space, but not just saying it, showing it.

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But sorry, back to low cost solution. Is that what we're talking about? Yeah, I think I've seen a few different things. I think after the pandemic, flexible work arrangements have kind of been a really easy way for employers to provide flexibility and accommodation for their staff. um

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I think there's a lot of different things, but you know, if it's a sensory thing, it could be changing a physical space, it could be changing lighting. You know, if your office has maybe a room that's not being used, like maybe try converting it to a wellness room and it doesn't need to be anything top tier expensive, you know, considering, you know, is it away from the hustle and bustle of your office? Is there maybe some comfortable furniture we can put in there? So that's...

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Another thing that we've invested in is making sure we have a space for people, whether they need to, and it's a wellness room, but it's also, do you need to go pray? Do you need to use it to pump? Do you

need it just to take a moment and have some alone time? So, making sure that it's a space for everyone. And I love that you bring that up.

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because things like flexible workspaces or like a wellness room meet the needs of so many people with and may not be because of a disability, but because, yeah, it's a space to pray or your breastfeeding or, you know, flexible work arrangements. You're picking up kids at the end of the day because we all know that school ends at three and workplaces don't end until, you know, 4.35. So, you know, we've built these like systems that don't really meet.

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those kind of wellness needs often. So I really like that you're, that those examples you're thinking this broad range of not just people with disabilities, but this is a great workplace practice for the culture of inclusion that you're aiming, you know, to create. um Why do you think, Ellen, that some workplaces hesitate to make even kind of small steps toward accessibility?

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I feel like I say, that's a great question every time. But it is a really good question because, I mean, from my perspective, it's like, there's no reason not to. This is a human rights thing, right? Like when you take that lens, it's like, this is a human rights thing. We just need to do it, right? um But I recognize, you know, there's kind of a cultural expectation that this is gonna cost a lot of money.

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you know, and it's going to be difficult and people are going to think that I'm giving that person special treatment if it's an accommodation. And I think that's where, know, Nikki, what you said about, um you know, having things that are useful to help with accessibility, but also other things like making this kind of larger equity approach tends to be, I think, a way to kind of like ease into this a little bit. So I think, you know, it's, it's

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from the perspective of the employer, not understanding, I think, the value, like the full value you get from being a more inclusive workplace and this kind of idea that it's harder than it actually is. And not to say it's easy. Like, I don't think it's easy because it does take a culture change and that never happens overnight.

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I'd like to see a place where it's happened overnight and like document that and figure out what they did. like, think, I think that's one way of kind of easing into it is like recognizing the benefits of it. you, you said like, or Cora, you said like, you know,

what's, what's the alternative is you miss out on this huge group of people who have potential to be amazing employees, to bring a totally different set of perspectives and problem solving skills and like,

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All the things that people with disabilities typically have to develop in their lives, um You know, you're missing out on all of that skill and whatever else. But then also all the other people who benefit from it, right? And I'll use the example of flexible workplaces, uh like work hours, environments, work everything. Like I think that is probably one of the most fundamental things that an organization can do to help.

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because it helps, like you say, everybody, right? It provides that flexibility for people to just access what's already there. And if that's what I need, then I don't have to disclose, I don't have to have this like special accommodation. I just fit in with everybody else. And that helps not only, you know, administratively, but it also helps me to feel like I belong there. Like somebody thought about what I was gonna need and made sure that I could fit in here.

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without me having to ask for something different, right? And that's not answering your actual question, but it's so, I think it's so important and it's worth saying probably another five times in this conversation. Well, really reducing the stigma too for someone, as you say, to have to say, okay, I need this as an accommodation when it's written into policy that there's flexible workplaces. And I am certainly dismayed at the number of

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workplaces who are now shifting back to know we need to be in five days a week. Like I just think, have we not learned anything from the benefits of flexible workplaces? So, I mean, really happy to hear that both of your workplaces offer that. And what I think is interesting, Ellen, you're part of municipalities in Nova Scotia, of course, who have been mandated um by the province to implement, um you know,

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create an accessibility plan, uh create an accessibility committee and um work towards increasing accessibility. Stuart McKelvey as a private business is not mandated yet um and yet you're doing all of these things. So like what's the motivation? And I know you can't speak on behalf of like, you know, the owners or the leaders or whatever, but from your perspective, what is the message that you get sort of from senior leaders who obviously are

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prioritizing this, given what you're able to do kind of in your workplace? I think it goes back to the point of you're going to miss out on really quality candidates. You are going to lose people if you keep stepping backward. um And I always kind of think about the whole, you know, there's this shift happening and I hope it stops of, you know,

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We don't want diversity anymore, we don't want inclusion. So you want sameness and you want exclusion. That gets you nowhere. And that's not what we want. We want to be inclusive because it's better for all of us. It's better for our business, it's better for our organizations. And so, you know, going backwards on things and, you know, making things.

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less accessible and just harder for people to do good at work. Like, there's no benefit in that. So, um you know, think providing, you know, flexible work and, um you know, trusting your employees too, right? You know, you think that they, you know, working from home is, and they're not going to do the same that they would do in an office, well, you know, maybe there is more to unpack there. um You know, I think if,

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You want to be an employer of choice. I think that giving employees autonomy and trust goes a long way. Could I come work for Stuart and Nicole? Sure. I love that. You're bringing up those bigger things that really need to form the basis of policies and practices, right? So autonomy, trust, obviously, yes, accountability.

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I always like to say it doesn't matter to me where or when you do the work as long as the work happens. So we see that this is a task that needs to be done and then you've done that task. Ellen, do you want to jump in? do want to jump I I could see your smile. No, really do because I'm...

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You know, I can use my own experience as an example for this. Like have quite a lot of flexibility in my role to work from home and where I support five different offices. Like I'm, you know, I also need to go to those five places. But, you know, for me, where I live in rural Nova Scotia and I don't drive and transportation is a real, it's like the bane of my existence. just, it's so difficult to just do things on my own schedule. I'm consistently needing to plan.

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And so when I need to plan to be in an office, there's that whole extra layer of like stuff I have to do in order to make that happen.

Whereas if I work from home, I drop my kids off at school, I sit at my desk and that I can be on, right? Like I'm there, I can focus, I can do the things I need to do. And with technology, the majority of what I need to do in my day, I can access from my home office, right?

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And I think it's the same with lots of people with different types of disabilities, just that ability to bring all that extra energy you would have spent getting yourself there, organizing that kind of cognitive, that mental load that everybody with a disability pretty much has to handle every day.

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It just decreases that so that you're coming to work with more energy and more capacity. So I know that's not the same for everyone. It doesn't look the same for everyone, but I know for me, that's just like one piece that is just so much easier when I'm able to work from home. And yeah, I think, again, say it a hundred times, like the flexibility. And you talked about, like that, um know, trusting your employees, you know, yeah.

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I'm sure there are people out there who are going to take advantage of the flexibility. That's just the nature of, you know, the range of human experience out there, right? But the benefit that I'm getting from my situation is so much of a benefit for me that I think it's worth the risk as an organization to take that. Totally agree. And I'm sorry, just one other point I want to make too, because there are some businesses and organizations who, you know, they aren't

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in the position to have fully remote workers. And that's okay. But I think it comes back to that flexibility that you mentioned, like work with that person. Like, it's their doctor's appointment that they need to go to that, you know, maybe it's easier and more accessible for them to work from home that day so that they can get there. um Or, you know, maybe it's they're taking their child to a certain appointment. So it's, know,

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being an employer of support, you don't have to say, fine, fully remote, and this is gonna be a pain. It doesn't need to be that way. It really is, it's just working one-on-one. um Every situation is different. Everyone is going through something different and needs different support. it really is, just comes back to that flexibility. it is, it's that assumption of this is a lot of work. This is gonna be expensive and it's hard work.

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It is hard work, and that's okay. em The point is that if you want

really great employees and you want a diverse pool of people working for you and creating and giving you more perspectives and adding value, then you need to put in the hard work because it pays off. It's valuable work. Absolutely.

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Is there anything else you'd like to say? I'm sure there's a lot about this topic of these, we're calling them disability hacks, but just this idea of what are some of the ways that workplaces and employers can create that culture of inclusion? Anything you want to say to close out? I do. I want to capitalize on what Nikki just said.

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is representation. And I know that's a big long-term thing, but it's like a superpower. Like once you get people with disabilities, with diverse backgrounds into your organization, then you're basically stacking the deck in your favor, right? Because if I'm an employee with a disability, I'm going to embed that perspective in my work, right? And that makes it easier for whoever we're doing our work for, like in my case, for the public.

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um in your case for like the clients, like you've got that perspective already embedded and that just helps the organization to be more inclusive in terms of culture, in terms of the services you provide and you're becoming representative of the people in your community, right? So the more I think we can, you know, put these like HR policies and just these practices in place to attract people with diverse backgrounds.

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the better we're gonna be able to provide an accessible and inclusive workplace and whatever service we're providing or product or whatever it is as a business or organization is just gonna automatically be more likely to have that stuff embedded into whatever we provide, right? So it's just like such, I would say it's like a super hack to just like have people already in the organization, right? The super hack, yeah. And hopefully also at senior.

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leadership levels and not at, you know, always the entry level or middle manager uh position. And I think that's the powerful piece when leadership is representative and it, you know, both comes like the change is top down, but also bottom up. And that's where I think the culture can really kind of, that's another super hack where it starts to really become embedded.

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with senior leadership. So curious, you know, at Stuart McKelvey, m

what does that paint the picture for us of like, um do you see representation in senior leadership? I would say so. um You know, I think that our leadership is very supportive and, you know, I think that they've made the investment in making sure that, you know, first of all, that we have a team of

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um making of HR representatives that it's our initiative. Like it's our initiative, it's my goal for my team to be doing whatever we can to really be creating inclusive environments. And um you know, it is a lot of work, but it's really rewarding work. I've seen representation and how that makes our community at Stuart McKelvey just so much better. um

39:09

you know, working with people with uh physical disabilities or invisible disabilities has really, I can see how it's impacting all of us and it's making us better workers and better people. um And yeah, just, it's one of the things that I really enjoy about my job. em And it's something that we're continuing to invest in and keeping at the forefront. um You know, we,

39:39

We've been doing a lot of training on neurodiversity lately and in psychological safety and one of the organizations that I'm going to plug here is TeamWorks and you know, I think working with them and and I really encourage employers to work with organizations organizations such as TeamWorks because you know, we've had such great success with bringing people in and working with them Yeah, there's just there's so many ways to really

40:07

know, create these spaces. I think that for maybe some organizations or employers who are just starting out, I think there's gonna be hesitations and maybe some nerves about getting it wrong and making mistakes. But that's okay. Like, you're, you know, you're as an employer, you might not be an expert in what you need to be doing, but you do have a responsibility um to be accommodating and, you know.

40:35

make sure that your workforce is feeling supported. And there are resources out there that you can tap into. because, you know, I get that there's hesitation that you're gonna slip up. But mistakes happen. And what matters is that you're taking the steps forward. Yeah, and maybe learning from some of those mistakes. I love that at the beginning, you talked about the idea of you don't have to know all the answers, but you have to have that sort of

41:03

compassionate inquiry to be able to not make assumptions and ask what people need. And so even if that's one thing that people take away kind of from this episode, you don't, yes, of course we're talking about little changes to Ellen's term super hacks, so great. And if you took one thing away, it's, you know, don't make assumptions and ask what people need in a way that is compassionate. yeah. uh

41:31

Well, I want to thank you both. It's great to have these different perspectives from, you know, a private business to someone living with low vision and also working with, you know, municipalities that are rural as well as towns. So just really appreciate your openness and sharing your experiences from your workplaces. Thanks so much. you. Thanks for tuning in. You can learn more at our website, CChangePolab.com.

42:01

That's S-E-A-C-H-A-N-G-E-C-O-L-A-B dot com. I hope you join us for our next conversation.