

**VERIZON  
UP TO SPEED LIVE  
October 22, 2021 12:00 PM ET**

>> DIANA ALVEAR: HELLO, EVERYONE.  
WELCOME TO UP TO SPEED.  
HAPPY FRIDAY, WE MADE IT.  
I AM DIANA ALVEAR AND I'M SO EXCITED BECAUSE WE HAVE A SPECIAL EPISODE TODAY, AND SOME TRULY WONDERFUL GUESTS.  
BEFORE WE GET TO ALL OF THAT, THOUGH, WE ARE GOING TO RECAP THE WEEK.  
SO MONDAY, WE GOT YOU EXCITED ABOUT THE QUARTERLY EARNINGS. AND WHAT WE DID WAS WE REVISITED SOME GREAT MOMENTS FROM PREVIOUS QUARTERLIES.  
TUESDAY, WE GOT SOCIAL AND INTRODUCED YOU TO THE DIFFERENT PLATFORMS WHERE YOU CAN CONNECT WITH INSIDE VERIZON. THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL GET ALL THE NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT YOU NEED THE WAY YOU LIKE IT.  
WEDNESDAY, OF COURSE, WE HAD THAT ROCKING THIRD QUARTER EARNINGS SHOW LED BY OUR MAIN MAN HANS AND FEATURING VIP APPEARANCES FROM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.  
AND YESTERDAY, WE HEARD FROM SOME INCREDIBLY COURAGEOUS VERIZON TEAMERS WHO TOLD US THEIR HARROWING STORIES AND ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS.  
OKAY.  
SO OCTOBER IS PACKED WITH IMPORTANT CAUSES TO CELEBRATE, AND TODAY WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS ON NATIONAL DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH.  
WE ARE SO HONORED TO HAVE WITH US TODAY TWO FABULOUS MEMBERS OF OUR A.D.V.A.N.C.E. ERG.  
NOW FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW, A.D.V.A.N.C.E. STANDS FOR ADVOCATES FOR DISABILITY, ACCESS, NEURODIVERSITY, AND CAREGIVER EMPOWERMENT.  
I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME JEAN MARIE MARSTON, SHE'S THE A.D.V.A.N.C.E. MEMBERSHIP CHAIR AND A NETWORK INTEGRATION PLANNER.  
AND WESLYN RAULINS, A.D.V.A.N.C.E. GLOBAL PROGRAMS AND EVENT CHAIR AND PROCESS ENGINEER AT VBG.  
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BEING LIVE WITH US.  
THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TOPIC TO ME.  
WE'RE GOING TO JUMP RIGHT IN.  
JEAN, TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHY YOU JOINED A.D.V.A.N.C.E.  
>> THANK YOU, DIANA.  
SO EXCITED TO BE HERE.  
AS YOU SAID, I'M JEAN.  
AND MY PRONOUNS ARE SHE/HER/HERS.

I'M A MIDDLE-AGED WHITE BRUNETTE WEARING A BLUE SHIRT WITH WHITE LETTERS THAT READ OCD IS NOT AN ADJECTIVE.

LIKE YOU SAID AT VERIZON I'M A NETWORK PLANNER AND I'M THE MEMBERSHIP AND VOLUNTEERING CHAIR OF ADVANCE.

I, MYSELF, HAVE ANXIETY DISORDER, SO AS SOON AS I HEARD ABOUT A.D.V.A.N.C.E., I WAS DRAWN TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN AND THEN EVENTUALLY TO GIVE BACK ON THE BOARD.

BUT I WAS AN EMPLOYEE FOR MANY, MANY YEARS BEFORE I EVEN KNEW THAT ANYTHING LIKE THIS EXISTED.

SO, AGAIN, THAT'S WHY I'M SO GRATEFUL THAT OPPORTUNITIES LIKE THIS EXIST SO THAT WE CAN SPREAD AWARENESS.

THANK YOU.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: THANK YOU SO MUCH, JEAN.

AND WESLYN, I WANT TO KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU.

HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY AND TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

>> HI, DIANA, I'M SO EXCITED TO BE HERE.

LIKE JEAN SAID, IT'S AMAZING TO BE ON UP TO SPEED WITH YOU ALL.

MY NAME IS WESLYN, I'M A BLACK PERSON WITH SHORT CURLY HAIR COVERED TODAY BY A YELLOW HEAD WRAP.

I'M WEARING A BLACK SWEATSHIRT WITH WHITE LETTERS THAT READ IT'S THE PROTECTING MY PEACE PART FOR ME, WHICH IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES. I'M IN A ROOM WITH GREEN AND WHITE WALLPAPER AND HANGING POSTERS. MY PRONOUNS ARE SHE/HER/HERS.

I'VE ALWAYS HAD AN INNATE DESIRE TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING THAT I CAN GIVE BACK, FORM CONNECTIONS, AND JUST, YOU KNOW, USE MY VOICE IN WHATEVER WAY THAT I CAN TO HELP.

SO WHEN DIAL, WHICH WAS FORMALLY A.D.V.A.N.C.E., WAS PRESENTED TO ME, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN.

SO -- BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL MY ROLE TO YEARS AGO ON THE BOARD THAT I WAS ABLE TO UNLOCK THIS MISSING PIECE OF MY IDENTITY THAT PROPELLED ME TO LIVING EVEN LOUDER AND MORE RADICALLY THAN I EVER DID BEFORE.

SO I'M JUST GRATEFUL FOR OUR CURRENT LEADS, LIKE KRISTA, SHE'S ONE OF MY BIGGEST SUPPORTERS IN HELPING ME REALIZE MY IDENTITY AS A DISABLED PERSONAL.

AND JUST ALL OF OUR MEMBERS.

LIKE I SAID, I'M JUST SO EXCITED TO BE HERE.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: WESLYN, I LOVE HOW YOU DESCRIBED WHAT YOU WERE WEARING.

AND THE WAY THAT THE ROOM LOOKS IN WHICH YOU'RE IN, WHICH IS ANOTHER WAY OF BEING INCLUSIVE.

I WANTED TO POINT THAT OUT FOR OUR AUDIENCE.

WESLYN, I'M GOING TO STICK WITH YOU.

SO THIS TOPIC, ACTUALLY, IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME.

MY SON IS ON THE SPECTRUM, RECENTLY DIAGNOSED, AND IT'S ONE OF THOSE INVISIBLE DISABILITIES.

SO FOR ME, I'D LOVE TO KNOW HOW A.D.V.A.N.C.E. IS DRIVING GREATER DISABILITY INCLUSION ACROSS VERIZON AND HOW EVERY V TEAMER CAN SUPPORT THIS.

>> YEAH, ABSOLUTELY.

SO A.D.V.A.N.C.E.'S MISSION IS TO MOVE BEYOND JUST AWARENESS OF DISABILITIES TO TRUE ACCEPTANCE, INCLUSION, EMPOWERMENT, AND EQUITY, RIGHT?

THAT'S WHAT OUR REAL GOAL IS.

WE ENVISION TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD BY TECHNOLOGY, AS WE ALL WORK FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY TO MAKE IT MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL.

WE'RE CONSTANTLY DRIVING INCLUSION BY DOING SPOTS LIKE THIS, BEING ON UP TO SPEED AND SHARING OUR STORIES.

SHOWING EVERYONE THAT DISABILITY IS NOT A BAD OR DIRTY WORD.

HELPING TO EDUCATE FOLKS, BECAUSE THAT'S OUR NUMBER ONE AT LEAST FOR ME, ANYTHING THAT WE DO, WE TRY TO ALWAYS EDUCATE FOLKS ON THE VERY WIDE SPECTRUM ON WHICH DISABILITY EXISTS.

AND AS A BOARD, WE'RE COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT WE'RE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE IN EVENTS THAT WE HOST AND IN WHICH WE PARTICIPATE.

AND LIKE YOU CALLED OUT, YOU HEARD THE EXAMPLE OF BOTH JEAN AND MY INTRODUCTION WITH A VISUAL DESCRIPTION AND THE ROOM AROUND US SO THAT PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE US NOT ONLY KNOW WHAT WE SOUND LIKE, BUT WHAT WE LOOK LIKE AS WELL.

THIS IS A REALLY SIMPLE WAY TO BE MORE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE OVERALL.

AND WE ENCOURAGE ALL V TEAMERS TO ADOPT THIS PRACTICE IN THEIR MEETINGS OR EVEN IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES.

WE'RE ALWAYS SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND OTHER RESOURCES AND TOOLS.

SO IF YOU AREN'T A MEMBER ALREADY, JOIN A.D.V.A.N.C.E. AND JOIN OUR SLACK CHANNEL.

IT'S SUPER ACTIVE.

IT'S A TREASURE TROVE OF LISTENING HERE'S, SHARED EXPERIENCES AND SO MUCH MORE.

WE HAVE A VERY ACTIVE VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY AS WELL WHERE WE PARTNER WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT ALIGN WITH OUR MISSION.

SO WE -- WE HAVE SO MANY GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO -- EVEN IF YOU DON'T IDENTIFY OR KNOW ANYONE, YOU KNOW, JUST JOIN AND IT'S ALWAYS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY.

AND WE ALSO HAVE A DISABILITY 101 TOOLKIT IN THE DEGREED LEARNING PLATFORM WHERE PEOPLE CAN LEARN ABOUT THE HISTORY OF DISABILITY AS A CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND WHY DISABILITY REPRESENTATION MATTERS.

AND JUST DIVING FURTHER INTO THE INTERSECTION IN WHICH IT EXISTS.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I LOVE THAT.

AND SO I'M GOING TO TAKE A PAGE FROM YOU AND JEAN.

I'M WEARING A BLUE-PATTERNED SHIRT AND I'M IN THE LOBBY OF BASKIN HEADQUARTERS.

THANK YOU FOR REMINDING ME THAT'S A REALLY GOOD PRACTICE TO HAVE.

JEAN, I'M GOING TO TURN MY FOCUS TO YOU NOW.

I KNOW THAT YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT THIS.

TELL US, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MISSION CONCEPTIONS AND STIGMAS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES THAT YOU ARE AIMING TO ADDRESS?

>> YES, THIS IS JEAN.

THANK YOU.

I LOVE OF THAT QUESTION.

FIRST, I'LL JUST START BY SAYING IT'S -- IT'S REALLY DIFFICULT TO ADDRESS A STIGMA THAT, YOU KNOW, IS NOT COMMONLY ACKNOWLEDGED EVEN EXISTS.

IT'S STILL SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO BE LEFT OUT OF THE EQUITY DISCUSSION.

DISABILITY IS RARELY INCLUDED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE EFFORTS.

DESPITE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SUFFERING FROM LOW WAGES, DISENFRANCHISEMENT, HIGHER LEVELS OF POLICE VIOLENCE, INCARCERATION, DISABILITY STILL GETS LEFT OUT OF THE CONVERSATIONS OR IT'S JUST NOT PRIORITIZED.

WE AT A.D.V.A.N.C.E. IN JULY DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO KICK OFF DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH.

AND HOPEFULLY EVERYONE RECEIVED THE EMAIL THAT OUR AWESOME EXECUTIVE SPONSORS SENT OUT.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THAT EMAIL HE QUOTED ONE OF OUR SHEROES, SHE'S A WARRIOR AND SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE SEEN HER IN THE OSCAR NOMINATED FILM CRIP CAM.

HER QUOTE IS FABULOUS.

IT BASICALLY BEGS THE QUESTION, LIKE, WHEN IS IT GOING TO BE UNACCEPTABLE THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DON'T HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE?

AND BASICALLY THAT'S -- WE WERE INSPIRED TO HAVE OUR THEME FOR THAT MONTH BE NOTHING WITHOUT US.

AND WE ARE PUSHING FOR THE FACT THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BELONG IN EVERY ROOM AT EVERY TABLE, INCLUDED IN EVERY SINGLE DISCUSSION ABOUT ANY DECISION THAT IMPACTS THEM.

AND, YOU KNOW, HOPEFULLY OUR MEMBERS ARE CARRYING THAT FORWARD.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I AGREE.

THE WORD INCLUSION JUST NEEDS TO BE PART OF THE FABRIC OF EVERYDAY LIVING.

WE ONCE TALKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

YOU SENT US THIS BEAUTIFUL PHOTO OF THEM.

WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT A PHOTO OF THEM AND CAN YOU TELL US WHY THIS IS SO IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US TO SEE?

>> I'LL TRY TO DO THIS WITHOUT CRYING.

THAT'S THE MARSTON FIVE.

WITHIN OUR FAMILY OF FIVE, THREE OF US HAVE INVISIBLE ILLNESSES AND THE OTHER TWO HAVE DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS.

WE ALSO HAVE A SIXTH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY, OUR DAUGHTER THAT WE LOST IN UTERO MID-TERM DUE TO A CHROMOSOME DISORDER.

NOT A DAY GOES BY THAT I DON'T WISH I COULD HAVE RAISED THAT CHILD, NO MATTER HOW HARD THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN.

SO, YOU KNOW, AND THE BIG GUY THERE, MY HUSBAND, HE'S A STABLE VETERAN, THE FORCE FOR 27 YEARS, SO OBVIOUSLY IT'S NO SECRET WHY I'M SO EMOTIONAL ABOUT THIS TOPIC.

THANK YOU.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: OF COURSE.

I MEAN, I FEEL ALL THE LOVE THAT YOU HAVE FOR YOUR FAMILY AND ALL THE FIGHTING SPIRIT THAT YOU HAVE FOR YOUR FAMILY, JEAN.

WESLYN, LET'S TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERSECTIONALITY, ANOTHER WORD I LOVE.

MAYBE I LOVE WORDS THAT START WITH "I" BECAUSE THEY'RE SO POWERFUL.

WE'RE A COMPOSITE OF IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES.

SO WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT THAT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT DISABILITY WE ALSO TALK ABOUT RACE?

>> YEAH, THIS IS WESLYN.

THIS IS SOMETHING THAT I NEVER GET TIRED OF TALKING ABOUT, DIANA, WHICH I THINK WE SHARE THAT, RIGHT?

AS A BLACK, DISABLED IMMIGRANT WOMAN, I EXIST ON A WIDE ARRAY OF INTERSECTIONS.

I'M A MULTIMARGINALIZED PERSON AND THAT'S HOW I MOVE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

ALTHOUGH I MAY NOT SEEM LIKE IT, WITHIN SOME OF THOSE ASPECTS OF MY IDENTITY I HAVE CERTAIN PRIVILEGES, WHICH I LOVE TO ALWAYS CALL OUT. BUT I SEEMINGLY MOVE THROUGH THE WORLD WITHOUT SOME OF THE STIGMA THAT JEAN MENTIONED THAT IS OFTEN PLACED ON DISABLED PEOPLE.

MY DISABILITIES ARE INVISIBLE, LIKE I THINK I MENTIONED AT THE BEGINNING. I DON'T EXACTLY FIT THE VERY FINE AND UNFORTUNATE VIEW THAT SOCIETY HAS OF DISABILITY.

I, HOWEVER, WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO -- NOT THAT I'D WANT TO, HIDE MY RICH BROWN COMPLEX.

THE WORLD SAW LAST YEAR CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE DOMINATE THE HEADLINES. AND MORE PEOPLE REALIZE WHAT MOST ALREADY KNEW, THAT THINGS NEEDED TO CHANGE.

SO 50% OF PEOPLE KILLED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT ARE DISABLED.

RICE, MCKENNA, ERIC GARNER, AND OF COURSE GEORGE FLOYD LAST YEAR AND SO MANY MORE WERE ALL DISABLED VICTIMS OF STATE VIOLENCE.

AND MORE THAN HALF OF DISABLED BLACK PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN ARRESTED BY THE TIME THEY WERE 28.

THAT'S DOUBLE THE RISK IN COMPARISON TO THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS. SO FOR THIS AND MANY OTHER REASONS, I THINK IT'S EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT WE TALK ABOUT THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND DISABILITY BECAUSE RACISM AND ABLEISM GO HAND IN HAND, UNFORTUNATELY.

AND IT'S A THREAD THAT HAS BEEN WOVEN THROUGHOUT, YOU KNOW, NOT ONLY THIS COUNTRY, BUT THE WORLD FOR A REALLY LONG TIME.

SO WHEN WE START TO REALLY TRULY UNDERSTAND AND EDUCATE OURSELVES ON THE ROLE THAT EACH THOSE PLAY.

AND THEN WE CAN BEGIN TO MAKE NOTABLE PROGRESS BRINGING WALLS DOWN AND, YOU KNOW, GETTING EVERYONE A PIECE OF THE PIE, AS IT WERE.

SO IT'S NOT EASY, AND WE CONTINUE TO DO OUR PART EVERY DAY.

AND TO ROUND OUT MY ANSWER, I'LL ADD, I THINK THIS MAKES SENSE TO ADHERE MY FAVORITE QUOTE BY JENNINGS BOLD ONE, NOT EVERYTHING THAT'S FACED CAN BE CHANGED, BUT NOTHING CAN BE CHANGED UNTIL IT'S FACED.

AS YOU TALK ABOUT INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE MARGINS IN WHICH PEOPLE EXIST, I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE ALWAYS CALL THAT OUT.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I LOVE THAT.

THAT'S SO POWERFUL AND IT STARTS WITH THIS, RIGHT, HAVING THESE KINDS OF CONVERSATIONS WHERE WE HIGHLIGHT THOSE ISSUES THAT SOME PEOPLE MAY NOT BE AWARE.

SO GIVEN THAT IT'S NATIONAL DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BARRIERS THAT WE HAVE PREVENTING OR CHALLENGING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FROM FULLY PARTICIPATING IN THE WORKFORCE?

AND THEN HOW CAN WE INFUSE GREATER INCLUSION IN EVERYTHING THAT WE DO, ESPECIALLY AT WORK?

>> THIS IS JEAN.

THANK YOU, I LOVE THAT QUESTION.

I THINK -- WELL, FOR SOME OF US, THE OBVIOUS ONE IS, YOU KNOW, THE MISPERCEPTION THAT WE'RE UNPRODUCTIVE OR AREN'T CAPABLE OR EMPLOYERS ARE GOING TO HAVE TO PUT UP WITH BAD ATTENDANCE OR, YOU KNOW, CONSTANTLY BE MAKING ACCOMMODATIONS, YOU KNOW, THAT WAS BASICALLY A HEADACHE.

IT'S JUST NOT TRUE.

THE -- THERE'S TONS -- IF YOU'RE A DATA AND SCIENCE PERSON LIKE ME, THERE'S TONS OF RESEARCH OUT THERE THAT WILL TELL YOU THAT THAT'S NOT TRUE.

BUT I'LL JUST USE MYSELF AS AN EXAMPLE.

SO I STARTED WITH THE ATLANTIC IN 1997.

AND UNTIL I BECAME A MEMBER OF A.D.V.A.N.C.E., THERE IS NO WAY I WOULD SPEAK ABOUT THIS TO YOU OR ANYONE ELSE AT WORK.

IT WAS A VERY LONG TIME BEFORE I FELT COMFORTABLE SPEAKING OUT ABOUT ANY OF THIS.

AND I WANT TO SHOUT OUT ALL OF MY AMAZING TASK LEADERS, IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM.  
SOME OF THEM ARE PROBABLY SHOCKED RIGHT NOW TO HEAR WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.  
AND MOST OF THEM WOULD TELL YOU THAT I PULLED IT OFF, THEY HAD NO IDEA.  
AND, YOU KNOW, I SHOULDN'T REALLY HAVE TO DO THAT.  
I WAS ALSO AN ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY SPOUSE FOR ALMOST MY WHOLE CAREER, AND WE MOVED AROUND SEVERAL TIMES.  
MY LEADERS WILL TELL YOU IT WAS PROBABLY LIKE I DIDN'T SKIP A BEAT WHERE THE WORK WAS CONCERNED.  
AND THEY WERE ALL WONDERFUL ABOUT ALL OF IT.  
AND THE -- AND THE PROBLEM WAS NOT -- THE PROBLEM WAS MY OWN CAST DOWN INTERNALIZE ABLEISM AND WHAT SOCIETY HAD TAUGHT ME ABOUT THESE THINGS.  
AND I AM NOW LEARNING TO SHED ALL OF THAT.  
AND I KNOW NOW THAT I CAN BRING MY AUTHENTIC SELF TO WORK AND I KNOW NOW THAT IT'S OKAY FOR ME TO SAY THAT I'M NOT OKAY.  
YOU KNOW, INSTEAD OF HAVING TO, LIKE, COME UP WITH MY OWN HIDDEN ACCOMMODATIONS AND, YOU KNOW, KNUCKLE THROUGH EVERYTHING, I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT ANYMORE.  
AS PRODUCTIVE AS I WAS, THIS PROBABLY MAKES ME EVEN MORE PRODUCTIVE.  
SO IT FEELS LIKE, ONE, I COULD BE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE [ INAUDIBLE ].  
AND, TWO, AN EXAMPLE OF THE FACT THAT YOU DON'T ALWAYS KNOW THE FULL STORY.  
AND JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE IS NOT REACHING OUT TO YOU TO TELL YOU THEIR FULL STORY DOES NOT MEAN THAT OTHER THINGS ARE NOT GOING ON THAT THEY MAY NEED YOUR HELP WITH.  
AND ON TOP OF ALL OF THAT, WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY, YOU KNOW, WE SERVE SO MANY DIFFERENT CUSTOMERS AND WE WANT TO SERVE EVERYBODY, RIGHT?  
SO IF WE DON'T EMBRACE EVERYONE'S DIFFERENCES AND, YOU KNOW, BEST SERVE OUR EMPLOYEES AND UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES WITH ALL OF OUR EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING OURSELVES, THEN HOW DO WE BEST SERVE THOSE CUSTOMERS?  
AND I THINK WHAT'S AWESOME ABOUT VERIZON RIGHT NOW IS WE HAVE A WORKFORCE THAT WE COULD PULL FROM TO INCLUDE PEOPLE IN ACCESSIBILITY CONVERSATIONS TEST PRODUCTS, TESTING SERVICES.  
AND IF ANYONE NEEDS ANY PERSON WITH DISABILITIES INCLUDED IN ANY OF THEIR PROJECTS TO DO THAT, CONTACT A.D.V.A.N.C.E.  
WE HAVE, AS OF THIS MORNING, 3,200 MEMBERS THAT WE CAN REACH OUT TO AND THEY CAN BE A PART OF, YOU KNOW, BREAKING DOWN THOSE BARRIERS NOT ONLY FOR EMPLOYEES, BUT FOR OUR CUSTOMERS.  
SO THANK YOU FOR THAT QUESTION.  
>> DIANA ALVEAR: YEA.

I LOVE THAT.

AND I THINK IT'S SO IMPORTANT, AS YOU'RE SAYING, FOR YOU AND WESLYN TO TELL YOUR STORIES.

IT FREES OTHER PEOPLE TO TELL THEIR STORIES AS WELL TO SAY HEY, I WOULD LIKE ACCOMMODATIONS AS WELL.

AND IT NORMALIZES THE KIND OF CONVERSATION, THIS KIND OF WORKPLACE WHERE EVERYBODY IS INCLUDED.

SO I LOVE THIS CONVERSATION.

SO WE'RE GOING TO WRAP IT UP HERE.

I HAVE ONE LAST QUESTION FOR BOTH OF YOU.

AS YOU ALL KNOW, I'M A STORYTELLER.

I'M A BIG BELIEVER IN THE POWER OF REPRESENTATION.

SO CAN YOU BOTH BRIEFLY TELL US WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BRANDS TO CHAMPION THE STORIES AND EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES? AND I'M GOING TO HAVE WESLYN ANSWER FIRST.

AND I'D LOVE TO BRING UP THAT SECOND PICTURE THAT YOU PROVIDED.

WESLYN, CAN YOU PLEASE SPEAK TO THIS PICTURE AND WHY IT RELATES TO THIS QUESTION ABOUT HAVING BRANDS INCLUDE PEOPLE?

>> YEAH, ABSOLUTELY.

SO I'LL TALK A LITTLE BIT JUST AS WE MENTIONED EARLIER, THE THEME FOR OUR VERY FIRST VERIZON A.D.V.A.N.C.E. CELEBRATION FOR DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH WAS NOTHING WITHOUT IT.

WE HOLD THAT TRUE FOR EVERYTHING.

NOTHING SHOULD BE DECIDED FOR DISABLED PEOPLE WITHOUT ONE OR MANY OF US BEING IN THE ROOM FRONT AND CENTER AND AT THE TABLE.

SO WE SEE IN TODAY'S, LIKE, EVER-CHANGING TIMES AND EVER-EVOLVING TIMES THAT CONSUMERS THE WORLD OVER HAVE THE ABILITY TO GIVE AND TAKE BACK THEIR POWER FROM BRANDS IN MANY WAYS.

WHEN WE FAIL TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF WHAT THE WORLD LOOKS LIKE, WE MISS OUT ON THE IMMENSE POTENTIAL THAT THOSE WHO ARE NOT REPRESENTED HOLD.

SO JEAN AND I ARE JUST A BLIP IN THE VASTNESS OF WHAT DISABILITY LOOKS LIKE AND WHAT DISABILITY ACTUALLY IS OR ISN'T.

DEPENDING ON THE ANGLE THAT YOU WANT TO TAKE ON THAT.

AND IT'S MY OPINION, HUMBLE OPINION, THAT WE START BUILDING THINGS AND BEGIN TO MAP THE WORLD ACCORDING TO STORIES AND EXPERIENCES OF DISABLED PEOPLE AND WE INHERENTLY WILL MAKE THE WORLD BETTER FOR EVERYONE.

SO THAT COMIC THERE IS BY MICHAEL WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN RHULE THAT DEPICTS SNOW-COVERED STAIRS AND A RAMP WITH A MAN SHOVELING, A GROUP OF PEOPLE WAITING IN FRONT.

AND THE WHEELCHAIR USERS ASKS, COULD YOU PLEASE SHOVEL THE RAMP IN THE MAN ANSWERED THAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR THE STAIRS AND HE'LL SHOVEL THE RAMP AFTER HE'S DONE.

TO WHICH THE WHEELCHAIR USER REPLAYED, BUT IF YOU SHOVEL THE RAMP, WE CAN ALL GET IN.



THIS IS PROBABLY THE BEST ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION THAT IF WE AMPLIFIED DISABLED AND OTHER MULTIPLIED VOICES, WE'LL UNLOCK THE WORLD.

I THINK THAT SUMS IT UP, DIANA.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: THANK YOU.

AND, JEAN, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO HAVE BRANDS CHAMPION INCLUSIVITY?

>> WESLYN IS A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW, BUT I WILL TRY.

I SECOND EVERYTHING THAT SHE JUST SAID, BUT -- AND I LOVE THAT YOU SAID THAT YOU'RE A STORYTELLER.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE STORYTELLERS, ACTUALLY, IS -- IS PART OF DISABILITY COMMUNITY.

AND SHE WAS PART OF SOME OF OUR A.D.V.A.N.C.E. EVENTS THIS YEAR.

AND I -- I LIKE TO USE HER QUOTE ALL THE TIME THAT THE DISABLED COMMUNITY IS ONE OF THE ONLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES THAT YOU MAY BE FORCED TO JOIN AT ANY TIME IN YOUR LIFE.

NO ONE IS EXEMPT.

AND SO I FEEL LIKE BRANDS JUST NEED TO START ACCEPTING THAT THE FUTURE IS -- YOU KNOW, THAT THIS IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE, THAT THIS IS ACCEPTABLE AND THAT, YOU KNOW, PEOPLE AREN'T NECESSARILY LIKE LOOKING FOR CURES BUT ACCEPTANCE AND THAT EVERYONE'S BORN WITH THE INNATE, YOU KNOW, EQUALITY AND ALL HUMAN LIFE IS OF EQUAL WORTH.

AND INCLUDED IN EVERYTHING WE DO.

SO, THANK YOU.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I LOVE THAT.

YEAH.

AS A MOM I KNOW I'M A LITTLE BIASED HERE.

BUT MY SON JUST WANTS TO PLAY WITH OTHER KIDS.

MY SON JUST WANTS TO BE INCLUDED IN EVERYTHING.

AND SO I LIVE IT EVERY DAY.

YOU KNOW, SEEING THE POWER OF BRINGING EVERYONE IN.

IT'S JUST GOING TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD.

AND JEAN AND WESLYN, YOU BOTH MAKE A BETTER WORLD FOR US ALONG WITH EVERYBODY IN A.D.V.A.N.C.E.

SO THANK YOU BOTH FOR BEING WITH US TODAY AND TELLING US YOUR STORIES.

WE HAVE ALL LEARNED SO MUCH.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK HERE AT VERIZON.

YOU ARE CREATING MORE VISIBILITY, YOU ARE CREATING MORE AWARENESS, AND ABSOLUTELY APPRECIATION FOR DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE.

MY HEART IS FULL RIGHT NOW.

THANK YOU SO MUCH TO BOTH OF YOU.

>> THANK YOU.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: AND I WANT TO TELL YOU GUYS THAT HANS IS DOING HIS PART TOO.

SO RECENTLY, HE SAT DOWN WITH SWEDISH FILMMAKER AND DIRECTOR PAR JOHANSSON TO DISCUSS HIS LATEST FILM CALLED CATWALK.

NOW, IN THIS DOCUMENTARY, PAR FOLLOWS A GROUP OF ASPIRING MODELS WHO ARE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES AND CAPTURES THEIR DREAMS OF BREAKING INTO THE FASHION WORLD.

AND ONE OF THE MODELS FEATURED, EMMA, ALSO JOINED HANS AND PAR TO SHARE MORE ABOUT HER STORY AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

YOU'LL GET TO SEE THAT CONVERSATION IN JUST A FEW MINUTES.

AND WE HAVE AN EXTRA SPECIAL SURPRISE FOR V TEAMERS.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO SEE THE ENTIRE DOCUMENTARY, YOU GET TO CHECK IT OUT AS AN EXCLUSIVE ON OUR INSIDE VERIZON APP.

SO IF YOU DON'T HAVE THAT INSIDE VERIZON APP, COME ON, MAN, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

DOWNLOAD IT FROM THE APPLE APP STORE OR THE GOOGLE PLAY STORE.

ONCE YOU DOWNLOAD IT, YOU CAN SIGN IN, SEARCH FOR CATWALK, GET THAT POPCORN AND ENJOY.

AND, AGAIN THERE IS AN EXCLUSIVE.

THIS IS JUST FOR VERIZON EMPLOYEES.

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE AND GENEROUS OFFER FROM PAR, EMMA, AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN CREATING THIS REMARKABLE STORY.

BY THE WAY, TOMORROW HAPPENS TO BE MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY.

SO THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SIGN UP AND SUPPORT OUR ADVANCED ERG.

HELP THEM DRIVING GREATER INCLUSION WITHIN VERIZON AND BEYOND.

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION, BECAUSE OF COURSE YOU KNOW THIS, TOGETHER WE CAN AND WILL MOVE THE WORLD FORWARD FOR ALL.

WITH THAT, I'M GOING TO TOSS IT TO HANS.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR HANGING WITH ME TODAY.

I'M DIANA ALVEAR.

DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEONE IF YOU CAN, AND UNTIL NEXT TIME, YOU'RE UP TO SPEED.

>> HELLO, EVERYONE, AND FIRST AND FOREMOST, THANK YOU FOR BEING WITH US, EMMA AND PAR.

WE'RE IS GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE MOVIE THE CATWALK, WHICH IS A POWERFUL STORY.

AND, EMMA, I'M GOING TO START TALKING TO YOU A LITTLE BIT, BECAUSE YOU ARE SORT OF THE ONE OF THE LEADING ACTORS IN THIS DOCUMENTARY.

AND IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUR DREAM TO BE IN FASHION AND DO THE CATWALK. TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DREAM AND HOW YOU ENDED UP BEING PART OF THIS FANTASTIC DOCUMENTARY.

>> THIS IS VERY MAGIC AND VERY WONDERFUL.

I THINK IT'S VERY FUN.

I AM THE MODEL IN THE MOVIE, AND I HAVE MANY FRIENDS FROM THE MOVIE.

YEAH, VERY FUN.

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> AND, EMMA, YOU SHOW A LOT OF AMBITIONS AND YOU REALLY WANT THIS. HOW DID IT START AND WHY WERE YOU SO EXCITED TO BE ON THE CATWALK?

>> YEAH.

I WAS VERY EXCITED ON THE CATWALK AND I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS.

>> A LITTLE?

>> YEAH, LITTLE NERVOUS.

BUT I THINK -- YEAH, THIS IS VERY FUN.

IT'S GREAT.

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> AND, EMMA, HOW DID YOU LEARN TO KNOW PAR?

DID YOU KNOW PAR BEFORE OR HOW DID YOU GET STARTED?

>> I WRITE LETTERS TO PAR BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WAS MEAN TO ME IN THE SCHOOL.

SO TO SEE I AM VERY BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE.

AND VERY FANTASTIC GIRL.

>> FANTASTIC STORY, EMMA.

I KNOW A LOT --

>> THANK YOU.

>> -- DETERMINATION CAME FROM YOUR [INDISCERNIBLE] WHERE PEOPLE WERE MEAN TO YOU.

LET ME ASK PAR A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS.

>> YEAH.

>> PAR, YOU AND I HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR I'M NOT SURE HOW LONG. SINCE YOU WERE A LITTLE BIT YOUNGER THAN ME BECAUSE YOU ARE YOUNGER THAN ME.

WE WERE BORN IN THE SAME PLACE AND WE WERE BORN BOTH OF US VERY EXCITED ABOUT SPORTS ALL THE WAY.

BEFORE WE COME INTO THE MOVIE, PAR, YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH THE CHILDREN, ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES, AND THE CHALLENGES FOR BASICALLY ALL YOUR ADULT LIFE.

>> YEAH.

>> WHY HAVE YOU DONE THAT AND WHEN DID YOU START?

>> I START FOR 25 YEARS AGO.

I HAVE A DREAM TO BE A FOOTBALL PRO, BUT I -- MY DREAM NOT COMING, SO I GUESS I WORK WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

WHEN I CAME THE FIRST MEETING, THE GUYS I WORK WITH, I SEE THIS WAS MY PLACE ON EARTH.

SO I -- I START TO SEE AFTER -- BECAUSE I WANT TO MAKE THESE PEOPLE SHINING, I WANT THE PEOPLE GET EXPERIENCE.

I WANT -- I WANT TO PLAY THE CHARACTER FOR MYSELF.

AND 1996, WE SOLD 400 TICKETS.

WE GIVE AWAY 350 TICKETS BECAUSE NOBODY WANTS TO SEE IT.

AND NOW WE HAVE SOLD OVER 500,000 TICKETS THE LAST THEATER.

I LOVE TO WORK WITH PEOPLE LIKE EMMA.  
THEY ARE INCREDIBLE PEOPLE.  
SO I LOVE THEM A LOT.

>> THIRD MOVIE?

>> YEAH, THIRD MOVIE.

I DO TWO MOVIES BEFORE, BUT THIS MOVIE IS A SMASH HIT.  
IT'S A MOVIE THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN SEE.

BUT I WANT TO THANK YOU, HANS, FROM ALL THE SUPPORT AND LOVE AND  
COMMITMENT YOU HAVE EVEN DURING THIS CATWALK PROJECT AND THE  
WHOLE [INDISCERNIBLE], YOU HAVE COMMIT US FOR 15 YEARS.

AND NEVER COME WHAT WE IS TODAY IF YOU DON'T HAVE SUPPORTERS.

SO WE ARE SO ETERNAL GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

>> THANK YOU, PAR.

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> I CAN PUT IT IN CONTEXT FOR OUR V TEAMERS, [INDISCERNIBLE] WHAT'S  
THE NAME OF IT, PAR IS AN ARTIST SELLING OUT THEATERS, MUSICALS AND  
THEY IN COMMERCIALS TODAY, HE IS BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS IN  
MANY WAYS AND HE IS ALSO TAKING THAT TO EXPORT TO MANY COUNTRIES.  
PAR, THIS MOVIE, WHAT STORY YOU WANT TO TELL AND WHAT'S THE THINGS  
YOU WOULD LIKE THE AUDIENCE TO LEAVE WITH WHEN THEY'VE SEEN THIS  
MOVIE?

>> WELL, EMMA WROTE THE LETTER TO ME AND I DECIDED TO DO THIS FILM.  
I WANT EMMA TO BE ABLE TO PUT THINGS RIGHT.

EVERY PERSON DESERVES THEIR PLACE IN SOCIETY.

EMMA AND HER FRIENDS MAKE SURE I LIVE MY LIFE AT TOP VOLUME EVERY  
DAY.

THEY TAUGHT ME NEVER BE ANYTHING OTHER THAN YOURSELF AND YOU  
SHOULD NEVER STOP BELIEVING IN PEOPLE'S AMBITIONS TO DEVELOP.

>> SO THERE ARE TWO CHALLENGES HERE, I'M GOING TO ASK YOU THE SAME  
QUESTION.

FIRST OF ALL, YOU DECIDED TO BE PART OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY, WHICH  
IS ONE CHALLENGE.

THE OTHER CHALLENGE, IT'S IN NEW YORK.

YOU BROUGHT YOUR ACTOR TO NEW YORK.

I THOUGHT WITH YOU EMMA, IT WAS A FASHION INDUSTRY IN NEW YORK.

WHAT WAS EXCITING WITH THIS DOCUMENTARY TO COME TO THE U.S. AND  
DO ALL OF THIS?

>> IT'S MY FAVORITE IN THE DOCUMENTARY.

IT WAS WHEN I GOING ON THE CATWALK IT WAS VERY BEST.

>> WHEN YOU WALK THE CATWALK, EMMA, YOU MET AN IDOL, I THINK, FROM  
AN EVENING PROGRAM.

>> YEAH, IT WAS ALEXANDER JAY FROM [INDISCERNIBLE].

I HAVE A TEAM [INDISCERNIBLE] AND I'M DOING -- YEAH.

ON THE MR. ALEXANDER JAY AND HE'S DOING THAT.

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> FANTASTIC, EMMA.

>> YEAH.

AND I THINK HE SEES THINGS THERE.

OH MY GOD!

THIS IS ALEXANDER JAY!

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> THAT WAS A GREAT MOMENT, EMMA, AND UNDERSTAND EXCITEMENT. PAR, FASHION INDUSTRY, YOU BROUGHT THE WHOLE CREW OF YOUR BEST FRIENDS OVER TO THE U.S. AND YOU WANT TO MAKE THE MOVIE.

>> YEAH.

>> I REMEMBER YOU CALLED A COUPLE OF TIMES.

THERE WERE SOME --

>> YEAH.

THE WHOLE THING WAS PREMISED IN NEW YORK AND WE DO IT IN ENGLISH.

I TRY TO DO MY BEST.

BUT WHEN WE GO TO NEW YORK AND STANDING WITH THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM, I WAS SO NERVOUS.

AND I WAS HERE BY EDA, SHE HAD DOWN SYNDROME, SHE'S ONE OF THE LOVELY CHARACTERS IN THE MOVIE.

I SAY TO HER, EDA, I'M SO NERVOUS.

BE CALM.

I'M REALLY GOOD IN ENGLISH, YOU CAN -- YOU CAN LEAN ON ME.

CAN YOU SAY AN ENGLISH WORD?

SHE SAID [ SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ].

>> ALL THROUGH THIS YEAR, OF COURSE, YOU ARE A CELEBRATE IN SWEDEN AND ALL OF THAT.

WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING RIGHT NOW AND WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

>> I WILL START WITH MY CLOTHES COLLECTION, '80S CLOTHES, NECKLACE, AND EARRINGS ON THE '80S.

>> THAT'S A FANTASTIC IDEA ABOUT YOUR PLANS HOW WE MOVE FORWARD AND ALL OF THAT.

PAR, IF I TALK TO YOU THEN, YOU HAVE BEEN ON FOR 25 YEARS OR 20 YEARS AND YOU HAVE DONE YOUR MOVIES.

WHAT DO YOU THINK CATWALK AND ALL THIS MOVEMENT TO CHANGE THE PERCEPTION IN OUR SOCIETY AND SEE THAT EVERYBODY'S INCLUDED WHEREVER THEY COME FROM AND WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING AND WHATEVER DISABILITY THEY HAVE, HOW DO YOU TAKE IT FORWARD NOW, PAR?

>> WE'RE GOING TO DO A LOT OF THINGS.

WE WANT TO DO A WORLDWIDE TOUR WHERE WE SHOW THE CATWALK MOVIE AND DO THE CATWALK LIVE.

I HAVE A BIG DREAM TO COME BACK TO NEW YORK AND UNITED STATES AGAIN AND WE WANT TO GO TO TEN FASHION WEEKS IN THE WORLD. AND SPREAD THIS.

AND WE WORK ALSO WITH THE SCHOOLS, SO WE HAVE A PROJECT IN SWEDEN CALLED CATWALK IN SCHOOL.

THAT'S 100,000 STUDENTS TO SEE THE MOVIE AND WORK WITH THESE. AND ALREADY WE HAVE WORKED WITH THE PROJECT IN EIGHT MONTHS AND NOW WE HAVE ALREADY 8,000 STUDENTS IN THE PROJECT. IT'S SO AMAZING.

AND I THINK THE CATWALK JOURNEY IS AT THE START YET. SO WE'RE GOING TO FLY TO A LOT OF COUNTRIES AND WE SHOULD DO A LOT OF WORK TO CHANGE.

I WANT EMMA AND SHE'S FRIENDS TO BE A NATURAL PART OF SOCIETY SO THEY CAN BE A PART OF -- OF THIS WONDERFUL WORLD THAT I WANT HER TO EXPERIENCE.

>> PAR AND EMMA, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TALKING TO THE V TEAMERS. WE ARE SOME 120,000 OF US, AND YOU HAVE GRANTED US EXCLUSIVITY TO SEE THIS MOVIE.

AND IT'S GREAT THAT VERIZON WOULD HAVE THE CHANCE TO DO THIS. AND I TELL ALL MY EMPLOYEES THAT THEY SHOULD SHARE AT HOME WITH THE FAMILIES WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR OFFICE. THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THIS DOCUMENTARY WITH THE FAMILY, SHARE THE VIEWS OF THE IMPORTANCE ON INCLUSION, BELONGING, DIVERSITY IN OUR SOCIETY BECAUSE THAT'S CORE VALUES FOR OUR COMPANY.

AND ALSO JUST SO YOU KNOW, WE HAVE A RESOURCE GROUP THAT IS CALLED A.D.V.A.N.C.E. WHICH IS -- WHICH IS -- WHICH IS A GROUP OF EMPLOYEES THAT HAS DISABILITIES AND THAT ACTUALLY PROMOTE INTERNALLY, HELP WITH US THINKING ABOUT WHAT PRODUCTS WE NEED TO HAVE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

BUT ALSO SEEING THAT IN THE WORKPLACE.

SO IF THE V TEAMERS WANT TO JOIN THE A.D.V.A.N.C.E., THEY CAN DO THAT AS WELL AND HAVE THE CONVERSATION GOING ON.

BUT FOR US, IT'S JUST AN IMPORTANT MOMENT TO HAVE BOTH OF YOU HERE AND THAT YOU TELL THE STORY AND HOW YOU BRING FORWARD INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY NO MATTER WHAT CHALLENGE YOU MIGHT HAVE.

AND WE ALL HAVE OUR CHALLENGES AS, PAR, YOU USUALLY SAY.

I WOULD LIKE TO END WITH THAT.

EMMA, GOOD LUCK WITH THE FASHION LINE YOU'RE COMING UP WITH.

PAR, CONTINUE YOUR FANTASTIC WORK TO SEE THAT DISABILITY IS SHOWN AS A NORMALITY, NOT A SIDE AND EVERYBODY'S INCLUDED.

SO THANK YOU VERY MUCH, GUYS.