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Welcome, Jeff, em over Mars. So excited to have a conversation with you today about accessible retention and career development. Of course, this is a really big issue knowing that many people with disabilities don't have the opportunities always to advance and to develop their careers. So I would love to give you a chance just to introduce yourself. Who are you? Where are you coming from in your work?

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life. Thanks, Corey. um My name is Jeff Overmars. I use the he-him pronouns. I'm coming at you from Dartmouth, which is in Chibokto, Halifax in Big Moggy. I work in the public service in HAV for coming on 20 years. I started my education in journalism and found myself on the FLAC side or the PR side of work. And so I've found myself

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starting in government and communications and marketing and branding, and then have been at the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission for the past 12 years. That's my day job. I've been a co-chair of the Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network, which is an internal to government employee network that supports employees with disabilities and works on issues of importance to those folks. have done other

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work related to this uh topic. I was a member of the Employment Standard Development Committee for the province of Nova Scotia under the Accessibility Advisory Board. I'm also a member of the Senior Leadership Council, which is ostensibly like the board of the CNIB for Nova Scotia. I have two kids and yeah, happy to be here and to chat with you. So you're not busy at all, Oh my goodness, it's fun. And all those various roles and hats, wow, okay.

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So when we're talking about accessible retention and career development, give me your sense of like, what are we talking about there? What are we covering when we're talking about this topic? Oh my goodness, I think it's everything. It's everything beyond the signing of the agreement or the hiring of the individual. I think a lot of people think that the job is over once you've identified.

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the candidate and sort of brought them on board as the newest member of your team. But the truth is that the real work begins, I think, often. Unfortunately, it begins when the employee enters the workplace or kind of starts their work. A lot of times, the thought isn't necessarily put into the process of onboarding individuals to include what it is they're going to need out of the gate to succeed. And I think that the truth of that really comes out.

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when you begin working together as a member of a team and you start to see where the systems that we have in place, the ways of working that we have just taken for granted, don't necessarily work for everybody. ensuring that employees, once they enter uh workplace, are supported in order to succeed at what it is they're doing. think that this whole topic is about support and ensuring that...

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you're giving the employees that you're welcoming to your team, the tools that they need to do the job that you've hired them to do. Yeah, absolutely. I know that uh there are a number of barriers to accessible retention and career development. you talk about it, it's kind of like after the hiring, it's kind of everything that comes next, um including

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even things like exit interviews to learn from people who are leaving, kind of why they're leaving and what an employer could have done better. And some of those barriers might be physical workplace, they might be lack of uh an accommodation plan or inadequate training, even as we know a lot of attitudinal barriers around... uh

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disability and around people disclosing maybe what some of their uh needs at work might be. Are there other em barriers that you've um experienced or witnessed in your time in the public service around retention and career development? Yeah, and I think, well, my experience has predominantly been in the public service. think a lot of the issues that folks are encountering

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are similar to those that you'd experience in the private sector or the NGO or not-for-profit sector. It's, think, oftentimes about managers and supervisors and sort of the style of management or supervision that any individual in those positions bring to their work. um Some of the big deal barriers that you've mentioned there, know, attitudinal being

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One of them, many people don't know what they don't know and they know what they've seen managers ahead of them do and they've absorbed and sort of learned through watching and being managed, you know, how it is they're going to manage people when they become managers. And I think um the idea of communication is central, I think, to a successful relationship between employees and supervisors and managers and...

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And sometimes too much is taken for granted. um That you think of your

team in homogeneous terms and that one individual member of the team needs is the same as what another individual member of the team needs. I've seen just assumptions being made about behavior. uh People reading sort of certain um ways of working or ways of communicating as being somehow, you know, off or not necessarily meeting the standard or the mark. um

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you preferences for folks, you know, preferring to have their door closed, for example, because it might mean that it's giving them a quiet environment within which to focus, you know, that could be a simple matter of somebody really needing that silence and that space to do their work. And it's not intended to be a sign that they're not, you know, open door policy for, you know, open to communicate or maybe they're not.

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walking around and chatting as much in the hallways, you know, between tasks or between meetings because they, they, they give themselves a rigid schedule because by, you know, going from one meeting to the other, allows them maybe the extra few minutes that they need to do a little bit of prep work or to sort of review materials so that they have what they need to go into a discussion. So it's just, yeah, communicating with your employees to ensure that you understand where they're coming from and just being human.

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together, think, is often a very simple thing that is lacking in the workplace relationships when it comes to of employee supervisor relationships. Yeah, one of the best, uh I guess, pieces of advice I've heard, and this comes from someone I think who also worked in the public sector, they talked about being a manager and uh asking folks that, you know, they hired uh

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What helps you thrive? Like what will help you succeed in the work environment? So again, I love that kind of question. Very proactive, not focused on barriers or needs. All about what is like individually what will help you thrive in this work environment. sometimes it's like the simplest approaches or questions.

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Yeah, and I think that's the thing is not necessarily treating it as a disability or accessibility specific sort of subject to broach with any individual. think if a team or a manager is welcoming and sort of sets out from the outset to sort of what do you need to succeed in this environment and do the job to the best of your abilities? Here are the tasks that we've sort of brought you on to attend to, you know, like what can I do as a manager to really support you?

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We've learned a lot in my work over many years. Just some great oh kind of approaches and practices around just restorative and relational approaches to management and working together as teams. And there's an interesting sort of uh window or box. I'm not sure if you're familiar with it, but if somebody was to Google like restorative window, you'd probably get this as one of the top graphic results. But it's a square that's broken into four

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quadrants and Corey you're probably familiar with it. So feel free to sort of correct me if I'm a stray at all when I discuss this, but there's this notion of doing things with people rather than doing things to or for people and the fourth sort of quadrant is just not doing anything at all. So there's these four sort of quadrants where it's like the accountability and sort of the expectations on the...

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the y-axis, the vertical axis, and then there's the degree of support that you're giving any individual uh at any one time on the x-axis or the horizontal axis. There's this quadrant of the sweet spot where you've got high accountability and high support. It's in this box where you're doing things with people and it really requires that constant relationship to be going on where you're not making assumptions and doing things for individuals because you think that they...

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uh, don't have the capacity to do it. You're not doing things, uh, to people, you know, because you're taking control and you're not really supporting them and what they need. And you're also just not being inactive and letting things just sort of fudge along and, and, and not go well. And, and, know, I really love this because it's such a simple concept of just sort of doing things with people and sort of having that high expectation, being very clear about what it is.

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you expect from people that you're working with and then also just being there to offer them support on a regular basis and just checking in to make sure that they have what they need and you're getting what you need out of the relationship. That's really great. I'm actually not familiar with that model at all. So as you describe it, I think, oh, wow, I need to look at that. then uh yesterday I was actually uh delivering a session, a training session around accessible uh

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career development and retention. And someone shared a story with me. They're a wheelchair user. And the employer was like, okay, great, we're gonna give you accommodation. We're gonna bring in this OTs, so this occupational therapist, and have them come and look at your

workstation. the uh employee in the wheelchair said the OTs, the therapist didn't...

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didn't ask them any questions, completely made assumptions about what they needed in their workspace and didn't involve them even in the conversation and just made assumptions about what they needed and left them with a workspace that didn't really work for them. So, waste of time, money, resources, and still that person was left with ah not the things that they needed to thrive.

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And so I imagine if they were using that quadrant, it would have been like, oh, okay, no, let's work together with this person. And it seems so simple. And I was sort of surprised to hear the story thinking, well, of course people would do it that way. Have you heard kind of stories like this in the work that you do? Oh yeah. And it's just, it's so dehumanizing to be sort of the subject.

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of a process. You're not engaging in it. Rather, you're a factor. You're kind of sitting there. You might as well be a piece of furniture. And I think that it assumes a lot of things. Number one, the physical environment is going to be the only sort of area where barriers are going to be encountered. But also, what works for one person is not necessarily what works best for anyone else. I think that there's...

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out of the box sort of things off the shelf. You you think you're going to be able to just assemble this and set it up and bang, bang, boom, you know, the wheelchair user's good to go, you know, no further engagement required. And I think that by having that conversation at the outset means that you're not going to find yourself a week, a couple of weeks, month, six months later, sort of realizing, oh, wow, you know, you're experiencing pain or discomfort or, know, you've been working sort of with this uh

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kind of not satisfactory solution for this long because we didn't really follow up with you or, you know, we didn't really chat with you at the time to validate that what it is we're suggesting for you is what you need to actually do your job effectively. Yeah, I think it's a big enough deal where people are maybe just trying to be helpful, but it ends up backfiring a little bit.

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Yeah, absolutely. So I know this, like, you know, the topic we're talking about really spans, as you said, from the moment someone's hired, things like onboarding, ah then you have, you know, how beyond

onboarding, how are employees being trained in general? And is that training accessible? Professional development opportunities? ah What are leadership doing, um you know, as you talked about, if leadership kind of isn't engaged?

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um workplace accessibility and accommodation. So that story that we've just been talking about, that was an instance where someone did need an accommodation, you know, the process didn't work for them, but is that available, right? So there's so many layers to accessible retention and career development. And as you said, these are beyond accessibility. Everyone's journey of employment includes these things. um

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from onboarding to training to leadership to performance management um and things like mentorship. And you've talked about um NSDEN, so the Nova Scotia Disability Employees Network. Can you share a little bit more about that network and the role that um it plays in terms of supporting some of the members of that group? Yeah, absolutely. And so I should say,

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a past co-chair, I've uh passed the hat on. so during my time and the network continues to thrive and it's a very important resource for employees. And I think it's as much about uh being available to the membership as it is advocating and educating on topics that are of importance to employees. So it's trying to effect culture change by ensuring that the allies in the workplace and the non-disabled employees.

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are aware of some of the issues so that the burden isn't necessarily always put on the individual employee with a disability to be the sole advocate for themselves. I think as we endeavor to try and raise awareness, you're really trying to ensure that allies and others are able to kind of move the bar a little bit and advance the issues and address the issues so that, and this is the same across so many equity seeking, equity deserving.

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historically underserved communities is that it's folks with the lived experience and the barriers that are often the ones needing to really push to have the barriers addressed. so one of the major focuses of the NSDN network was to raise awareness, engage others in conversation, ensure that the information that employees with disabilities needed

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was available and easy to access and that the supports that were

available were clear and again, sort of easy to find that the right people to talk to for any given thing, be it sort of learning about accommodations, understanding what tools are out there, but also addressing that attitude piece and really seeing that there's a lot of work happening in.

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know, large workplaces like the public service and just making sure that, you know, folks across all different departments and offices are able to access, you know, the educational resources and the best practices and the guides for, you know, using uh accessible documents. You know, if you're creating documents in your workplace, you know, they may end up being distributed across multiple workplaces and departments. So when you're doing that, you know, bear in mind that there should be a standard that you're adhering to when you're

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creating electronic documents so that when you're sending them along and a blind or visually impaired person like myself opens that document and tries to read it with a screen reader, that I'm able to do that effectively and that it's not creating a barrier for me. So it's just trying to instill best practices and a lot of it was collaborating using the example of NSDN. was really connecting in with some of the folks whose jobs it is to sort of move these

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issues and these topics along. So the Public Service Commission was a really important partner and a relationship builder uh as was the accessibility directorate being a really great office and an important resource, both internal the government and externally. So connecting the dots was a big part for NSDN to just keeping the lines of communication open and developing those Q &A's, frequently asked questions. if folks are kind of looking for stuff that we've already, you know,

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been asked about and found and know where to point people to. Kind of making that clear and easy, creating a resource hub within government so that consolidating disparate information that might be tucked away in various SharePoint sites, within a, you can only imagine how many SharePoint pages there are within a big um organization like that. And so just helping to create clear spots where people can go to get their questions answered.

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So really that level of internal support, networking, sharing of information, but then externally more of the advocacy and the learning and sharing resources. And of course, NSDEN is one example of an employee resource group within the public sector, but even that could be across other organizations as well. And how would you say

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What has been, I guess, your experience of retention and career development? You just named yourself as someone um with low vision and have there been barriers in your own journey uh in career development and retention? Yeah, for sure. I've run into just some closed-minded uh barriers.

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where folks have kind of been, this is the way we do things. typically we scan our emails and send them around for response for correspondence. I'm thinking back a decade ago, and then send me sort of inquiring to say, well, you know, that doesn't work for me. Is it possible that you just send me the original document as it was created, for example, and then I can just read that with a screen reader and then be an, no, we'll just find somebody else to do it. uh

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And so discouragements like that are a thing. again, not pointing fingers or naming any individuals. These are just kind of examples of things that I've encountered. More recently, I think that coming out of the pandemic has, from the NSDEM perspective, there were some examples that came to our attention by way of return to office mandates, just as one sort of kind of rogue.

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road sign on the map that, know, things are kind of backsliding a little bit. There was this move during the pandemic, of course, to kind of keep the public service working and ensuring that employees were able to continue to do their job. It really benefited employees with disabilities profoundly. And I would say it even created opportunities for folks to join the public service during that time that might have otherwise not had that opportunity due to uh

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you know, mobility issues, access to accessible transportation, you know, the sort of economic resources you'd need to own a car and sort of pay for parking. You know, there are just so many factors that kind of impact the ability for folks to do their job, to get a job and to sort of uh do well at their job. when the world moved to a remote workplace, there was just this opportunity that was presented without any choosing to sort of, you know,

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liberate and remove some pretty significant barriers for a large number of people. And there were, there's periods of time where this return to office mandate, is unfortunately not necessarily within the public service, but more broadly speaking has been categorized as like a return to work mandates. This sort of framing it as, you know, people have been off work, working remotely, whatever that means, you

know, and now we're getting them back into the offices and they're going to be returning to work.

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And so when return to office mandates are being enforced, and this is happening federally, this is happening in so many places, but you're really seeing people with disabilities who were able to work effectively and do their job really well, suddenly being told that they need now to sort of return to work. And, know, that means return to an office. And it will mean that what was necessarily not needing to be a formalized accommodation,

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Rather, was just a workplace flexibility thing is now suddenly being medicalized and being turned into, this is something that we need to go through a formal process for. And if you don't meet certain criteria, then we're not going to be able to approve this particular accommodation. And I want to be clear, too, I'm not targeting the provincial public service, and I don't want this to be about this workplace necessarily. But I do want to just highlight that as being an area where I've seen people.

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leave work and make decisions to sort of, you know, this isn't for me anymore. And I think it's really unfortunate. And this goes back to the idea that, you know, recruiting and hiring diverse people is the first step. And then all the work that goes into understanding what people need to actually succeed in the job, that's the retention piece. And that's the insurance that people are succeeding piece. It's just sort of being mindful of when decisions are being made to change, you

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ways of doing things, the impact that it has on people can be very significant for significant reasons beyond those that you may be thinking about when you're making those decisions. I hope that makes sense. and we know that flexibility is one of those policy or process decisions or practices that really impacts a wide variety of people, whether you identify as someone with a disability or not. Perhaps you're a caregiver.

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whether that's to children or an elderly parent, for example, and that flexibility allows you to fulfill those caregiving roles. So you don't have a disability, but you have other things happening in your life where flexibility really that allows you to, and it doesn't mean you're doing less work, right? I work a few days in an office and a few days at home and there are...

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benefits and, you know, minuses to each situation, but I do, overall, I do get more done at home. Mostly because I'm not engaging in some of those more informal conversations, which are really important to, you know, workplace culture and team building, but aren't sort of necessary, you know, five days a week in a workplace. So I definitely agree with you there. And we know that flexibility is one of those top

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things that really are ways of working that really meets the needs of a lot of people. um Yeah, like another one is the tools that you need to do your job, for example. Like an employee that's working with a case management system in one office, for example. They may start a job and realize that this case management system is working for me great. I'm able to use my keyboard versus a mouse because this is

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how I interact with my computer best. It's not necessarily, I'm not a point and click person because maybe I've got limitation in my mobility, but this particular content manager, case management system that I'm using, I'm able to navigate effectively with my keyboard. Maybe I've had to work with IT to sort of have them update uh the program a little bit so that it is more accessible to me. But then as we talk about sort of retention and advancement.

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If you're doing really well in your job and then you apply for a job somewhere else, maybe it's a step up, maybe it's a lateral move, but it's into a different area or unit of your company and all of a sudden you're working with a different case management system or a different program. The fact that software and tools that are being deployed within any business...

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Accessibility is not necessarily one of the criteria that when you're doing your procurement, it's not necessarily on the radar for folks. they might be procuring tools and software because it suits the need as far as the average employee is concerned. But then you've got folks coming in that may have different accessibility needs. it goes into that like the workplace flexibility, it extends into sort of the procurement and the tools that you're using.

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in your job, there's so many different factors that are really at play there. Yeah, and I know we did another episode um talking about some sort of, you know, accessibility hacks at work. And while of course the idea isn't that they're all hacks, but what are some things that really make a difference? And one of the ones I know um that Stuart McKelvey shared was that, for example, they offer benefits from day one.

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So not having to wait sort of a trial period of three months, for example. So something like that. Well, yes, it is part of the hiring process, like then easily builds into that retention piece because I think it may be that the idea of having, you know, uh benefits is an essential. It's not sort of an add-on or a nice to have. It's a need to have, for example. Are there other...

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examples that you can think of that are things that really make like flexibility, like, you know, having benefits from day one that that would impact kind of across nice to have. Yeah, I think performance planning and development is such an important thing to have in place within any workplace. I think that it might often be seen as a bit

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of drudgery when it comes to just the process of going through it on a regular basis. But I think it's critical um for so many reasons. For ensuring that the work that you're doing as part of a team is contributing to the overall mandate of the organization. Really articulating what your place is, how the work that you're doing is contributing to the bigger picture. I think that that's just really important for morale and for feeling part of a team. But it also creates really

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clear milestones that are articulated, you know, ideally in conversation between an employee and their supervisor, you know, so that annually or however frequently these conversations are had, there's a point in time where you're looking back at the year that's just been completed and sort of checking it against some goals that might have been set at the beginning of that year and determining whether or not you've achieved the goals that were set out together for you.

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And if not, you know, what was it that was missing perhaps that helped you that could have helped you to sort of get over the finish line or, you know, do better. And then the opportunity to look forward to the coming year and identify, know, and what are the areas of focus on my plate for this year? You know, what are the goals that are being set out for me to achieve? then on the same

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Same conversation, the same page, what supports do you need to do this? Is there some professional development training that you need? Are there specific tools that you need? And this is not necessarily an accommodation conversation, but it also provides an opportunity for an employee with a disability to touch upon how the accommodations that are in place for them are working. I'm a big advocate of using a

performance planning and development schedule.

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as a check-in time to determine how accommodations are going. think it takes it away from being like a big to-do and rather is just rolled up in a conversation that should be being had by employees of all kinds within an organization. It needn't be that something specifically disability-focused, but it creates a container wherein you and your supervisor can have discussions around how we're going to work together to achieve the overall goals of the organization for the year.

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and what is it that you need and what can I provide as support? It's just a structure. And I think it's a structure that too often might get neglected because it's not seen as a priority. The work is the priority, which is true. But then in order to achieve the work, having taken that time on a regular basis to have a conversation about performance planning and development, it just makes it that much easier for you to have a clear picture and a common understanding.

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about what it is you're setting out to do together. Yeah, and I think that is such a huge part of uh retention and career development, right? Both from the perspective that you talked about of knowing how your job contributes to that larger vision and goals, but also having a system to check in, to give feedback. um And the key part being that leadership as well needs those performance management.

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piece is really built in to make sure that again the policies the processes the things that they're committed to when it comes to accessibility and inclusion are also happening uh and I and I think the big Assumption that sometimes people make is oh, okay We hired this person they told us at the beginning what they need to thrive and then two or three years later It's like no no wait. We accommodated them when they first came

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But as we know, needs change over time, right? We are all only, if we are, we are all only temporarily able-bodied and I think needs change over time, what we need to thrive and succeed change over time. As someone who was fairly recently diagnosed as a 49-year-old with ADHD,

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it certainly brought to my attention how my workplaces over the years didn't really accommodate me, but in part that was because I didn't know I even needed that accommodation. And so a lot of things might come to light over time and through that whole employment journey. So having that regular checkpoint touch base, I think is so key and to

build that as kind of an ongoing learning.

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Yeah, and I think that it will evolve. You have those first kind of years of performance planning, but then you get into a good groove and you get to know each other better through that process as well. I think it is a really good container and a good tool to use in a workplace. um Yeah. Are there any examples you can think of, Jeff, where uh accessibility and inclusive

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culture that was created really positively impacted retention or career development, like something that changed more big picture work culture. Any examples you can think of there? Like interrupting bias, for example, as something that was introduced into a workplace and how ableist terms may be used and then how we've developed a tool. I've been witness to a tool being introduced. Is that something? That's a great example.

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Yeah, absolutely. Give me a beat. So, yeah, so why don't we back up and we'll start again. And this is my last question, just so you know, I won't put you on the hot seat anymore. Jeff, if there's an example that you can think of where accessibility and inclusive culture change within an organization really positively impacted retention or career development.

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Yeah, thanks, Kurt. This is a great question. And it makes me think of em a tool, sort of a process or a practice that was introduced in a workplace that I've been a part of em to help interrupt bias, which is something that we all talk about. And we understand that there's conscious bias and there's unconscious bias. And there's language that we use on the day to day that we've picked up along the way. We've kind of used as just shorthand for something, or it's just part of our vernacular. But there's so many.

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Terms and phrases out there, for example, that carry a lot uh of weight and lot of meaning in different ways for different audiences, depending upon your identity and your upbringing and your experiences in life. so they're, uh from my perspective, for example, when I hear terms like, you oh, you know, they're just blind to the facts, you know, like they're just, they're just deaf to what it is I'm trying to say, you know, like terms like that that are used as just shorthand for.

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being stupid or misunderstanding or not getting it. um I've been part of conversations where words like that have been flagged or called out

in various ways where it ended up resulting in kind of like hurt feelings, where people were feeling like, uh I really am so sorry. And then it becomes this kind of exercise of shaming and people feeling bad about saying something that offended somebody. But I think that, as I said, there are

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conscious and conscious biases and it shows up in all sorts of different ways. And so I've been part of a process where this purple flag process, this purple flag tool, which I've read about on your website as well. So I know you know about it, but it's a great one where I think it's a human resources consultancy in the States called Just Work. You can Google it. There's a Ted talk about it. It's like three minutes long, but it conveys this really simple process where we're going to come to an agreed upon

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way of interrupting bias in our workplace so that folks don't feel shamed, they don't feel, you know, targeted because, you know, somebody has raised a hand and said, you know, what you said kind of hit me because of this. This simple tool of sort of identifying a phrase like saying purple flag or even having like a physical purple flag to wave if you're sitting in a meeting room as a means of just sort of

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stopping the play on the field and just saying, know, hey, purple flag, you know, did you know that that term is kind of offensive because it refers to, you know, blindness as being ignorant when in fact you're just unaware of something and that's not necessarily due to you being blind because you're not, you know, or there are so many other terms if folks can look up. uh

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practice in introducing a process that everybody sort of understood as being like, okay, this is going to be something cool we're going to try in our office to make it not a shameful act to have, you know, been called in for, you know, saying something they didn't know means something else or was offensive. was just creating a shared language and an agreed upon process that, you know, if you get purple flagged or if there's a purple flag thrown up in a discussion, it doesn't mean that you're a bad person.

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It just means that we're identifying some language that we use that we don't necessarily know the full extent of its meaning or how it's going to land with people. I think just being sensitive to different culture and community as you bring diversity together, you're going to find that um there's a lot of difference in the perspectives that are there in the room. And I think that's the part around

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You bring people into a workplace and you assume that the work is done. You know, if you're not being attentive to how the work is going and how people are doing in an ongoing way, in an ongoing basis, then you are going to find people quietly quitting or people moving on to other places because they find the workplace that they're in isn't really the best and safest place for them. And so this purple flag tool is just one simple thing that I think created

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in awareness and appreciation for the fact that, know, 15 second, 20 second conversations about language can sometimes make a big difference and again, kind of help chip away at some of those unconscious and conscious biases that exist in any environment. So that's like one really simple tool that I think anybody can Google and sort of go to their offices and a uh hot tip for anybody in the Maritimes or in Nova Scotia is that

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Prescott Group in Halifax, uh Nova Scotia have made some purple flags and know how to do it really well. So if you're looking for purple flags for your office, you can just call up Prescott Group. I love that hot tip. And Jeff, I think this is such a great example. So imagine if, so in one world that some of that language is going sort of unaddressed and maybe you're someone who is, you know, represents that.

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that identity or that community and then that's causing you to feel unsafe at work. So you, as you say, you quietly leave. On the flip side, if you're using that tool, the Purple Flag Moment, and it's a process that's named as really the group learning and unlearning. So as you said, it's not about individually shaming someone for using a term that might be offensive, but it's about, oh, how is our language changing and what is important for us to know about this? m

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it takes away the stigma, it takes away the shame. And then you think about allows that person who may have previously felt the impact of that to say, oh, this is actually a place where we can talk about those things really openly, share them. And I, as someone with that identity, doesn't have to do all of the kind of education around this.

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So I love that example because it's a fairly, as you say, it can be fairly simple to include in any kind of workplace, in any sector. And yeah, so thank you for bringing that into the conversation. I wanna thank you so much for this conversation today. It's been wide ranging from, you know, everything from.

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from employee resource groups to purple flags to health benefits to, we talked about even needing to do really good job exits uh to really understand as opposed to letting people leave quietly, to really understand why they're leaving and if there are things that could be improved. And in particular, your examples around performance management and kind of building that in in an ongoing way.

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really that crosses uh so many sectors and workplaces. So thank you, Jeff, for bringing all of that to this conversation. No, for sure. I really appreciated the opportunity to be here, Corey, and to have opportunity to chat with you. I always enjoy it, and I look forward to hearing the rest of the season. really excited. Great. Thanks so much, Jeff. So when we talk, Jeff, about

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career retention and advancement, we are talking about a whole continuum of things, right? So from accommodation policies that need to be shared and implemented and evaluated to leadership, mentorship, performance management. It's like, it's not one thing when we talk about career retention. So can you share a little bit more about in particular that first thing I talked about, accommodation?

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policies and how accommodations are implemented. Yeah, thanks, Corey. I agree. It's a whole suite and a continuum and an ongoing process after you've brought on the employee and kind of fostering that relationship. the benefit of having a formalized accommodation process is that it's not done in an ad hoc manner. It's not left up to the whim of the individual supervisor or manager. think that uh folks have different styles.

42:13

of managing employees, you know, that they've learned in different ways throughout their careers. A lot of managers come into manager and supervisor roles, not necessarily because they're particularly good at dealing with people. It's because they're good at their job. And I think when you come into a management role, there's a whole different skill set that's required. that training piece for managers, the performance planning and development, and having a formalized accommodation policy to ensure that

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every individual in an organization understands what the process is. This makes it easy for the managers to sort of be consistent. It makes very clear what the expectations of the employee are. It also makes clear what the obligations and responsibilities of all people involved in the conversation are. I think that a lot of times um there's

concern that, you know, it's the manager's responsibility to sort of

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know what an employee needs for an accommodation. It's really important that employees themselves are able to articulate what it is they need and to be able to have that conversation with their manager. just that consistency, that clarity, the not leaving it up to chance. em And it makes it as well really important for other employees who don't necessarily require an accommodation so that folks don't kind of have this mindset of like, oh, you know,

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this person gets that and I don't get that. Like what is it that is deserving of them to get special equipment or special treatment? think that having a formalized process to go through really removes a lot of the subjectivity from what can sometimes be uh unclear for folks historically. And so I think the Employment Standard Development Committee, for example, included within its recommendations for regulations, you know, that there would be some expectation that employers of certain sizes would have

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accommodation policies. And I think it's it's necessary to ensure that folks are clear. What are the responsibilities? What are the obligations? And what are the roles that folks play? And it also kind of makes it so that if folks move from one role in an organization to another role in an organization, they don't have to go through that process again, because they're working with a new manager. It's something that will follow the employee, hopefully, through their career as they advance in an organization.

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Yeah, absolutely. And I think what you talk about is the formalized policy. And then as we know, it's also about implementing that policy. It's about evaluating and getting feedback on that policy. yeah, I think that's really great, Jeff, as we think about that suite of approaches, tools, and policies around accessible career retention uh and advancement that accommodation policy is really a foundational aspect of that.