

Verizon  
Up To Speed Live  
April 12, 2021

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>>> HAPPY MONDAY, THANK YOU FOR JOINING US FOR UP TO SPEED LIVE.

THIS EPISODE IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE V TEAMERS WHO HAVE SHARED THEIR HEARTFELT, PERSONAL STORIES RIGHT HERE ON UP TO SPEED.

YES, OUR SHOW REMAINS YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR NEWS REGARDING ALL THINGS VERIZON.

BUT ONE OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO IS TELL STORIES THAT FEATURE OUR AMAZING V TEAMERS.

TODAY, YOU'LL NOT ONLY GET TO SEE TWO OF THESE FEATURE PROFILES, WE'RE GOING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THESE STORIES ARE GATHERED, PRODUCED, AND SHARED WITH OUR ENTIRE V TEAM AND BEYOND.

THERE'S A VERY GOOD CHANCE SOMEONE WATCHING THIS RIGHT NOW HAS AN IMPORTANT STORY TO TELL, AND WE HOPE TODAY'S CONVERSATION WILL INSPIRE YOU TO SHARE THAT STORY WITH US.

WITH THAT IDEA IN MIND, LET'S START WITH A STORY ABOUT LOVE, FAMILY, AND A VERY SPECIAL BOOK.

HERE'S RICARDO'S STORY.

>> MY NAME IS RICARDO.

I'M A CONSUMER DISTRICT MANAGER IN THE AUSTIN, TEXAS AREA.

I WAS ORIGINALLY BORN IN EL SALVADOR.

WHEN I WAS A KID, I DON'T THINK I UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT WAS THAT WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT ME.

AS I GREW OLDER, I STARTED LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT BEING GAY WAS AND AS I MOVED TO THE UNITED STATES, THERE WAS MORE COMMUNITY AND SOME OF THE THINGS THAT HELPED ME START TO BUILD AN IDENTITY AROUND WHO I WAS.

I CAME OUT WHEN I WAS 18 YEARS OLD.

IT'S NEVER AN EASY THING TO DO.

YOU ALWAYS FEAR THERE'S NOT -- THERE'S GOING TO BE REJECTION.

I STARTED BY TELLING MY MOM.

SHE SAID, I LOVE YOU AND SUPPORT YOU NO MATTER WHAT.

I'LL BE HERE FOR YOU.

FOR HER TO ACCEPT IT IS WHAT GAVE ME THE STRENGTH TO MOVE FORWARD AND SAY "THIS IS WHO I AM, AND I'M PROUD AND I'M GOING TO EMBRACE IT."

I'VE BEEN HERE ABOUT FIVE YEARS.

I STARTED TO REALIZE THE POWER AND THE VALUE OF BUILDING A FAMILY.

WE STARTED GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ADOPTION.

THE COST CAN BE PRETTY SIGNIFICANT.

SOMETHING WE WERE REALLY HAPPY ABOUT.

AND BLESSED TO HAVE ACCESS TO.

VERIZON WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE US WITH THE BENEFIT OF ADOPTION REIMBURSEMENT.

THE FACT THEY OFFERED IT FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES, WE UNDERSTAND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IS ACTUALLY AN ATTRIBUTE AND BENEFIT IN ITS OWN.

18 MONTHS LATER, WE GOT THE BLESSING OF HAVING OUR SON COME INTO OUR LIFE.

HAVING HIM JUST REALLY HELPED ME UNDERSTAND THE CAPACITY THAT A HUMAN BEING CAN HAVE WHEN IT COMES TO LOVING ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.

REALLY UNDERSTANDING WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WAYS WE CAN GIVE BACK TO THE WORLD.

THERE WERE TWO THINGS I THOUGHT OF, THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY.

WE STARTED BUYING MORE BOOKS THAT ARE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AND MESSAGES THAT WE WANTED TO ADOPT.

IT WAS HARDER THAN WE THOUGHT.

WE THOUGHT, WHY NOT WRITE A BOOK THAT TALKS ABOUT IT?  
TO EMBRACE DIVERSITY, AT THE END, REALLY LEARNED THE DIFFERENCES  
LITERALLY MAKE IT UNIQUE, BUT CAN BE BEAUTIFUL TOO.  
IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST HAVE THAT CONVERSATION.  
IT STARTS BY FIRST INTRODUCING THE LANGUAGE.  
THEN THE BEHAVIORS AND COMBINING THEM BOTH.  
THAT'S ALSO TO START THAT CONVERSATION.  
WE'RE CAPABLE OF DOING ANYTHING WE PUT OUR MINDS TO AND ANYTHING  
YOU FEEL IS IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOU WANT TO CREATE SOMETHING  
THAT WILL HELP IMPACT THAT COST, YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO DO IT.  
MAKE IT AN ACTION.  
TAKE THE NEXT STEP AND NEXT THING YOU KNOW, YOU'VE RUN THE  
ENTIRE RACE.  
GOOD JOB.  
ALL RIGHT.  
>> BYE.  
>> BEAUTIFUL FAMILY AND A BEAUTIFUL STORY.  
OUR THANKS TO RICARDO.  
YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED RICARDO'S ADORABLE SON.  
NOT ONLY SAY I LOVE YOU VERIZON, BUT AT THE END OF THE VIDEO,  
YOU COULD HEAR HIM SAYING GOOD-BYE TO SOMEONE ON THE OTHER END  
OF THE VIDEO CHAT.  
THAT PERSON HE WAS SAYING GOOD-BYE TO, WE GET TO SAY HELLO TO  
TODAY.  
JOINING US IS OUR GOOD FRIEND, UP TO SPEED HOST AND VIDEO  
PRODUCER, JESS BONARDI.  
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU.  
THANK YOU FOR JOINING US ON UP TO SPEED LIVE.  
>> JESS: SO GOOD TO SEE YOU, ANDY.  
I'M BACK HERE IN MY OFFICE FOR THE FIRST TIME.  
I GOT A LITTLE EMOTIONAL, TO BE HONEST.

IT FEELS GOOD TO BE BACK.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME ON THE SHOW TODAY.

>> ANDY: THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT WALKING INTO THE BUILDING, THE ENERGY, I KNOW IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE YOU AND I HAVE BEEN IN THE BUILDING TOGETHER.

IT'S AWESOME, GREAT TO BE WITH YOU.

WE SAW THIS INCREDIBLE STORY FROM RICARDO, YOU PRODUCED THIS BEAUTIFUL STORY FOR US, WE GET TO SEE THE FINISHED PRODUCT, BUT WE'D LOVE TO HEAR MORE ABOUT HOW THIS IS MADE.

I KNOW NOT EVERYONE IS AT THE HELM OF STORY-TELLING, VIDEO PRODUCING, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE WHEN IT COMES TO TALKING ABOUT HOW THESE STORIES ARE MADE.

WITH THAT IN MIND, WALK US THROUGH WHAT IT TAKES TO PIECE THIS STORY, RICARDO'S STORY TOGETHER.

>> JESS: ABSOLUTELY.

SO, RICARDO'S STORY WAS BROUGHT TO US, HE WAS FEATURED IN A LOCAL NEWS ARTICLE AND THAT WAS SENT TO US, THERE'S PICTURES WITH HIS VERIZON SHIRT ON AND SO, IT WAS SENT TO ONE OF OUR TEAM MEMBERS AND THEN IT'S JUST A MATTER OF REACHING OUT AND HAVING A NICE, LONG INTERVIEW.

SOMETIMES WHEN WE HAVE INTERVIEWS THAT LAST TWO HOURS AND YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CUT IT DOWN TO TWO MINUTES, SO, WE HAVE A BRILLIANT EDITOR I WORK WITH.

MIKE SOLARNO.

HE WORKED WITH ME TO BRING THE STORY DOWN, MAKE IT NICE, SHORT, SWEET SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY IT.

IT'S JUST A PARTNERSHIP, IT'S A COLLABORATION, I WANT THE V TEAMERS INPUT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

AND YOU KNOW, THE STUDIO HAS PICTURES OF ME IN THE STUDIO.

FRIENDS THERE.

WORKING TOGETHER.

YOU KNOW, ALL YEAR LONG, ON MULTIPLE PROJECTS, JUST TRYING TO TELL THE WHOLE V-TEAMER STORY.

SPEAKING OF STORIES, I HAVE MY RAINBOW BEAT COPYRIGHT HERE.

I HAD TO GET ONE SO I CAN GIVE IT TO A FRIEND SO WE CAN KEEP TELLING THE GREAT STORIES OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

>> ANDY: AWESOME.

IT'S AWESOME TO SEE MEKS OF OUR STUDIO TEAM CONTINUE TO FIND THOSE STORIES AND CULTIVATE THEM.

YOU COVERED SO MANY STORIES THAT GET PERSONAL, LIKE RICARDO'S THERE.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THIS PROCESS?

ESTABLISHING TRUST.

GETTING PERSONAL WITH OUR V TEAMERS SO THEIR AUTHENTICITY REALLY SHINES THROUGH.

>> JESS: THAT'S A GREAT QUESTION.

IT REALLY IS ABOUT LISTENING TO THEM AND YOU REALLY HAVE TO TAKE THE TIME TO MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE IN THEIR VULNERABILITY.

SOMETIMES THESE STORIES, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THEY MIGHT BE COMING OUT AND SHARING SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

AND ALMOST COMPLETE STRANGERS.

IT'S KIND OF, IT'S THERAPEUTIC, IT'S VERY CATHARTIC TO RELEASE THAT ENERGY AND GET IT OUT THERE AND A LOT OF THE TIMES, PEOPLE SAY IT'S A REALLY GREAT HEALING EXPERIENCE.

TO KEEP LISTENING TO PEOPLE, MEETING THEM WHERE THEY ARE WITH THEIR VULNERABILITY AND I SHARE THINGS ABOUT MYSELF TOO.

IT'S A BACK AND FORTH, IT'S A PARTNERSHIP AND WE END UP DEVELOPING THIS BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP THAT LASTS YEARS AND THEY HAVE A STORY THAT THEY CAN SHARE WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND HAVE FOREVER.

>> ANDY: YEAH, THAT LISTENING PART IS SOMETHING WE ALL, ACROSS THE BUSINESS, TRY TO DO TO MAKE SURE THOSE CONNECTIONS REALLY MATTER ACROSS THE BOARD.

JESS, YOU'VE BEEN WITH VERIZON FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW.

YOU'VE BEEN BUILDING THOSE RELATIONSHIPS, TELLING THE STORIES OF COUNTLESS V TEAMERS.

THIS HAS LITERALLY TAKEN YOU ALL OVER THE WORLD.

TELL US WHERE IT'S TAKING YOU AND WHAT YOU LEARNED ON YOUR JOURNEYS?

>> JESS: I'VE MET SO MANY AMAZING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT MY 12 YEARS HERE AT VERIZON.

V TEAMERS, YOU KNOW, OF ALL WALKS OF LIFE, ALL DIFFERENT JOBS.

I THINK TO GO TO RETAIL STORE OR GO ON A ROOFTOP WITH AN ENGINEER OR CUSTOMER'S HOME WITH FIOS INSTALL.

EVERYONE'S ALWAYS, THERE'S ONE COMMONALITY AGAINST ALL V TEAMERS, THEY EMBRACE THE EXPERIENCE AND THEY TAKE ME UNDER THEIR WING AND THEY WANT TO SHOW ME THEIR LIFE AND WANT TO INVITE ME INTO THEIR FAMILY FOR A DAY AND YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES IT ENDS UP AT THEIR KIDS SWIM MEET OR PLAYING WITH THEIR DOG OR ORDERING TAKEOUT.

YOU KNOW, THE PRODUCTION DAY WENT LONG.

AND IT'S BEEN SUCH A FUN RIDE.

I FEEL VERY GRATEFUL TO HAVE THESE SKILLS.

THEY TRANSLATE INTO SO MANY THINGS.

COMMUNICATION.

BEING VULNERABLE, BEING COURAGEOUS.

IT'S SO INSPIRING.

THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF WHY WE TELL THESE STORIES.

SO WE CAN INSPIRE OTHER PEOPLE TO TAKE THAT NEXT STEP OR TO COME FORWARD WITH THEIR STORY.

>> ANDY: YEAH, OF COURSE, LIKE LAST YEAR.

YOU AND THE STUDIO TEAM AND THIS OTHER COMMUNICATIONS TEAM.

WE WERE TASKED WITH MAKING THOSE CONNECTIONS VIRTUALLY.

IT'S HARD TO DO IT IN THOSE LITTLE BOXES THERE.

BUT WE'VE DONE IT.

TELL US WHAT YOU LEARNED THIS PAST YEAR.

BUILDING THOSE CONNECTIONS, PRODUCING THESE VIRTUALLY, WHAT ARE THINGS WE CAN TAKE AWAY WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING THOSE CONNECTIONS AND BEING A VIRTUAL STORYTELLER?

>> IT HAS BEEN A NEW CHALLENGE AND I KNOW WE'RE ALL DEALING WITH

THE SAME THINGS, HAVING JUST TO, NOW, COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEBODY THROUGH THE SCREEN, INSTEAD OF HAVING THAT HUMAN, YOU KNOW, TOUCH OR HANDSHAKE OR HUG.

IT'S A CHALLENGE, BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES LISTENING SO IMPORTANT AND BEING ABLE TO FIND COMMON GROUND AND CONNECT WITH PEOPLE ON A DEEPER LEVEL WHERE YOU KNOW, THEY MIGHT NOT INVITE ME INTO THEIR HOUSE ANYMORE, BUT THEY CAN SHOW ME HOME VIDEOS OR PICTURES.

I THINK IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE DOING EVERYTHING THROUGH A SCREEN, THAT WE, YOU KNOW, HAVE HONEST, DIALOGUE THAT WE CAN FIND, THIS COMMUNICATION, THROUGH EYE CONTACT, THROUGH A SCREEN.

IT'S HARD.

NOT BEING OUT IN THE FIELD WITH THEM.

STILL LOVE IT.

WE STILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE TO DO IT.

>> WE'RE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR STORY-TELLING.

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING MORE AND MORE PEOPLE TELLING THEIR STORIES.

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THAT ENERGY, SO, WE APPRECIATE, OF COURSE, ALL THE WORK THAT YOU AND THE STUDIO TEAM HAVE DONE.

SO, WITH THAT IN MIND, AS WE KEEP THINKING ABOUT STORIES, THIS NEXT STORY, WHICH JESS ALSO HELPED PRODUCE HIGHLIGHTS FAITH.

TONIGHT MARKS THE FIRST EVENING OF RAMADAN.

FOR 30 DAYS, MUSLIMS AROUND THE WORLD DO NOT EAT FROM DAWN TO DUSK, THEY PRAY INTENSELY AND TOGETHER FOR FEASTS TO BREAK THAT FAST.

AS WE WISH OUR MUSLIM V TEAMERS A BLESSED RAMADAN, WE TURN TO THE STORY OF KAMIL.

>> I LIVE IN CHICAGO.

I DO CAPACITY PLANNING.

I CAME TO THE UNITED STATES IN 2007.

WHEN I WAS LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES, I HAD TO FACE MANY CHALLENGES.

YOU KNOW, PEOPLE HAVE STEREOTYPES ON THEIR MINDS.

IT WAS MY VERY FIRST DAY IN THE U.S. I WAS GOING TO THE MOSQUE TO PRAY AND SITTING ON A BUS.

I DIDN'T KNOW I SAT SOMEWHERE AND YOU KNOW, THE GUY SITTING NEXT TO ME SAID, WHY DO YOU LOOK LIKE OSAMA BIN LADEN?

I WAS SO CONFUSED -- IMAGINE, IT'S YOUR FIRST DAY IN A NEW COUNTRY, YOU'RE ALONE.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO GROW IN THIS PROFESSION, YOU NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU LOOK.

AND YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR DRESSING.

THAT KIND OF MAKES YOU UNEASY.

AND DEMORALIZES YOU.

IF YOU HAVE ALL THESE EXTERNAL PRESSURES, YOU CANNOT FOCUS ON YOUR WORK.

WHEN I JOINED VERIZON, SINCE I HAD ALL THIS BACKGROUND WHEN I ENTERED THE OFFICE AND MET THE MANAGER, I WAS REALLY NERVOUS.

I WAS SURPRISED, THE WAY HE MET ME.

HE WAS LIKE "WHAT'S UP?" AND HE SHOOK MY HAND.

THAT, IMMEDIATELY, YOU KNOW, SURPRISED ME.

IMMEDIATELY I COULD FEEL THE DIFFERENCE.

IMMEDIATELY, I FELT I'M PART OF THIS TEAM.

MOSTLY, WE HAVE TO PRAY FIVE TIMES A DAY AND SOMETIMES, THOSE PRAYER TIMES COME DURING WORKING HOURS.

ANOTHER PROBLEM, BEFORE PRAYING, WE HAVE TO WASH OUR HANDS AND FACE AND FEET ALSO.

WHEN I TALKED TO MY MANAGER, HIS APPROACH WAS INCLUSIVE.

HE WORKED WITH BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND HE ARRANGED A PLACE FOR ME, WHERE I COULD WASH MY FEET.

THERE'S A LINK ABOUT RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS.



IF YOU READ THROUGH IT, IT SAYS ANYONE IN VERIZON CAN GO IN AND REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS.

ANYTHING THAT YOU FEEL THAT YOU KNOW, THAT VERIZON NEEDS TO ACCOMMODATE FOR YOU.

THIS SHOWS HOW GREAT VERIZON IS.

YOU SEE THAT PEOPLE ARE ACCEPTING YOU AND PEOPLE ARE INCLUDING YOU AS PART OF THE GROUP, ALMOST A YEAR OR MORE.

I WAS PROMOTED.

I DON'T NEED A CHAIN MESSAGE TO GET PROMOTED.

AS LONG AS I WORK HARD, I'M DOING THE RIGHT THING AT WORK.

I DON'T NEED TO LOOK DIFFERENT OR DRESS DIFFERENTLY JUST TO BE ACCEPTED.

SO, IT'S NOT JUST ONE OR TWO PEOPLE, IT'S THE NATURE OF OUR COMPANY AND I'M PROUD TO WORK FOR VERIZON.

>> IT'S AN INCREDIBLE FEELING OF EMPOWERMENT.

WE THANK KAMIL FOR THAT STORY.

YOU HEARD THE WORD CULTURE THERE.

THAT'S WHAT WE CONTINUE TO BUILD WITH THESE STORIES.

YOU HEARD CHRISTY SAY, WE BRING OUR WHOLE SELVES TO WORK AND WE'RE PROUD TO SHARE THE STORY OF OUR WHOLE SELVES.

THANK YOU TO THE STUDIO TEAM AND V TEAMERS WHO ARE SHARING THOSE STORIES.

A FEW QUICK THINGS BEFORE WE GO.

WE'VE BEEN SHARING WAYS FOR YOU TO GET OUTSIDE NOW.

THE WEATHER IS GETTING NICE.

LITTLE DREARY IN JERSEY, BUT APRIL SHOWERS BRINGING MAY FLOWERS SOON.

CURRENTLY, SMALL STEPS TO BIG CHANGE.

RACIAL JUSTICE STEPS CHALLENGE IS GOING ON NOW UNTIL MAY 11TH.

WE ASKED EMPLOYEES TO CREATE TEAMS WHO WILL TRACK THEIR STEPS AS A TEAM.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED AND LEARN MORE, WE'LL INCLUDE ALL OF THE DETAILS IN TODAY'S WEB STORY.

NEXT WEEK, STARTING APRIL 19TH IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK.

THE QUESTION IS, HOW WILL YOU PARTICIPATE?

ALTHOUGH, IT IS CALLED NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK, WE BELIEVE EVERYONE CAN GET INVOLVED THIS WEEK OF CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERISM.

GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION.

WE HAVE COMMITTED TO PLANT 150,000 TREES TO OFFSET CARBON EMISSIONS AND CONTRIBUTE TO VERIZON'S GOAL OF PLANTING 20 MILLION TREES BY 2030.

YOU CAN HELP BY CONTRIBUTING A LETTER OF HOPE AND INSPIRATION TO A FRONT LINE FIREFIGHTER AS WELL.

FOR EVERY TEN LETTERS WRITTEN, WE'LL PLANT 100 TREES.

ALL OF THE DETAILS WILL BE INCLUDED IN TODAY'S WEB STORY.

IF YOU'RE VOLUNTEERING, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

TELL US HOW YOU'RE DOING IT.

TELL US YOUR STORY AND THE E-MAIL IS GOOD@VERIZON.COM.

THAT'S WHERE WE INVITE YOU TO SHARE YOUR STORIES WITH US.

WE'VE BEEN UTILIZING THAT GOOD MAILBOX FOR QUITE AWHILE.

GOOD@VERIZON.COM.

IT'S OUR PRIVILEGE AND HONOR TO HELP SHARE WHAT MATTERS MOST TO OUR V TEAM.

WE'D BE THRILLED TO HEAR HAVE YOU AND SHARE YOUR STORIES AS WELL.

SO, ON THIS MONDAY, THAT JUST ABOUT DOES IT FOR US.

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING LEFT --

>> OH, ANDY -- C'MON.

YOU KNOW I'M IN THE OFFICE -- YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE MEAT SIGNOFF.

>> ANDY: JESS, SORRY, I TOTALLY SPACED OUT.

IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE YOU AND I HAVE BEEN IN THE BUILDING  
TOGETHER HERE.

HOW COULD I FORGET?

>> GET USED TO IT.

>> THANKS AGAIN FOR JOINING US.

JESS IS BACK.

WITH THAT IN MIND, ON THIS MONDAY, JESS, BACK TO YOU FOR THE  
SIGN OFF.

GO AHEAD.

>> UNTIL NEXT TIME, YOU'RE UP TO SPEED.