

# Disability Employee Engagement

*The Next Frontier of Disability Inclusion*



**Amplify**  
Action. Results. Impact.

# The Power House:



Meg O'Connell

Meg is the CEO & Founder of Global Disability Inclusion; she is an internationally recognized disability employment and inclusion expert with over 25 years of experience in human capital management, talent acquisition, performance management, disability inclusion, employee engagement, marketing, and customer service programs. Meg and her team have worked with some of the world's most recognized brands and provides strategic program design, development, and implementation of disability employment and inclusion programs for Global 500 companies, US Federal Contractors, colleges and universities, non-profits, and foundations. Her work has received numerous accolades including the Society of Human Resource Management's (SHRM's) Innovative Practice Award.



Dr. Peter Rutigliano

In over 25 years of external consulting, Peter has provided data analysis, interpretation, and recommendations for many organizations across a variety of industries. Peter joined Mercer in 2007; over the years since Peter has been working with client organizations to drive change through engagement surveys, onboarding surveys, exit surveys, 360 surveys, as well as other survey efforts. Peter is a trusted advisor to many Fortune 500 companies throughout North American providing insights and actionable recommendations to CEOs and other corporate executives. Additionally, Peter manages the Data Analytics Group within Mercer which, among other duties, maintains the company benchmark database. In addition to his position at Mercer, Peter is on the Corporate Advisory Board at Hofstra University. Peter is also a committee member for SIOP (Society of Industrial / Organizational Psychology). Peter maintains an active research program with over 90 publications and scholarly presentations including a consistent representation at the SIOP annual conference.

# One of the most powerful tools companies use to drive organizational change is engagement surveys

## Assesses Workplace Programs

- Provides feedback from **employees** on corporate policies, programs and procedures
- Enables **companies** to receive data on how programs impact various populations

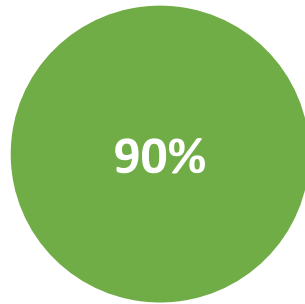
## Drives Strategy & Development

- Identifies **gaps** between populations
- Feedback is often **an impetus for change, or new program development**
- **Benchmarking** against other organizations (industry, geography etc.) helps companies understand how they fare with their peers

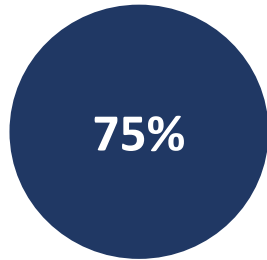
## Employee Experience

- Employees often feel **safe to be “honest”** through the survey instrument
- Employees have a powerful **voice in creating change**
- Employees are able to provide information on everything from tenure, to leadership, to intent to stay and workplace culture

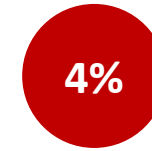
# Yet, Disability Employee Engagement is a gap companies are only just beginning to explore



Investigate gender as a diversity segment



Investigate race / ethnicity as a diversity segment



**Only 4% of companies investigate disability as a diversity segment**

Source: 2007-2018 Mercer Engagement Survey Benchmarks



# This led Mercer and Global Disability Inclusion to study 10 years of global data examining disability employee engagement

## Disparities: Disabled vs. Non-Disabled



People with disabilities often feel micromanaged, or feel a lack of trust they will make good decisions.



People with disabilities feel like there is greater risk of consequences for sharing new ideas or opinions.

# The differences between employees with disabilities and those with out disabilities is stark

## *Disparities: Disabled vs. Non-Disabled*



A low-ranking question across the board. But people with disabilities feel significantly less recognized when doing a good job.



People with disabilities often feel their well-being is not of interest to the company. This could be the “don’t ask, don’t tell” approach until a few years ago.

# A few questions showed little differences between disabled employees and non-disabled colleagues cont.

## *Disparities: Disabled vs. Non-Disabled*



Employees with disabilities rank the ability to achieve their career goals -7% less than their colleagues without disabilities.



While EWD believe they are treated with respect, they do not believe people of diverse backgrounds can succeed.



# A few questions showed little differences between disabled employees and non-disabled colleagues

## *Disparities: Disabled vs. Non-Disabled*



Employees with disabilities feel they are treated with respect with only a -5% difference. Yet, this is still a call to action



Even though we saw employees with disabilities Don't feel they are allowed to make decisions about their work, they believe their work-load is reasonable.



# These differences are meaningful because a call to action is only a 5% difference

## *Action & Opportunity*



- In all of Mercer's survey data there are no real engagement differences for:
  - Age
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Sexual Orientation
- Yet, disability has some of the largest differences across all engagement categories.
- Companies are missing out on data from their largest diversity segment.
- The opportunity to impact what is likely 15-20% of the employee population is monumental.

# Often perceptions exist that disabled people are less happy in general, as well as in their work experiences

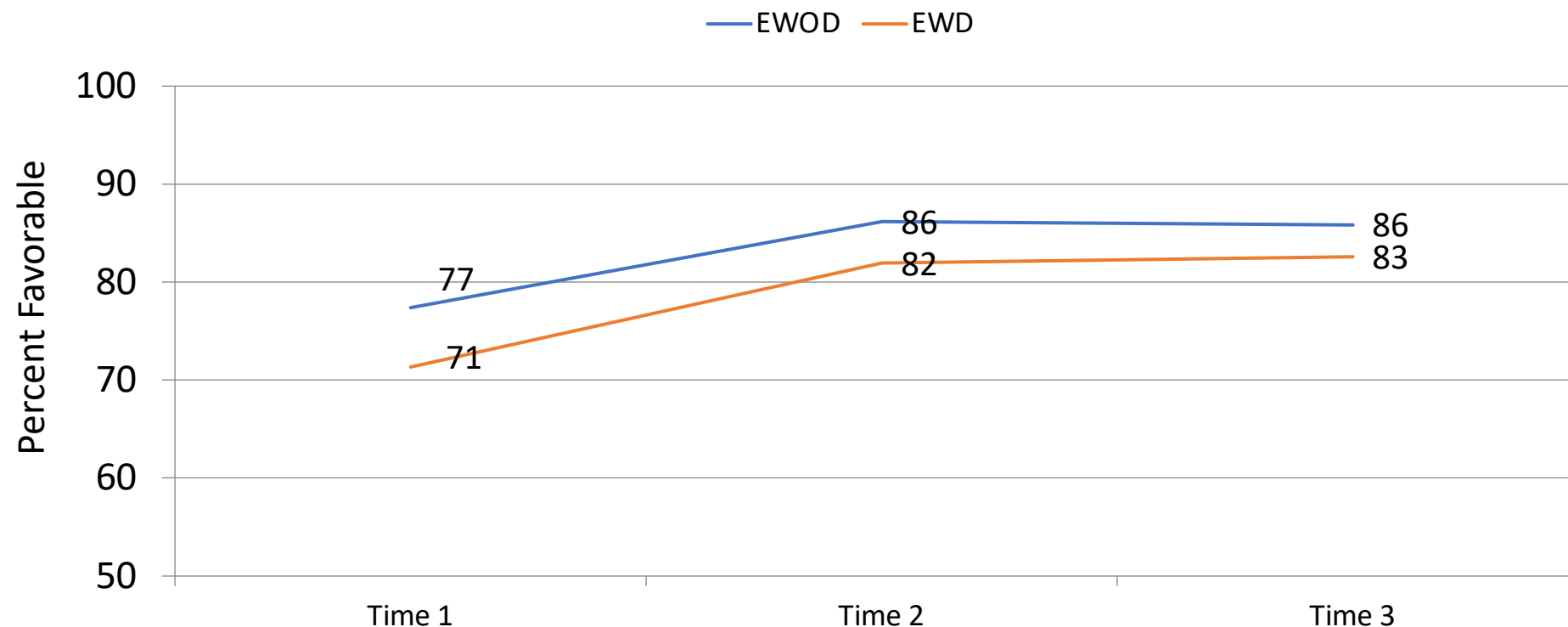


- Our data indicates **new hires with and without disabilities are equally enthusiastic at the start of their employment experience.**
- There is **little difference in their perceptions about inclusion, advancement opportunities and ability to contribute**



- However, as **employee tenure increases we begin to see differences in the engagement of employees with disabilities.**
- This might be an indication that the **climate and culture of the company do not meet the expectations**; they do not feel they belong perhaps because they do not perceive an open environment for disclosure of their disability.

# The question is, can we make a difference? Absolutely.



Case Study: A company who chose to take strong position on disability actions show the progress they made in engagement in 3 short years.

# Microsoft is a leader in disability inclusion and is a company to emulate

Highlights	Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Microsoft is <b>leading the tech industry</b> in disability inclusive product design</li><li>➤ <b>Disability Answer Desk</b> offering resources to customers on accessibility features</li><li>➤ Hosts annual <b>hack-a-thons</b> to tackle some of the biggest issues facing customers with disabilities</li><li>➤ Autism Hiring Initiative</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Chief Accessibility Officer</b></li><li>• Accessibility Office ensures an inclusive environment for both customers and employees</li><li>• Disability Employee Resource Groups</li><li>• Business Resource Groups</li></ul>
Lessons Learned	



**Demonstrates** buy-in and commitment at the highest levels and will establish the standards for other companies to follow. Continuous learning mindset exists to ensure ongoing progress and expansion of inclusion for customers and employees. Action oriented – with an eye on innovation.



# Northrup Grumman has designed an inclusion framework that works to embrace all abilities

Highlights	Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Centralized accommodations process</b></li><li>➤ Self-Id Campaign to encourage disclosure and help evolve the conversation on disability inclusion, and enhance supports</li><li>➤ Establishment of an <b>Employee Resource Group VOICE</b></li><li>➤ Increasing recruitment at colleges and universities to focus on students with disabilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Inclusion framework with 9 pillars from infrastructure to community outreach</b></li><li>• <b>Creates a support system on the job of mentors, buddies, coaches &amp; managers</b></li></ul>
Lessons Learned	



**Infrastructure is key:** Northrup Grumman used a targeted approach and created a framework for disability inclusion to be integrated into all aspects of their business.

# What can be done? Companies must begin to investigate and understand the employee experiences of people with disabilities

## *Amplify Survey Dimensions:*



**Round 1: September 2-17<sup>th</sup>**

**Round 2: February 14 – March 4, 2022**

- **Diversity & Equity** (e.g., colleagues with disabilities are treated fairly and with respect)
- **Enablers/Resources** (e.g., in my work group my opinion seems to count)
- **Climate & Culture** (e.g., my company is open to disability status conversations)
- **Leadership** (e.g., publicly senior leaders promote diversity and disability)
- **Achievement** (e.g., I have the opportunity for advancement in my company)
- **Identity** (e.g., I am comfortable disclosing my disability status, I am comfortable having people with disabilities disclose to me)
- **Disability Inclusion** (e.g., accommodations, disclosure/self-id, remote work, and workplace safety etc.)

# Companies will receive many benefits...



- ☐ Dedicated survey link for easy distribution
- ☐ Full data sets
- ☐ Summary of findings and shareable report
- ☐ One hour consultation with Global Disability Inclusion & Mercer to review survey highlights, discuss recommendations and industry trends
- ☐ Benchmarked against our 12M data sets
- ☐ Optional ability to work one on one with our disability specialists

# Questions, Comments, Thoughts



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