

THE WECO

Access From the Start

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TRANSCRIPTION PROVIDED BY CAPTION ACCESS AND NICOLE FULLER

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This transcript represents the Transcriber's best efforts to express the full meaning intended by the speakers. This is a meaning-for-meaning representation, not a verbatim transcript.

Lynn: We have 422 members right now, which is a record. We have a growing membership. In January, we launched a new phase. It was a lot to manage. It's growing the membership.

We are changing a few things for the membership in 2020. We've talked about this a lot in the last year with the Staff Team. We released a survey for the members in the spring or summer. Not everybody responded, but we got a nice sampling of the membership.

As you can guess, it gets hard for a little company to deliver this for free. We reached out to the members to see what they thought about paid memberships. This is what we came up with.

I love these old photos from the first office. Everybody looks a little x-rayed there. I don't know why.

It's about the delivery cost and the growing interest. We need more staff. We're mission based, we believe in it, and we love the accessibility community we're building. There's a lot of different disciplines in this room. That's what we want. We want to work with each other.

From the survey, we learned people love to meet, but no one wants to run it. We love to do it, but we have to defray the cost of staffing it.

I'm going to pass this summary out if you want to see it. We can email it to you, too. From the survey, people felt like a meeting cost of \$10 - \$20 was reasonable.

The Meet Up system doesn't let us sell tickets per meet-up. We want to stay on that system, because everybody is familiar with it. They only do memberships. We thought we would ask for an annual membership for \$50. If a company has 50 employees or less, then it would be a \$250 membership. If you have more than 50 employees, it would be \$500. We can work with you.

That \$50 would give you entrance to every bi-monthly meet-up. You would get priority notification and could sign up for them right away.

If you're a company, all your people can come for free. We have not put a limit on that. We want to keep it simple for you and us. If it gets crazy, we can talk about changing that. If a company wants to sponsor, then their staff, employees, and contractors should be able to come. Companies can have their logo displayed on the website and during presentations.

Does that seem reasonable? Okay. Next slide.

You don't have to do a membership if you don't want to. That's Bill. [Laughter.] [Multiple speakers.] It's an awesome shot there.

We thought we would do \$20 at the door, so people can sample it. We might have to get a Square, because we don't do that type of commerce. We decided it would be \$20 at the door. There's ATMs outside the door if people need it.

The next step is to look at the information. Andy will email it through the Meet-Up system. You'll get an email option if you want to join it.

This is awkward. We talked about disbanding. We have a really sharp business counselor that we work with. He is always making us look at the returns on investments and our resources.

We think this is a great community we're building. It can be hard for companies to get involved in something like this because of the red tape. Sometimes it's hard to get people in the door. We are positioned to do it, so we want to do it.

Any questions?

With that, we're going to move onto our programming for tonight. This is a topic we thought it would be fun to end the year with. We hear from new clients, "How do we do this? It is hard." We tell them to incorporate it into their everyday work.

I thought of three members that are in varying stages of get their accessibility efforts within in this group. These are on pretty big scales. But, there's a lot of things you can apply to a small business or creative firm.

I encourage you to ask a lot of questions of these people tonight. It's fun to watch and learn from the members. Tonight, we'll introduce them starting with Ryan Houghman from General Mills. Ryan is part of an organization that is starting out.

Second, we'll have Teresa with US Bank. [Background noise.]

Then, we'll end with Bill from Optum. He's been an encyclopedia of accessibility. We call him a lot. He works with the W3C. He's immersed in this. You'll get different ideas of where this can go.

I'll turn this over to Ryan. We have a slide for your introductions and your notes.

Ryan: I was expecting Bill to go first. I was going to say, "What Bill said." [Laughter.] That didn't work out.

[Can't hear/can't understand.]

You have that nice photo there. [Can't hear/can't understand.] [Laughter.]

[Background noise.] [Speaker moving away from mic; hard to hear.]

There's a ton of them. We create them for North America and consumers around the globe. We have designing teams. [Background noise.] It's different than what we have in Australia.

[Background noise.]

In addition to working with the branded sites, I've worked with other operating units [inaudible] on accessibility. These include our sales teams, product innovation, human resources, etc. We're starting to get tough on other areas. That's what I do on the day-to-day.

I'm sitting next to Tim [Inaudible.] He is responsible for the people that sit on the team. [Inaudible.] He is a senior developer if you have any questions on that, direct them his way.

My personal accessibility journey is a little bit different than most people. I didn't realize I was on that journey until a month ago. My background is that my mother was [Inaudible.] Her specialty was working with children who live with disabilities. Raising a child with a disability is difficult. [Inaudible.] They wanted a break once in a while.

I was exposed to a diverse community all my life. I've seen all different disabilities. I created relationships with these kids and families.

My step father was born with spina bifida. [Inaudible.] If I get emotional, it's a lot. I've witnessed my step dad overcome so many obstacles. He got his PhD and teaches. He has sponsored a softball league. He's sponsored [Inaudible] in the field of education. He's done a lot.

All of these experiences have shaped who I am. But, I didn't know I was on an accessibility journey.

When I got into the field of design, I didn't know I would work in accessibility. [Inaudible.] Here we are. That's my background. It's pretty cool.

As Lynn said, with General Mills, we're at the beginning stages of incorporating accessibility. I don't want to talk about the organization, but I want to talk about our team incorporating accessibility in the day-to-day.

I don't know how we had the initial conversation. We were probably at lunch, or an issue came up, and we started talking about solving a problem. [Inaudible.] How do we best serve all consumers? [Inaudible.]

That got us into doing our own personal research. We did research on our own. [Inaudible.] For me, I was focused on design. I was focusing on color contrast, buttons, and target areas. I stumbled on cognitive disabilities and spacing out content. Then, I looked into screen readers and the linear process. You can't just jump around.

It kept growing and leading from one thing to the next. We wanted to develop a plan and a process. We talked about creating sites for different brands. We thought about making a template for the experience. Then, we could create an expected user experience. Once a consumer could use the website, then they could jump to other brands.

We looked at areas where we had problems, like images [Inaudible.] That was not accessible content. We addressed those issues and made a check-list to solve those problems. We communicated that to our internal teams and then operating services, like human resources. I think that's where we started.

Tim: It was a natural progression. We've focused on accessibility over the last few years. As I learned more, I had more questions. I felt like I was guessing a lot. I'm not a keyboard-only user, so I could not answer some of those questions.

I went to Ryan and said the heading hierarchy didn't make sense. We had a lot of great discussions. We needed a guiding light. That's where we reached out to find the experts. We wanted real testers.

I'm a privileged white guy that can use my fingers. [Laughter.] I'm not a great testing methodology. Ryan is an amazing designer, but there's some things that we looked to each other for. We needed more expertise, so we brought WeCo into that. We met at a meet-up.

Ryan: We took it to the next level that way. We knew about a meet-up for accessibility. We showed up. [Inaudible.] A lot of them are coming to the meet-ups.

I reconnected with Lynn. I had known Lynn in a previous life. I didn't know she was going to be running the show. We reconnected. We used them as a resource. We picked their brains.

Then, we hosted a workshop. You came out and educated our teams. Then, you came out again to talk to our agency partners. You did a live audit and talked about how the users understand and receive the content. That was eye-opening for our organization.

Now, we're in the process of putting together an audit on four sites. I think that's the key to this. Going back to what Tim said, we're not experts. We're advocates. We found the right people to connect with.

[Inaudible.]

Tim: In how we pitch that, it's a business. We wanted our websites to have more eyeballs. If you leave out different groups, you're leaving out different buyers. That made it an easy sell. Also, General Mills is about doing the right thing. If we can make our websites accessible, then that's what we'll do. We'll do what it takes.

It's been wonderful having WeCo involved. We had different roles in General Mills. We had project managers, analysts, and designers involved. It was everybody. It brought the whole thing to life. It is a real problem we have to stay on top of.

Ryan: We're experimenting with different tools like Wave. [Inaudible.] We were running audits. We have an existing site we ran an audit on. We made notes on it. [Inaudible.]

We designed a new site. Before we run sites, we test them before the launch. We're trying to guess how to fix errors. We look for false positives. Then, we try to fix them. We're hoping as we build more sites, we can create a backlog of issues to address. Then, we hope that WeCo can identify the issues and let us know if we've fixed them.

Tim: [Inaudible.] We want to be confident about the accessibility. [Inaudible.] Waves can be tricky. It's a common scenario. [Inaudible.] What went wrong? What can we fix?

That's the helpful part of the template approach. If we get it right once, then we can duplicate that on different sites.

Lynn: Any questions?

Speaker: Are you building a pattern library with your team? That would be a prime tool.

Tim: We don't call it a pattern library. We have a default theme in Word Press with accessibility in mind. Each brand looks different, like Cheerios versus Lucky Charms.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Tim: That comes along with the ride. We build in best practices. Each product becomes unique at some point. You can't keep them all the same.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Speaker: [Inaudible.] Do you have an accessibility team? [Inaudible.]

Ryan: We currently don't have an accessibility team. [Inaudible.] [Speaker turned from mic; can't hear.]

[Can't hear/can't understand.]

Tim: [Inaudible.] Everybody is thinking about accessibility, even our product manager. They look for red flags.

Lynn: Any questions?

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Lynn: Can you restate the question for those getting captions?

Ryan: That's a good question. What do you think? You can answer and I'll respond. [Laughter.]

[Multiple speakers.]

Ryan: "What has been the greatest challenge in starting the process?" That was the question.

Tim: You don't want to limit the functionality of a website. [Mumbling.] Having a super-collaborative process [trails off.] That was the learning curve for us. We had to get past that with a Waterfall process.

Ryan: [Turned from mic; can't hear.] We want to eliminate legal risks. Then, it drives innovation. We've created some quick components out of the collaboration. It was easy to talk to [Inaudible.] We asked what they meant or what they wanted to do. [Inaudible.] That was not an issue for us. It's still not an issue.

Lynn: Any questions?

Speaker: [Inaudible.] Is there a way to capture the knowledge you're developing? [Inaudible.]

Ryan: We're in the process. We've got a few PowerPoint presentations we've shared around. I'm creating one-sheets that we can pass out with our information. We might have a one-sheeter for an agency partner that's different from the one for the sales team. [Inaudible.] These are checklists and things they need to know about accessibility. That's helped a lot.

We find any opportunity to talk about it. We create discussions in the quarterly meetings we have. I put it in my priorities and objectives for my end-of-year review. I set accessibility as a priority at the beginning of the year and create a metric for that. I want to move each website to 98% accessibility, for example. [Inaudible.] When it's below 100%, I want to know what's flagged.

We have good support in the organization. I check in with my manager once a week or twice a month to talk about priorities. For me, it's a part of my ongoing conversation all the time.

Speaker: If you could look into a crystal ball, could you guess your company would work toward [Inaudible]? Would that be knowledge that can be used through different organizations and in different structures?

Tim: I think it's responsive web design. We had to think about that in 2012. It was hard for people to adapt to. I want everybody to think about it naturally as they do it. I think we're headed that way.

I think we went in the wrong direction with .html and Flash. We have wonderful testers. But, when it comes to design, we should be able to [trails off.]

Ryan: With the websites we're creating, it's a template. We reuse the same framework over and over. If we design it once, and it works, we fill it with content.

When we create new applications, we have an agency or development partner. We put a lot of pressure on them. That's a part of the contract. When they develop for us, [Inaudible.] If it's not, they will fix it for no cost. That's part of the contract.

Our team is a vendor partner. [Inaudible.] Instead of having a full-time accessibility team, we work with WeCo as our accessibility team.

Lynn: It doesn't appear we have further questions online. Going, going, gone. You can ask questions later if you think of them.

I'm taking over for Andy for the moment. Oh, you're going up front? Great. We're going to switch the camera for Teresa from US Bank.

Teresa: I'm Teresa West. I'm the Accessibility Programmer for the IT department of our organization. We have offices throughout the United States. There I am! [Laughing.]

I started a journey in 2018 that I'll talk about later. I've been with US Bank for 11 years after working in the airline industry. I'm back in the Minnesota area. We have a child with special needs. That has brought me closer to this topic of accessibility.

I'm a Senior Product Manager. That's where I started. I'm the Program Reader for Accessibility on the IT side.

Lynn: I took it off.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Let's talk about some milestones during my journey at the bank. I begin in 2015 on a special project. We worked with a consulting firm. They wanted a site specifically for [Inaudible] which was on trend. You don't want a separate site. You want it all incorporated.

When the site was launched, I was asked to do an analysis of the defaults. We worked with the makers of JAWS to work it out. We had extra funding, so we started some training on JAWS.

I became an Advisory Board Member at the bank for accessibility. The banking industry is heavily regulated. We have a lot of policies to make sure everybody is doing the right thing.

The following year, I took over the US Bank marketing platform. We moved to a new publishing product. We started socializing the new policy for accessibility. On the new platform, we made a big change for accessibility. Our original site had over 5,000 pages.

As we went to the new platform, everything was supposed to be accessible. We brought in a firm that helped us through the process. We moved forward on the platform.

The second year of USbank.com, we pulled up more accessibility pages. Within the organization, I could see that we were growing pockets of accessibility experts. This was reassuring. It was like the movie *Field of Dreams*: If you build a policy, you think people will conform. But, you have to think about the infrastructure.

Training is key to people being successful. It's not easy for developers, because there's so many different ways to solve a problem. With General Mills, [Inaudible.]

In 2017, our policy has been doing fundamental training. I frequently have a training session with 300+ people. Or, I might train a whole division.

Then, US Bank put the walk behind the talk. They built an accessibility team of testers. They hired people that are native screen readers. [Inaudible.] That is key to accessibility. [Inaudible.] He had a developer's background. That was coupled with US Bank testers. We saw great traction with that.

I took on a role with accessibility last year. I'm creating awareness at all levels. We're seeing a lot of activity on different projects.

We have some old platforms with entrenched technology. When you have older platforms that deal with money, you have to be careful. When you're logging in or looking at transactions, it's very complex. I did come case studies. [Trails off.] It was often too complex to fix before we released it. Like your company, we created backlogs.

Our projects at that time was done with the Waterfall method. When the project was done, our team was torn down. That meant there was no continuity between projects.

From 2017 through this year, we're rolling out accessibility and we're going through technology shifts. We're in Safe Agile now. Those changes have an impact. We're starting with new models. Along with those technology shifts, we've been working on delivering accessibility awareness and education in our programs.

Today, I have a small team that I started with some developers that act as consultants. Any team can reach out to me or a team member for help. I have a quality engineer that provides training and helps with questions. Until now, we had our folks using the free tools out there, like Wave. We have not had formal training.

We are engaging in an Enterprise Live training. We're using this across the entire company. This will give them an in-depth foundation. This will be training for all the screen readers and browsers, for example. We're going to implement that in 2020.

We're also implementing on the Value Stream. I could dedicate another session with that. We have a group that works with the Value Stream team. [Inaudible.] The wire frames, content, visual design, etc. is accessible. Then, the coders code for these forms of accessibility. This has been going on since 2018.

We're defining the roles and the knowledge people need to deliver accessibility to the marketplace. Also, our testers are required to manually test for accessibility. We're putting tools into place for this.

Our developers scan the code. They use a test tool to identify up to 40% of accessibility issues. Rather than sending it downstream, and backlogging it, we want the code scanned before it's merged. Then, we'll scan the pipeline. We'll have two "gates."

We have other things. They will upload in a test file with their stories. That will be part of the compliance audit. There's a lot of checks and balances, so we can do better with getting to the marketplace without backlogs.

[Inaudible.] We are requiring our QV folks to run Assure. [Inaudible.] It will walk through checkpoints for documentation. This tool is great, because it automates failures into the tools we use for Agile. It will create a test. It identifies a failure, but tells them how to fix it. We're training people on this stream.

I'm sorry to talk. I'm used to talking about ITS. Our designers will be trained on these accessibility checkpoints. We have a lot of moving parts. Our leadership is 100% behind us for our success for accessibility.

I'm really excited about it. We've done a great job to date, but I know there's more we can do to make our folks successful. This will be turned on next year.

In working with our legal department, they have new vendor contracts. Anyone embedded in the audits, need a compliance statement from an accessibility [Inaudible.] They will do a touch test to make sure.

We've written this into our code of ethics. We don't want to scare anyone. We want everybody to know how serious we are about making strides in that role.

That's a lot to say in a short period of time. We do digital road shows where we talk to people about the Value Stream for 30 minutes. You got the short version.

I'll pause for questions. Ask me anything.

Speaker: Do you include accessibility in your definition with Agile? Do you write success criteria?

Teresa: Yes. We're implementing those tools, because [trails off.]

Speaker: When you upload those files found in the quality assurance, are they attached to users?

[Multiple speakers.]

Speaker: It's smart enough to bind them. [Inaudible.]

Teresa: Each tester or developer has their part of the story. We also have filters, so we can see progress.

Speaker: Are you building libraries?

Teresa: Yes. All of our components are tested. Our logo has been tested and called to action.

Also, I don't know if your company does this. A lot of our development has gone offshore. That adds more complexity in aligning and training them with what we do stateside.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Teresa: My team is the Technology Accessibility Team. We are in lock step with the User Accessibility Team. As soon as something kicks off, a consultant is added to the team. [Inaudible.]

This is something that unfolded in the last six months. I'm quite happy to be a part of this discovery.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Teresa: We'll see. It's been working really well. We still have a long way to go. When we have consistency, it becomes a part of the normal process. [Inaudible.]

Speaker: Does Agile help with compliance?

Teresa: We're on Safe Agile. The program readers are incredible with working [laughing.] [Multiple speakers.]

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Teresa: When you're testing right away, it doesn't build. If you wait, to tear it out and redo it is not elegant.

Speaker: No one does it unless there's a federal compliance issue.

Teresa: We do it on the ground level. Going back is tough, but it can be done. [Inaudible.]

I think you had a question.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Teresa: Go ahead. I'm sorry.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Teresa: The tool is called Assure. It's a suite of tools we're using from DQ.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Teresa: They have a free version that can be used for testing. The Assure tool is a step-by-step process with checkpoints. If people don't have the experience, it helps them. They tell you to use the screen reader to make sure it works. It's exciting.

We look to reduce our risk from 100% to 80% with those tools. I bet we get to 90%. It's amazing with these big projects. We're also shifting left with the accessibility design.

If you think about it, [trails off.] If you don't have that up front, it's really hard downstream.

Speaker: You mentioned there's new policies for vendors to meet standards. Are you providing them with anything to make sure they are using the right tools or processes?

Teresa: We have vendors that come to us for help. It's hard. It's hard. You have these big vendors embedded in the products.

As part of our contracting process, they have to be accessible up to the required expectation. They say they are accessible. When we do a spot check, they are usually nowhere near accessible.

Now, they have to get certified by an outside accessibility expert.

Speaker: Is that before you work with them?

Teresa: Yes. That's before any consideration.

Speaker: When you get an RFP on something, one of the mandates was about compliance. Are you seeing more of that with software?

Teresa: I'm on the other side. That's customer facing. I would suspect so. Our company wants to do the right thing. We want everybody to have access to the content with the same functionality.

Also, we started a Center for Excellence in Practice. [Laughing.]

Speaker: That's what our group is called.

Teresa: [Mumbling.] We meet quarterly throughout the United States. We invite colleagues. We have an agenda. We talk about the issues people are facing and promote communication. It creates comradery and support. It helps get things moving throughout the organizations.

We also have a fun thing. We make these little pins. People can get nominated for recognition pins. We have accessibility pins. It's kind of fun. It's the little things we do to support the efforts.

Speaker: Any questions?

Teresa: Okay. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Lynn: I really tried to tone that down.

Bill: Optum is one part of it. Unlike this previous speaker, I'm just a Principle Digital Accessibility Engineer. [Mumbling.] I've been doing this since 1984.

When it comes to personal journeys, I don't have an extensive one as far as accessibility. I had an uncle that had polio. He put up scaffolding to paint buildings. For me, I think more about digital accessibility.

In the '80s, I was in college. There was someone who was blind. We had an Apple that didn't have a monitor. That was scary.

About a decade later, I had a friend that was a St. Paul fan. [Inaudible.] I became friends with their radio color commentator named Don. I learned a lot about accessibility from him. Don had anophthalmia. He was born without eyes.

Don would do the program for the games. If you listened to it, you could tell that he was using braille. I was friends with him. I had to learn how he did things. His partner would read the stats for both teams and he would braille it out.

That also meant that his partner was great with descriptive audio. Don could then know what was going on. Don kept a lot of notes. [Inaudible.] It was all these little things.

He dealt with situations like a braille breaking on the road. How do you get that fixed? I learned these things from him. [Inaudible.]

Ultimately, I was exposed to accessibility in 2002. [Inaudible.] I was a developer, coder, and designer. I dove into learning accessibility. I'm still learning today. I'm an advocate, but not a spokesperson.

Around 2013, I was a Java script developer. They wanted me to do accessibility. I thought, "Are you kidding?" Since then, I've been doing accessibility full time.

In the first few years, there was not a lot of things to do. [Inaudible.] We are a Fortune 600 company. We're huge. There's United Health group, and Optum. [Inaudible.] I was in Boston.

At that point, six years ago, the journey on the accessibility road was the genesis point for our group. We recognized that we didn't have much going on with accessibility. Things were changing and we

needed to have that. We had a target lawsuit that was going on for about a decade. We have millions of people using and needing our products.

In a company our size, the executives ask, "build or buy." Some of us wanted to do the work and grow with it. They decided to build. We could have bought and consolidated.

We've grown to the Accessibility Center of Excellence. We're one of the largest groups. [Inaudible.] We're a private non-consulting firm that's internal to the organization.

We also have an accessibility practice within the business that deals with health plans for communities, state government, and federal government. There's about six people in that group. [Inaudible.]

We have about 250+ products. [Inaudible.] As I said, they decided to build. That also means we are huge. We have about a quarter million people worldwide. We have so many products, markets (domestic and international), and other issues that makes it hard to make a model.

Our journey will not map with other people's. When I thought about how we would be the group we would become, I would not have predicted about how it happened. [Inaudible.] We don't follow any plan. There's not many companies our size [Inaudible.]

For the first few years, I had the luxury to get the foundations of things like "role-based accessibility." I took it several levels beyond. I see accessibility as an extension of usability from the '80s.

The only difference is that you have the law on your side. The heuristics are the same. If you don't make your site accessible, you will be sued, especially if you have a target on your back. [Inaudible.] [Laughter.]

We moved very slowly. [Inaudible.] I've talked to someone at the time who did accessibility. People talk about Section 508. That's not our driver. Ours is the Affordable Care Act.

Our department grew quickly. We had contractors coming in. We had hundreds of products to address. [Inaudible.] We had to upgrade the training materials. With the role-based, we had done that as an internal pilot that we had to refactor for different roles, including the business office.

I did a presentation about four years ago on how I became an expert on DQ. [Inaudible.] I thought they should get someone who knew more. [Inaudible.] That was work that would be presented for outreach and education.

That scales down to all sizes in role-based training. In our organization, the logistics are crazy. We would need 125 people if we had a half an engineer for each product. It's hard enough to find the people we need locally.

Ultimately, we just can't scale that way. We do products that are critical. We have a process that's been in place for years. We're trying to train people who do the work about these things.

I've done some role-based analysis. A lot of the analysis shows that the accessibility is not magic. I had slide decks on this. The majority of them are things that your UX designer or coder should know. [Inaudible.]

The content office should be a friend. Most of the writers I work with already have writing guidelines. They write for the criterion that's about junior high level. [Inaudible.] We did all those things.

We started by trying to train everybody on their jobs. We continued to do that, and all that. As we grew, we built internal resources. We tailor it for buyer stories. We have examples and standards. We are growing our talent pool. We have experience from different backgrounds.

We have people with different abilities. We have some screen readers, people with hearing deficits, etc. We've hired people from the open. We also have graduates from a program. We are finally caught up enough that we can build things out starting next year.

Starting next year, we'll finally be able to spend time on infrastructure. I didn't want to be a manager, so I don't have visibility on a lot of that. I can't give you the information that a lot of managers could.

I can give you clarity as to where we're going as we've stumbled through the process. There's a series of seminars from Level Access. If you look up DAMM, there's a great presentation. I'll pull it up on my iPad. I took notes from all the webinars and blogs. Then, I put that into one document.

This document identifies everything you've heard tonight and more. The DAMM model has ten levels: government, risk management, communications, legal, fiscal management, testing and validation, procurement, and [Inaudible.] [Mumbling.] That's about the statement of work or performance.

We touched on testing tools. Some don't work for us. We're evaluating them. Sometimes, we don't have the budget for them.

Also, how do you scale when you have 100 products coordinating at different business levels. We work on a level that most businesses don't. [Inaudible.]

There's other areas we have such as the regulatory section. We deal with state and federal governments, so we have to be covered there. [Inaudible.]

When talking about Agile, [Inaudible.]

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: That's one. That's a special flavor of Agile.

I'm on projects where they farmed the work to outside vendors. We don't use it. We are one company. We have one of everything according to our portfolio. We bought all the companies we've needed. We try to integrate and digest. That's a challenge.

Ultimately, what I've seen over time is that we've been using these different models. There's some areas we've grown. Some of it can be about how you participate with accessibility. On the Enterprise level, we become a part of the W3C. We put together the proposal. I didn't have to be an invited expert. [Inaudible.]

We still face challenges. We have products we do evaluations on. They are still not where they need to be. There's challenges there. We're facing that.

There's three human resources dimensions along with the other ten dimensions. [Inaudible.] They wanted to meet with people of all abilities. That gives you the DAMM model of human resources. If you're using Taleo, you're not accessible. There was a webinar four years ago [trails off.] I'm sure there's people that know about that.

Our staff is aggravated by "reasonable accommodation." What does that mean? Microsoft Office is mostly accessible, but is your internet mostly accessible?

Staff evaluations is the third human resources dimension. If you have people with different abilities, can they achieve the goals of job definitions? [Inaudible.] That was a bad example.

When you look at the topic for tonight of growth, I work from home. I look at these situations. I don't know where we're grow next. There's a framework where I can handicap the race. I can see where things are going to happen and the frustrations that will come.

[Background noise.] [Can't hear/can't understand.]

Teresa was talking about communicating with her Center of Excellence. On GAD, we had our own web summit. We had that to people outside of our organization, too.

I had a manager from 3M say they liked our presentation and asked us to do one for their team. In September, I presented my material to UX designers there that are in the early stage of accessibility. They are where I was 15 years ago. [Inaudible.]

They know the site needs to be accessible. They knew there were lawsuits that could apply to them. That helps me understand it as it goes forward.

Each dimension has five levels. Google Level Access DAMM. You'll find it. I did it when I was sitting here. I think they still have the streaming presentations from four years ago. The slide deck is still there. That will give you a sense of it.

In our own organization, you look for what fits your group. You'll face these challenges. You've heard the same statements. We need to train developers.

When I did role-based analysis, I wanted to see how early you could shift left. We created a checklist prototype for when we got an FRP. [Inaudible.] There were style guides and requirements. It went all the way through.

We can apply that checklist to any design document. We're trying to come up with a way based on our internal process to get to the AA standard. We want a standard. [Inaudible.]

For the most part, that's guided me. Closing the session, if you're looking at what you need to do, knowing the full pictures, and then identifying how far you want to go is important. Our organization is trying to be proactive at an international level. That's level five. [Inaudible.] I would not have anticipated that.

You can decide what fits your group. Are you measuring it? Are you just undefined and making progress? Are you setting goals?

There are other goals out there than Level Access. That one works for me. It's separate from what lawsuits or legal precedence will guide us. You have to have external audits, etc.

That should be all of my time. I will take questions.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: There's one director, four managers, and about 30 or so engineers like me at different levels.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: Center of Excellence is a pre-dated term.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: It's one of those cases where you can't trust the terminology. [Inaudible.] It's like information architecture. When I see a job application for information architecture for something else, it's an abuse of the terminology.

In our case, it's the Digital Accessibility Program. We're the DAP. We'll have an APO. In a formal organization, there's an [Inaudible.] I've met one from Microsoft. They weren't going to hire me, but [trails off.]

What was your question? I'm not sure if I answered that.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: We got to be the centralized group. There were few accessibility people full time. That happened about four years ago. They consolidated multiple UX teams in our organization. Then, they recognized the company was so large, there were silos of set teams. It became the group that I was supposed to have been hired into years ago.

Any questions?

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: As soon as possible. I'm on projects now. When we hired, you were assumed to have taken the online training. [Mumbling.] I was doing three sets of trainings at different times. The sun doesn't set on us. There's offshore installations. [Inaudible.]

The training was supposed to be built in. We can't scale for the hand-holding of initial training. I put together the slides of things they are already supposed to know. [Inaudible.] Don't be too trendy. [Inaudible.]

The training has been key. We didn't have a lot of documentation initially. We're building that. We have an Accessibility Counselor. We have brainstorming sessions to look for different solutions. We're formalizing that. We write it up. We have a group with different backgrounds of expertise.

It can be a Moscow model. We have [Inaudible.] There's a minimum, accessible, and optimum. You can use whatever terminology to figure out how to encourage the model you want.

We've built portfolio management. We had the DAP director for Target's AC properties. [Inaudible.] She was frustrated. [Inaudible.] That was our goal. We're working toward it.

We're trying to help with fairly usable accessible experiences. But, we really want an ideal experience. [Inaudible.] I tried to see if there was anything like that for accessibility, but there is not. I don't know if someone can correct me, because we would like to have it.

With best practices, you want a usable, friendly, and positive experience for everybody whether they use a screen, touch screen, mouse, screen readers, etc. Those are the things that give me excitement about where our group is going.

Since we got the engineers, and they have the products, there's a big market. We have a lot of goals. They have the executive leadership. If you want a product to be accessible, you need someone to drive that. It might be driven by fear or because it's the right thing to do.

Our project got ramped up because of 5057. They had someone that went through the ringer like Target. He found the money and made that happen. We went from 5 - 6 people to 30 in less than a year.

When it comes to a talking point, I tried to do that at Blue Cross. It would come up at the University of Minnesota. [Inaudible.] Happily, I could answer their questions. You have to have support.

One of the maturity models is that have the CTO support. You need someone who gets it and supports it. They have to make sure it happens.

I sat there for a few years knowing the company had to get somewhere. [Inaudible.] That's the sort of thing that will happen to any organization. You've heard it from General Mills and US Bank. You have to have the support.

If you have anyone that understands the user experience, you can leverage that. It's the same thing.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: Do you know John? He was your predecessor. He did accessibility through about 2005. I was looking up his name. I knew him through UPA. [Inaudible.]

This was the first time I saw a braille business card.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: I'm not sure what he oversaw. It was some of those things, like ATMs.

Speaker: Do you think organizations buy in more easily because of federal government compliance?

Bill: It's driven by fear a lot, such as with 5057.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: Where I was, it would be a lawsuit. When you're a certain size, they can make things less usable.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

[Multiple speakers.]

Bill: You're not qualified. The RP we're trying to fill out fails.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: It's a matter of how far you want to go. Again, I don't have a lot of visibility these days. I have to sit back and read the signs that are out there. When you see the CEO of your project, such as the business segment, [Inaudible.] You're waiting to hear it's important.

When it comes to training, the lawsuits say you have to train everybody in the organization. You don't want to hear the anecdotes. You don't want to hear someone calling that says. [Inaudible.] These are things that can happen in organizations.

In the webinar series, they talk about Taleo. It's really bad for accessibility. It still is. It's a matter of what drives the vendors to change things.

Speaker: Deborah asks, "What is your recommended starting point for a company just adding accessibility to business practices?"

Bill: You need a champion from high enough in the organization that can move things. You can have a great team that spend extra time learning things. That's great. If you want to change the product, someone has to make that a line item so it becomes a requirement. You need someone to pay for that and make sure it's happening. You have to give them the return on the investment. You have to find the carrots and the sticks, so they can make the business case.

Speaker: [Inaudible.]

Bill: People with disabilities are more likely to use the healthcare system. That website should be accessible for everybody. When you look at our business, you have to deal with HIPAA. A lot of people are familiar with that. That's a part of 5057.

When I talk to a doctor, I have to fill out a questionnaire. If I have to talk to someone to fill it out for me (a friend, a family member, or someone else), it's a violation of HIPAA. It's about the awareness and communication.

Going to back to the champion, you need someone to support it and push it forward. With HIPAA, organizations have been sued. In the literature, there's a lot of great stories on structures to keep from being sued. If you have someone coming after you (the National Federation of the Blind, for example), work with them to work it out and not get sued.

The timeline will be set by the courts. That's why lawsuits like Dominos are interesting. There's organizations that try to go right. Even in the current political climate, things are still being enforced, like the ADA. The ADA did not go away.

Lynn: We have to wrap it up. Thank you to our wonderful guests. I'm always blown away at the knowledge we have in our midst.

If you are inspired and want to present on something you're working on, you don't have to be as advanced or as knowledgeable as everybody in this room. Your experience will speak to someone in the group. Email Andy or Kelly with your idea. We'll put together a calendar for next year. We would like members to present.

I would like to thank our presenters. Our General Mills folks are new to this. Bill and Teresa are and have been wonderful partners.

Thank you for coming tonight. Stay safe in the snow tonight. Have a great Thanksgiving. And, we'll see you back here in January.

[Applause.]

Please come up for a picture.

[Multiple speakers; can't understand.]

[End of session.]