



Centre for Inclusive Employment & Disability Employment Australia Lunch & Learn Session | Wednesday, 12 November 2025

Engaged to empower: Building employer relationships that last

Speakers: Amy Whalley & Nicolas Hoskins, Australian Disability Network

Host: Sally Karandrews

SALLY KARANDREWS: Hi everyone and welcome to this week's Lunch and Learn. I'd like to begin today by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land that each of us are joining from. For me that's the Darkinjung people and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. My name is Sally and I am the IEA policy manager here at Disability Employment Australia. I'll be your host for today's Lunch and Learn session. If you would like to turn on the live captions, Hanif will post the instructions and the link for those in the chat, and just a reminder that today's session will also be recorded, so please keep that in mind. These Lunch and Learn sessions are a partnership between Disability Employment Australia and the Centre for Inclusive Employment, and they aim to provide you with practical and real world advice and ideas that you can take with you as you continue delivering your employment services under this new IEA contract. Today's topic is Engage to empower, building employer relationships. We are joined by Amy Whalley who is the CEO and Nic Hoskins who is the relationship manager at Australian Disability Network. Both Amy and Nic come to us with wide-ranging experience in building relationships, especially relationships that resolve around employment, and they are here today to share their experiences and advice and share that with us as well as some resources and some other take-aways as well. There will be plenty of time to ask questions of both Nic and Amy, so if you do have questions, please pop them in the chat and we'll come to those at the end. A copy of today's presentation, any resources and the recording will be shared with you after the end of the presentation. So I'll now hand over to Amy and Nic. Thank you.

AMY WHALLEY: Thank you very much Sally. Thank you to DEA for inviting us to be part of this Lunch and Learn series, it is a very exciting time for the sector and I appreciate Australian Disability Network being invited. My name is Amy Whalley, as Sally mentioned I am the CEO of Australian Disability Network. I recently rejoined the organisation on the 1st of September having had a few years out of the business and previously working in the organisation for 10 years before that. I am really excited that we have the opportunity to share some of our experiences with working with employers on how they build disability confidence, and particularly aimed to provide you with some examples that you can use in your day-to-day work. So I'll be co-presenting this session with my colleague, Nic, and Nic is a relationship manager who works closely with a number of our members across the Australian Disability Network.

So before we get into the content I would too also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land in which we meet today and acknowledge their connection to land, sea and community. I am on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and I pay my respects to the people, the culture and the Elders of the Indigenous communities, both past and present.

As Sally mentioned the objective of our session today, Nic and I are going to tag team the presentation and if you like use a fireside chat approach to be able to share some of the examples from Australian Disability Network with how we engage with employers, examples of how to build meaningful relationships with employers and effective engagement and what that looks like in practice. Our goal is to provide you with some practical tips that you can use, as I say in your day-to-day work with the ambition of making sure that you can create mutual benefit and mutual success for your participants and for the employers that you engage with.

As Sally said there will also be time for questions at the end, so please feel free to start scribbling those questions that we can answer at the end of our presentation.

So to start off with I wanted to share a little bit more about Australian Disability Network which throughout the presentation I will use the shorter name of AusDN just for speed. The Australian Disability Network is a National not-for-

profit organisation that works in partnership with our member organisations who are generally large, private and public organisations, including not-for-profits with a shared vision of creating a disability confident Australia. We are very much driven by the belief that business is the mechanism for systemic change, particularly advancing the inclusion of people with disability, both as employees, but also as customers and we have done so for the last 25 years. We have over 440 organisations as part of our network, and we work closely with our members to support them to have the right behaviours, right attitudes, the right systems and knowledge in place to welcome and include people with disability across the whole of their business. The approach that we take and the way that we work has been the case since the organisation was founded by the previous CEO Suzanne Colbert, and I want to make sure that we collaborate and build strong relationships for change. We influence change by building solutions for business and with business. It is through the investment of business through their time and resources, combined with the insights and experience of people with disability that our programs and solutions have been created. Our work is about creating a safe space for employers to ask questions and to seek solutions as it relates to disability inclusion in their business, while also providing an environment that challenges and pushes organisations to do more. We do this also by being the go-to, if you like, on disability inclusion and business. The other aspect of our work is providing an opportunity of the voice of business, so the voice of our members to be shared as it relates to any policy risk form that may impact them. An example of that would be sort of live at the moment is that we are seeking the responses and feedback from our members as it relates to the proposed changes to the Disability Discrimination Act. We want to make sure that their experience is also heard. So all of the work that we do is with the intention of advancing disability inclusion, advancing the employment of people with disability, advancing the participation, choice and access that people with disability have across all of our community.

So to demonstrate this further I am going to show you a couple of examples or share some examples of the solutions that we have created with our members over the years. I do this again to demonstrate the opportunity that we have when we are working with employers, by identifying gaps and finding solutions that work for mutual benefit. So the first one that I wanted to share with you is around our internship program, which some of you may know formerly known as the Stepping Into Program. This was developed in 2005, it was an internship program specifically for university people with disability. Back in 2005 a number of our members, specifically law firms have identified a gap in the

number of students with disability joining their graduate program. So we work together collaboratively with students with disability, the employers and ourselves to create what is now our internship program and has delivered over 2,700 internships over the 20 years. Another example is our Career Mentoring Program, some of you may know it as PACE. This was developed in 2013 again developed with our members, providing an opportunity to build the disability confidence of employees within our member network, but also providing a mentoring opportunity for jobseekers with disability. We prepare between 300 to 400 mentoring opportunities each year and it has grown from strength to strength.

The next one I wanted to share was Employing 100 Project, as well as our Career Pathway Pilot. These are two examples where we receive Government funding to take a tailored approach specifically on the employment of people with disability. Employing 100 wrapped up last year. You may be able to tell from the name, Employing 100 the objective was to secure 100 roles for people with disability across four organisations that took part, which was the McDonald's, CSL, Marriott and Salvation Army. We managed to achieve 237 placements through that project, and we worked closely with some of the organisations that's probably on the call today as well.

The Career Pathways Pilot Program was an opportunity where rather than focusing on bringing in talents, disabled talents, it was around looking at career pathways, so again we worked with four organisations from our network to look at how we can ensure that people with disability have the same opportunities to progress their careers and move up and across within an organisation. The next two that I wanted to give you a little bit more information on are Disability Confident Recruiter Program and our Access and Inclusion Index. These are examples of tools and programs that can support an organisation to understand where they are at on their journey to disability confidence. Often when working with employers we know what can be getting in the way for them making progress is the lack of understanding of what they need to do and whether they have the right systems and knowledge in place to ensure that they are providing an inclusive and accessible experience. Our Disability Confidence Recruiter Program specifically focuses on an opportunity for an employer to demonstrate that they do provide an inclusive and accessible experience for people with disability as they go through the recruitment program. An index provides an opportunity to find out how they have accessible practices across

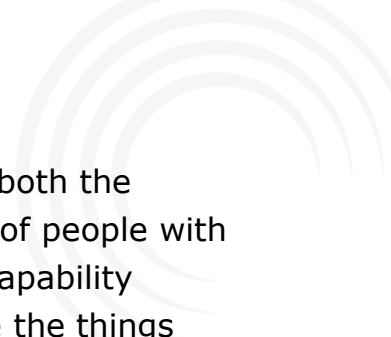
different areas of the business, such as marketing, procurement, customer service and so on.

The final example I wanted to share just to demonstrate the diversity in some of our programs and solutions was Directing Change Scholarship Program which was run from 2022 to 2024. This was an opportunity where individuals with disability had the opportunity to access the Australian institute of company directors courses to rebuild their skillset and understanding of the role of directors on board and equally have the opportunity to increase the representation of people with disability at board level. The key thing as I mentioned before around the objective of our programs is to bring business together, bring the lived experience of people with disability together to find solutions that provide a positive and mutual benefit for everybody involved.

So I am now going to hand over to Nic who is going to share more about building employer engagement and what that means. Nic, over to you.

NIC HOSKINS: Thank you so much Amy and thank you for sharing that overview, of course of Australian Disability Network who we are, what we do and how we work in collaboration with our members to improve the employment of people with disability and the inclusion of people with disability. As Amy shared, and as you can see on screen I am now going to talk about building employer engagement, so I am going to talk about some of the strategies that Australian Disability Network has previously implemented and some of the thinking and rationale behind our strategies in the hope that this can support you in the work that you do to continue to build your own networks and to build meaningful relationships with employers that will last into the future.

The first concept that I'd like to introduce to you and this is a concept that we'll refer back to later, so it is a central theme of the recommendations, it is a central theme around the way that Australian Disability Network approaches the work that we do. We are trying to unlock three locks. The first lock is understanding the business's culture and work environment. What environment is this person with a disability in, or is this an appropriate environment for us to put people into and how can we work with businesses to improve those



environments and cultures and make them the right place where both the employee and employer can thrive and benefit from the inclusion of people with disability. Number 2 is understanding the skills, knowledge and capability required. When looking at the organisation's objectives, what are the things that this Inclusive Employment Australia participant, what are the things that they can do which are going to support the organisation to achieve their objectives, how can we naturally integrate with the things that the organisation is hoping to work on and to achieve? The final one here is providing support throughout the process, and so that is maintaining long-term connections and connections that last and connections that matter. We don't want our relationship with an organisation to be a sugar hit or one-time interaction; we want to build long-term change and connection and to bring those organisations along for the journey and certainly in the inclusive Australia space we see the value in maintaining those long-term partnerships so they keep coming back, keep absorbing the clients and keep bringing them into the wider workforce. I want to throw to you, Amy, is there any additional comments that you'd like to make about the three locks and how they integrate with Australian Disability Network?

AMY WHALLEY: To build on Nic's comments, the real key to our engagement with members and building that lasting relationship is the ability to deeply listen to the organisation and understand where they are at now and where they want to get to. We know that quite often for organisations individuals - probably should talk about the individuals rather than the organisation as a whole, because that's who we interact with, the humans themselves, often when there is a fear of getting it wrong it holds people back to make a start or to get started. So sometimes that may feel as if they are not interested or don't want to move forward or understand why disability inclusion is important. But it could be coming from a place of fear or lack of understanding. So providing an opportunity to listen, understand their position, where they are at now, both as an individual and as a whole organisation can really help you with those first two unlocks, around understanding the business culture and the work environment, but equally understanding where the organisation is trying to get to, what skills and behaviours they have, and that they are seeking. So those skills and behaviours can equally be the skills and behaviour they are looking to recruit for, the talent that they want to build into the organisation, but equally understanding the disability confidence of their organisation, what is the sense of a disability confidence across the business. So that fear can get in the way of them making the first step and is often again, which leads into lock 3 around

providing support throughout the process is being available and clarifying how we can support and step out the steps to take to build disability confidence. So between those three aspects and the deep listening to understand to help find solutions together is our effective way of helping us build those relationships.

NIC HOSKINS: Thank you so much for adding that additional detail there, Amy. I'd like to bring us forward to the reason why this work matters. Of course I am sure a lot of people in the room are on the page with this is the right thing to do, we want to create a world where people with disability can be meaningfully included in the workforce. When we are looking at those points around understanding the business's culture, meeting the business where they're at and progressing together, these are some of the common things that we find resonate with business and help them understand the importance of including people with disability meaningfully in the workforce and for having meaningful strategies around people with disability. The five things that Australian Disability Network promotes are recruitment, retention, reputation, rights and risk. Recruitment we know that the Australian population, 1 in 5 people, those are the official numbers, I personally feel like it might be a little bit higher, depending on how people want to self-report, but based on that 1 in 5 people, so organisations want to and should want to benefit from hiring from the entire talent pool to make sure that they can find the best most suitable person for the position that they have available. Also knowing of course disability can be something that is from birth, but it can be also acquired later in life and that can mean that people might be looking to reintegrate and use the services of Inclusive Employment Australia to reintegrate into workforces where they already have lots of great skills and things those employers want to seize upon. Retention, there is a good amount of information saying that people with disability and organisations that employ people with disability will benefit from increased retention rates. It brings reduced training costs, it also brings benefits to workplace culture that can only happen when we have those people in an organisation who have been in that position for a long time. I am sure we have all worked in positions where we know someone who has been with a company for 20 years and they just bring so much valuable knowledge and experience that we wouldn't have were they not there, were they not able to share with us the transitions that the company has gone through, so retention and increased business rates is a benefit of employing people with disability. I want to say that people with disability have rights, detected by things like the Disability Discrimination Act. There are legal and reputational risks for organisations that don't uphold and support those rights. Of course on the

other hand, there is also positive benefits to organisations in terms of reputation for employing and supporting people with disability. So being known as an employer of choice for people with disability can mean that that organisation benefits from the top talent of the disability population. In terms of being an inclusive brand the organisation benefits from having 1 in 5 Australians being promoters of that brand and sharing positive opinions about that brand with their family, friends, loved ones which can be an asset to a business. These five Rs are hopefully helpful to promote the why around organisations that you might be working with as a starting point. Hopefully they are on board with the most important R which is right. It is the right thing to do. But these can be some additional things which can help them for engaging in disability inclusion more broadly. I want to play a quick video for you. This is a short snippet only. It is from International Day of Persons With Disability, and it further speaks to some of those business benefits. I will let this play before moving on to the next component.

VIDEO PLAYED -

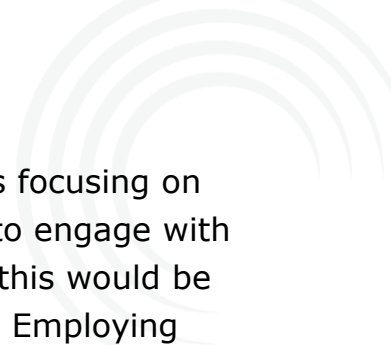
NIC HOSKINS: Quickly just jumping to the next slide so that the next one doesn't auto play there. Hopefully that video gives you a sense of the ways that we can speak to businesses about where they are and the benefits that employing people with disability can bring to their organisation. Organisations are often led by some of those factors and so meeting them where they are, identifying those priorities and working collaboratively with them to show how your participants can help complement those priorities can bring them into the conversation for the short and long-term.

We will move forward to a little bit of a conversation between Amy and I about some of the things that Australian Disability Network have done and some of the ways that you can lean on and leverage some of our experiences and knowledge. Of course, we will have that Q&A portion shortly, so please keep these questions coming. I can't see how many, but I can see a little red dot at the top of my screen showing there is at least a few, so please keep those piling up and we will have the chance to explore those with you shortly. The first question that we see on screen here is, how do you support employees to commit to creating inclusive and accessible workplaces? I want to share a few of my thoughts quickly and then I will throw to Amy to add a little additional

detail from her experience as well. In terms of my thoughts the key parts that I would say is having an environment that is set up for success. That's a big part of Australian Disability Network is working with organisations to help them identify the strengths and weaknesses of things like their recruitment processes. Working with employers not just to place a single candidate by building long-term meaningful relationships with employers where we are working with them to build better work cultures and digital environments that are accessible to people with disability can help to meaningfully change this area. It is important to hear all of the voices in the room. There is your voices as an IEA provider, there is also the voice of the employer and the voice of lived experience in the room. It is important to speak to and be guided by each of those individuals in practice. I know that when I am working with our member organisations I always lean on the lived experience of people who actually live and work there, because they live and breathe that organisation and they can just offer so much more valuable insight than I can as someone who is looking into the organisation from the outside. Meeting organisations where we are and I have spoken to that more, but meeting organisations at their current position where they are, looking at their priorities, strengths and weaknesses and aiming to collaborate and work with them to achieve those goals. Those are some of my thoughts. Amy, I'd love to throw to you to add to or share to what I have said.

AMY WHALLEY: I will be short. Building on what Nic has already said, I think one of the things that's good to call out here is the clarity on the expectation. When we work with employers of course it is about listening to understand their needs and also being able to demonstrate some potential ways of working with them, but it is also being clear about what is to come. So if we start to work with an organisation, we make sure that we are clear about what we can offer, what's the responsibility of us, what's the responsibility of them, what should they expect from us for support and so that there aren't anything sort of unintended, surprises along the way and clarity on who will do what and that clarity on the ongoing support. So as you said before it is not just a short time thing, it is an opportunity to stay connected throughout the experience and the change.

NIC HOSKINS: Thank you so much Amy, and I feel like that supports us into our next conversation point, which is when have you seen an employer move from engagement to action?



AMY WHALLEY: Great question. I appreciate this session today is focusing on engagement, which is where our key thing is, obviously we want to engage with employers with businesses for them to take action. So I thought this would be a good example to share. We have got the examples through the Employing 100 and some other projects we have led in the past. One that we had quite some time ago was called the High Growth Jobs Project which was based here in New South Wales, and really the focus there is about in the title with the high growth jobs, so seeking to connect with employers that were looking to recruit regularly or a high volume of individuals, because it provided us with an opportunity to put forward a particular case or solution that we have talented people with disability that can meet their business objective, which is to hire more people. So again through the work of IEAs and DES being able to identify the opportunities within an organisation, understand their objectives and then provide effective solutions that will not only meet their talent need, but also will benefit in terms of their diversity and inclusion and equity strategies as well. Really connecting to that business strategy as well as the individual opportunities for people with disability in those roles, and in terms of when we have seen organisations move from engagement to action, it is when that trust has been built and again to reiterate it is not a one-time conversation, and when we start working with an employer while they may want to achieve (a) (b) and (c), we need to recognise that it may be step (a) first and take longer before we can move on to the next piece. So recognising that we need to build that trust with an organisation in how we work and that we will continue to deliver, and making sure that that timing of when we can engage to act is right for them and for us. So that again mutual benefit and that working together collaboratively has been key.

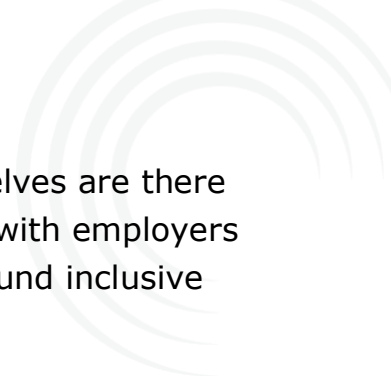
NIC HOSKINS: Thank you so much Amy, and our last question for Amy and to discuss before we open up for the chance for you to ask us some questions, so please do keep those questions coming, the question is what are your top tips in engaging with employers? Again, I will share some thoughts and then I will throw to Amy to complement and add some additional insights. The comments for me is to positively represent your brand. Brand reputation isn't something that just belongs to marketing, it is something that we all are responsible for. I would encourage us to think about how we are acting and conducting ourselves in a professional way, really representing the best for our organisation, but also how we are positively representing the disability community and disability inclusion movements. So I would first raise that. The second point that I would say is to clearly demonstrate the value of your service. What is the value,

knowing the organisation's needs that you can connect with and clearly demonstrate and provide value to that organisation. My final thought here is to make it simple. So we want to avoid really complicated drawn-out processes with lots of delays, as this can be really difficult for organisations to navigate through and they may lose motivation through that process. The simpler, the clearer, the easier that we can make our service offering and the way we can guide our organisations through that conversation the more we can get that final result, is that placing people in long-term work. Amy, are there any top tips that you have for our audience?

AMY WHALLEY: I will take your advice straight from the bat, so firstly listen. It really is about listening to understand when we are working with engaging with employers. Second piece is around the approach of dual customer, so certainly for you working in IEA you have two customers; you have the employers and you also have your participants. So demonstrating that mutual benefit and thinking about the experiences of your dual customer I think is critical in engaging with employers. The third I would say is don't be afraid of storytelling, obviously being mindful of confidentiality, not necessarily sharing information that is not appropriate, but the storytelling that you can share with employers of experiences you've had and where you have seen success, I think you can never underestimate the power of storytelling in how you demonstrate impact and how you demonstrate positive outcomes.

NIC HOSKINS: Thank you Amy. I am thinking about throwing over to Sally in a moment. Just before I do that I'd just like to quickly recap those three locks. Those three locks are to understand the business, culture and work environment, understand the skills, knowledge and capability that's required, and the final one there is to provide support throughout the process. So thank you again for hearing directly from us, we are excited to answer some of your questions as they come through. I will stop sharing my screen now and I will throw over to you Sally.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Thank you Nic and thank you Amy. To the questions. There is a lot of positive thanks and appreciation coming through in the chat, both for the content that you've shared, but also for the concept of the three locks. That certainly seems to have resonated really well with people, so just wanted to call that out before we dive into all the questions. So beyond the job



board and the local network that providers might build for themselves are there any tools or platforms where people might be able to collaborate with employers looking towards more strategic conversations and discussions around inclusive hiring and filling vacancies?

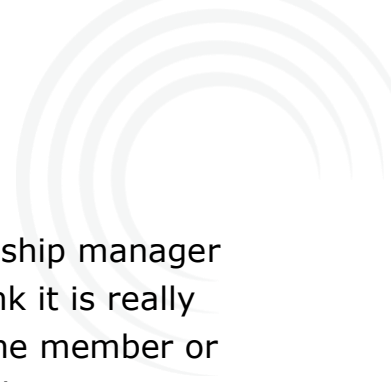
NIC HOSKINS: Did you want to take this one, Amy, or would you like me to go first?

AMY WHALLEY: You can go first if you have something, just hand to me whenever you like.

NIC HOSKINS: Well, it is a really great question, to think beyond the traditional job boards that we have access to. My recommendations are to look at an organisation's bigger picture strategy, so lots will share their inclusion plans publicly, so looking at some of that public information that's available about an organisation's disability strategy can help you when you are meeting with them to connect and align with some of those strategies and objectives. I also would recommend being in the places that your employers are, so being on places like LinkedIn, being in places like Expos that your employers are likely to attend can be a way that you can support networking and building some of those connections as well. Amy is there anything you wanted to add?

AMY WHALLEY: No, I think the local networks which was also pulled out in the question anyway is such a positive way, but again you can link it then to either strategies or known business objectives for that organisation, whether it is directly related to access alt or diversion and inclusion, or not, if there is anything related to talent, there is an opportunity.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Lovely. Again lots more positive feedback coming through on the content, even lots of comments saying people feel much more comfortable to connect with employers and putting some of those things that you've shared into practice. Nic, in your role as Relationship Manager, is there something that you might have learnt over time that's really helped shape the way that you have, I guess developed in your practice that you might be willing to share with people?



NIC HOSKINS: Amy also can speak to this having been a relationship manager a while back in her career, but from my personal experience I think it is really guided by the organisation, so knowing that I am there to meet the member or the organisation where they are and to work collaboratively with them to achieve some of their goals. So looking at the work that Australian Disability Network does, the kinds of tools resources that we can offer, and trying to provide those to support the members' objectives, also looking broader, so looking beyond what Australian Disability Network does. If there are things that the organisation is trying to achieve that sit beyond what I can do, but is supporting the call which we are trying to support, then linking it in with those other external community providers. Is there anything else?

AMY WHALLEY: A slightly different tactic, probably what I really enjoyed doing and seemed to be effective too was the regularity of contact. So if I get down to the real nuts and bolts of engagement, which is really about building relationships. So the consistency and the regularity of that connection, opportunity with individuals from within business was where I saw a real opportunity and growth, you are building the trust. It doesn't mean that we call them lots, but we set a cadence that allows people to check in and reconnect regularly enough so that when that timing is ready for an organisation to act, and in this case to recruit, then we are front of mind because we have built that relationship and trust with the individual. So that would be probably what I'd build on.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Thank you both for sharing those experiences and things that you have learnt. Amy, towards the beginning of the presentation you mentioned a number of offerings that AusDN has, including things like the PACE mentoring program, the career start - Stepping Into Internships, there is quite a long list. If those have resonated with people, maybe they have a participant on their case load which they think might benefit from it, what's the best way for people to find out information and make those connections?

AMY WHALLEY: Actually, there is a question in the Q&A area around our website and list of employers. So I might answer the two things because I think they are linked, so that's perfect, thank you. So, yes, the internship program is open to university students, currently it is open to university students in their

final year of study and our mentoring program is open to jobseekers, so certainly if there is some clients of participants that you are working with that may benefit from mentoring, then on our website and we can make sure these links are sent through, there is an opportunity to apply to be a, mentee, which will be fabulous. On our website we have got a list of our members, the 400 organisations, I don't necessarily expect everyone to look at the 400 organisations, but there is also under disability confident recruiter it lists the opportunities that have achieved that status, which can be useful as well.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Thank you, Amy. Nic, I might start with you on this one. What are some good things to say to employers when you are speaking with them for the first time and should you ask if they prefer you to come in person, or over the phone?

NIC HOSKINS: A great question. So in terms of the first things that I would be doing when meeting in the organisation is I would be trying to, as I said earlier, build on your brand reputation, so that's the brand reputation of your organisation, the disability community, but also thinking about your personal brand reputation and the reputation that you have with that direct contact. I would be seeking to build some rapport with that contact in a professional way, getting to know them so they understand more about who you are, how you work and how you can work effectively together. I would be seeking to be really clear about your service and what you can do and how you can support. I'd be seeking to be clear about what some of those objectives are and what that naturally links in with what you can do. As Amy shared, thinking about and using that as a time for a call to action, so don't leave that meeting saying, "We'll be in touch", try to leave that meeting saying, "When is the next time we will be in touch?" It can be hard to reach someone via email. You can be cheeky and get into the diary earlier. In terms of in person or online there is practicalities that you need to consider to see what will be best. I find it depends on the employer. Your employer or your contact might have an accessibility requirement where they prefer online. They may just generally prefer online or in person, so I would put the offer to them if you can meet face-to-face and say, "Would you like me to come to you, or would you prefer to connect online?" And be guided by them in terms of their preference. Amy is there anything further you wanted to say?



AMY WHALLEY: Maybe one thing I'd add is when you build on what you were talking about your brand, when you are interacting with anybody I think being able to demonstrate your understanding of inclusive communication is another benefit, and opportunity. A slightly different example, but I hope it resonates, when we provide training to workforces at the beginning of it we, particularly when it is interactive we set the accessibility expectations of the meeting. So we call out the standards of accessibility that we'll use through that process. That slide is often one of the most supportive slides that individuals find because they learn so much in the approach that we want to take. So I would encourage you to think about when you are either trying to get a call or you are going to meet with someone, opportunities such as please let me know if you have accessibility requirements for our meeting, again not making assumptions about the individuals within your organisation and adjustments that may need to be made, but you are demonstrating your work in practice with everybody that you communicate with, not just your participants. I guess my point here would be to never underestimate the opportunity you have to influence change and to call out what inclusive practices look like in every interaction that you have.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Well, we might just squish one last question in. Would you do anything differently if you were engaging with a smaller employers compared to larger employers?

AMY WHALLEY: I am happy to take this and Nic, you can build as you wish. Yeah, I mean there are different types of organisations I recognise that and our experience is more with the larger organisations as I said at the beginning. Certainly with the smaller scaled organisations, and I think that building of trust and relationship is even more important, and the other piece I would call out is that understanding who is who and the responsibilities within the small organisation is a good opportunity. We've talked about building those relationships, but if individuals do move to a different organisation being able to maintain that connection with the business as well is important. So sometimes that's easier to do in smaller organisations because there is less movement, but equally it can be harder if one person moves then the whole relationship can drop off. That thinking about the people within the organisation that you connect with, that that building of trust and understanding their timings and how that fits with them, such as there is an opportunity as you come up to the busy season, that we are already far in it of the Christmas period. If we are

thinking about retail they might have a high demand for more talent during the Christmas period. Equally, if they have already done the hiring they are also in delivery mode in full pace, so we need to expect that that may not be the right time to try to initiative change or to do something they haven't done before.

NIC HOSKINS: Just to complement Amy's response, I think when it is a small to medium enterprise understanding the industry can be helpful, so understanding specific requirements of the world in which they operate if it is a construction organisation or whether it is architecture, the practicalities of that industry and having some understanding of the way that they work can support your conversations to be successful, as an example when working Amy mentioned retail workers and the practicalities of things like Christmas, I know when working with retail organisations the nature of their staff means they are not computer-based so we approach working with those organisations differently. If we are working with universities they have academic and professional staff, so working with the nature of research brands and things like that to fit the nature of the organisation. So I think there is a point there about really understanding the industry and that also means when someone moves between the organisation hopefully that may give you a contact at a new organisation rather than losing someone because you understand the space in which they work. If it is a small organisation the strength of rapport and direct connection also goes up in value 10 fold, so I would say those personal connections are so, so important in that type of environment.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Thank you both. I think a couple more comments and questions have come in, but we have reached our time for today and I know you all have plenty on your plates. So I will go through and pick up on anything that we might not have had a chance to address. We'll see if we can address that after the session. Thank you Amy and Nic for many could go along and sharing today. It has been incredibly insightful, really appreciate you spending your time with us today. Thank you also to Hanif who has been in the background making this all possible. We will be taking a break next week, but we'll be back the week after, which will be the 26th of November where we will be joined by Shae Wissell, and looking at dyslexia in the workplace, so we look forward to having you join us for that. Thank you again for joining us today.

AMY WHALLEY: Thank you very much.



NIC HOSKINS: Thank you everybody.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Thank you both.

(End)