# Walgreens' Secret to an Inclusive Workplace Webinar – Transcript

6 July, 2017

KEVIN

It is a good 20-minute summary of that. And this session this morning really is not to re-present that, except to say if you’ve heard it, it builds upon that story. If you haven’t heard it, go back and listen to it after this so you can still get the effect. But really, I heard Randy at that conference, and I was inspired. And, what I want to say, is anyone who’s been there was probably inspired, I guarantee. Inspiration is not enough. We can all be inspired, and feel really good and go “well that was great”. And I hope, I really hope, that at the end of this that I am able to take that inspiration into action, and by modelling it through Woolworths’ experience and journey, but also sharing what we’ve learnt. So, like you, I went “wow!” And, I looked at this, and I went and spoke to a lot of my friends in the safety arena, because it’s what I do in my day job, and I talked to different companies, and I said, “let me tell you about this guy, let me tell you about Randy.” And, I realised very quickly that people around the room said, “That’s great, wow, that’s fascinating. But, how do you know?” And if you’re a catholic like me, you have to see to believe. And so I went, OK, just telling them and re-presenting the stories back isn’t working. So I decided that I would jump on a plane and make, literally, a pilgrimage to Anderson, South Carolina. And let me tell you, for anyone who hasn’t been there, it is a hike! That’s a hike just from Washington, DC to Anderson, South Carolina. But I went there, and I went there because I wanted to come back and share with my colleagues, particularly in the safety space, but more broadly like you today, what I actually saw, and what is a practical application of this. [coughs] Excuse me.

So, I’m onto this first slide, which basically just recaps the belief systems. Not all people, I’m obviously generalising here, but these are the general belief systems that exist. There’s more than just this. In effect, is shows what people say or think. They say, “We don’t want to hire people with disabilities because it’s a safety issue, they’re going to get hurt.” They say, “Well it’s not productive, because, you know, a person with disability, they’re slower, and they’re not going to get the job done. And when they get hurt it effects productivity again.” They say things like, “Well, people with disabilities are difficult to manage, and difficult to manage their performance, and I don’t want to say the wrong thing. We’re good people, we mean well, but this is getting too hard already. They’re definitely not reliable, because they get sick all the time. They must get sick.” And this one’s more true, the next one, in Australia I find more than anywhere else, is that “Everybody in a wheelchair – the only people with disability are people in wheelchairs, because we can see this. It’s a visible thing, we can see it.” And then of course the classic one for organisations is, “The union will not accept it anyway.” So, I’m so you could add to this list of things, particularly people who have lived experience, you will have a much richer experience than my little dot points on the slide. But I suspect, I suppose, this is what we encounter in this space, and what I hope to give you today is the roadmap to, or the antidote to fixing these belief systems, then rechannelling them. Because everything on there is absolutely true, for everybody. I find, personally, performance managing difficult. I don’t know whether the person has disability or not. That makes it difficult. But that’s my skill challenge, right, I’ve got to develop that challenge.

So, let me tell you, I’ll go to the next slide, and for anyone with visual difficulty, I’ll describe the slides for you as I go, so you don’t have to rely on the image. So, this is Randy and his son, Austin. So, after that conference, Randy came to Woolworths at Norwest, and it was a hike to get there too I suppose, that’s the payback for the Anderson trip. So, off to Norwest he comes. And, after the session, he grabbed my arm, I still remember it so vividly, and he said, “Hey, do you know what it’s like for a parent with a child with a disability, in particular a child on the autism spectrum, do you know what it is like for a father, for a mother, for a parent?” And I was – there was a long pause there, because I don’t even know how to answer that question. I don’t have a child with a disability, and I don’t really know and live with – well I know a lot of people but I don’t live with someone with disability. And I wasn’t about to guess. And he’s still holding my arm, and he says, “What do you hope for, do you have kids, Kevin?” And I said yes. And he said, “What do you hope for, when you’re about to have a child?” And every parent, anywhere in the world, says one thing: it’s I don’t care if they’re a boy or a girl – maybe some cultures prefer boys, I know that – but, you now, as long as they’re healthy. And, he said, “Right. So, Austin now, we know he’s on the autistic spectrum”, and this was my one thought, this is where my ‘ah ha’ moment comes from. He said that, “We hope to live just one day longer, maybe one hour longer, than our child. Because when we’re gone, we’re not sure what will happen.” Now check out the TED Talk, that will give you the detail behind that. But when he said that to me, I’ve bene on this board since 2006, and, you would think by now I know some stuff. And I realised at that moment I know nothing at all. And I have my own biases and my own thinking about what this thing should be. And so that was my first kind of thinking around this, and so I said to Randy, I said, “Look, I don’t know, and I’m not about to guess.” If you know Randy, you know not to guess. But I said, my wife works, she’s an accountant, she quit her job and she works with kids on the autistic spectrum, and she tells me stories, but yet I’m not even going to try. And so, he went on to ask the second question, he goes, “You’ve heard my talk, now what.” And I said, “Well, what can I do to help?” is what I said, right. And he said, “That’s an interesting question.”

So, If I just go to my next slide, he said because, when Randy discovered this, the reason why he said about to create this, is he wanted a future for Austin. And people like Austin. And in his own distribution centres, he started to discover that there were people with disabilities working there that he hadn’t noticed before. And so, he one day saw a group of people, he walked up to them, and he was so excited about the possibility and he said, “Oh, the answer’s right here in front of me.” Because, if people with disability can get a job, then they belong, they have purpose, they make friends, they have a community, and perhaps I don’t have to think like a father that goes, “I have to live one day longer”, because there will be an environment, a community, and places where people with disability are included, not excluded. And so, he interacts with these people, he got really excited, then he met the person who was in charge of them, and she said, “You do know I’m not one of them, right?” And he said he went from a high to an immediate low, that he couldn’t imagine that the culture of an organisation he’s leading has this kind of ‘us versus them’. And he knew at that point that he had to make a difference. So, he set out to go and ask his leadership, his boss, Greg Wasson, and he says, “Hey, let’s build the best distribution centre we’ve got down in Anderson, lots of people down there I believe. And he wanted to build this distribution centre with 30 per cent of that workforce with people with disabilities. And we’ll come back to that in a second, but in effect he said, Greg went, “Yeah, that’s good, let’s go to the board and ask them”, and didn’t really make a decision. So, he went to the board at Walgreens, and the board said, “Ok, yeah, that sounds like a great idea, but what if we fail?” And he said, “We’ll do what we’ve always done; we’ll learn, we’ll adapt, we’ll overcome, and the board said, “Ah, yeah, I’m not so sure.” To which his response was, “Hey, I’ll tell you what. If it doesn’t work, you can fire me.” And they said, “OK”. Now I’m sure there was some discussion between that dialogue, but in effect, there’s a moral to this story, there’s a purpose to the story. Because he left that meeting, and he went and he spoke to the legal guys and girls, and the safety folks, and the HR folks, and they all responded by – and I’m sure on this call there is HR people, and perhaps safety people, and perhaps business people and diversity folks – and he said, “It’s really interesting. The ideology of a lawyer is to fight injustices of the world. The ideology of the safety person is to make sure nobody gets hurt. The ideology of HR folks is to help people, to nurture talents, to give them purpose, to rain and develop them and retain the talent, and make sure we have inclusive workplaces.” But then we get these jobs, we being me, Kevin, Head of Safety for Woolworths, and all that ideology goes out the window, and we think about risk and liability. We don’t say, “What can we do to help?” So, he went to ask these guys and they said, “Oh, I don’t know about the liability, and people will get hurt and we’ll have PR problems because the union won’t get it, and they’re not reliable and managing performance is difficult, and we’re going to get sued.” So, we get back to the belief systems. And I said, “So what did you do?” And he said, “I’m the Vice President of Walgreens, and I realised very quickly if they’re telling me this, I’ve got no chance now.” So, he said, “I said what I said to the board. I said, ‘If we win, if we win, and we make this work, we will celebrate together. And if we lose, and this fails, the board’s going to fire me.’ To which they responded, ‘What can we do to help?’” So, the first thing I would encourage you to do when you’re thinking about this, if you’re taking these slides or just this conversation back to your workplace, is remove fear. And you cannot remove fear by simply telling people someone else has done it. You can’t remove fear by simply saying, “Here’s the research article that proves it works”. You cannot remove fear like I did, by telling people about these successes, not failure avoidance. None of these things work. So that t-shirt on that slide which says, “It’s all my fault”, is the answer to removing fear. So, I went back to the CEO of Woolworths and I said, “Hey, we want to do this”, and he said, “Sure, Walgreens, it sounds interesting actually”. And I said, “Here is the deal; if it fails you can fire me.” And he said, “OK. So, your new mantra from today is, go out there.” And, look, two things: nobody’s going to fire you. If they do, you probably shouldn’t work for that place anyway. And so, I know this is recorded so I probably should be careful! But it’s good advice. And my view is, walk around there, just see how liberating it is, and try for anything by the way. It doesn’t have to do with this stuff, you can just go, “Look, if it fails it’s my fault,” and you will have innovation. You will have people giving you ideas that you’ve never seen before. So, first step, remove fear. Remove fear by taking responsibility and just saying, “Hey, it’s my fault if it fails. If you fire me you’re off the hook. But if we win, we celebrate together.” Let me pause here. I know I can end up talking a lot, but are there any questions responsive to that. I can’t see you, so make some noise if I’m not hitting the mic for you and tell me why so I can adjust.

SAMANTHA

We don’t have any questions on the screen. Lucy said, “It’s all good”. Does anyone on the phone have any questions for Kevin at this stage before we move on?

PARTICIPANT

No, all good from my side at the moment.

KEVIN

OK good, now I actually have some questions too so if it’s not good, it’s OK to just go, “Hey, go faster, go slower, I can’t understand what you’re saying.” That’s it, thanks for the encouragement! But don’t be afraid to provide some constructive adjustments as well, otherwise… I’m a manager, I like an adjustment, I can adjust for the next 45 minutes. So let me now tell you a little but about, just for context, the next slide is a slide about a Walgreens store. This is a new one, not all of them look as great as this one, not all Woolworths stores look as great as some of them as well. But in effect, just to put this into perspective for you, it’s a $70 billion business, with nearly 6.3 million visitors a day – Woolworths sees about 23 million customers a week, just to give you some context. They have 200,000 people, so does Woolworths, they have 8500 stores, we have about 3000 stores. We have the same amount of distribution centres. So, we are a similar business in many ways. Our product mix is completely different, it’s much more simpler, and smaller, compared to the amount at Walgreens. Woolworths is a grocery store and so on. But in effect, this is what we’re talking about, this large organisation, this is who Randy used to work for.

So, what I wanted to share with you is, well, OK. Randy gave us an inspiring talk. But what are the three things? The three secrets to making this thing come alive. How do you implement right now, what’s the tactical next step for you? So, I’m going to take you through that journey now. And on my next slide, which basically reads, “Three secrets to creating an inclusive culture. It’s not a big secret, but I worked out that if I put the word “secret in, into anything in life, people listen for some reason. Even if I tell you what I’m doing, because I fit’s not a secret, then you’re not attentive to it. So, this is a secret. Now this is… These three things are not things that Randy talks about. They’re not even in his book. And they’re not even… you know, you have to go fish for them. I mined for these three things. So, I wanted the three things. So, the first thing is you have to have a champion with passion in a big business. Be a part of your business. I don’t mean big business like Woolworths, but you know, big part of your business. It’s usually helpful if that person is a credible person like Randy or otherwise, but a business leader. But your first step is, who is that business leader? I’m thinking, write it down right now. Why is that champion in my business that I can go and have a chat with? I can take these slides and replay them, I can maybe connect them with Kevin or AND or whoever, it doesn’t really matter. I can send them the TED Talk on Randy and say, “Have a look at this and let’s have a chat”. But who is that person in your business? We’ll break that down in a second. The second one is, go big, I should say go big or go home, but he’s polite and says go big, not incremental. So, if you’re trying to do a little bit here and a little bit there, its commendable, great. But it’s not going to make a significant change, and the purpose of this webinar and this session is to actually make a big change. We know we’re making little change, but little change is not giving us big effect. So, we’ll talk about that. And thirdly, the third secret is to focus on the person, not the process. Even today, even yesterday, even last week, I still hear people ask about what’s the process, what’s the reasonable adjustment, and who do I call, what form do I fill out, and all these things. So, I’ll give you the antidote for all three of those, and the solutions that Walgreens uses, to credit them, in that space. But the way I got these three secrets from are not from Randy. The universe conspires, and I was at the Harkin summit with Suzanne and the AND team in Washington DC in December, and sitting right next to me, coincidentally, is Randy’s boss. So, Greg Wasson. So, I said, “Hey, you’re Randy’s boss, you know Randy!” And he goes, “You do?” I said, “Yeah, he came to Australia, he spoke about this stuff,” and I said, “Look, listen. Never mind about him because he’ll tell me whatever he wants to tell me. What really happened? What really happened? How does this all work? If you were to say three things that made the difference, what would you say?” So those three things came out of Randy’s – came out of Greg’s – he was Chief Executive at the time. Number one, use a champion in a big part of your business, and that was Randy. Number two, go big, not incremental. Number three, focus on the people, not on the process. As the Chief Executive, those are my three lessons I’ve learnt through that experience. Now by the way, you can take that and apply it to almost anything, can’t you, but, and this is the whole point of diversity and inclusion with disability, it is not inclusive, it is universal in its application.

So, let me now go to slide one. For those of you that can see, that slide’s up, number one which is a green slide, there’s Randy, Vice President of Supply Chain. I mentioned Greg Wasson is the boss on the right-hand side. But the guy in the middle, the guy in the middle, nobody talks about poor Joe Wendover. Joe is the field inclusion manager at Walgreens. Now I got to spend nearly a day with Joe at Anderson. And Joe told me, “All these guys take all the cr3edit, I’ve done all the work.” He’s not shy in saying that, and he actually is delighted that people like Randy and Greg quote him all the time, except it would be nice to make sure he gets some credit. So, I thought, it’s my duty to make sure I give Joe some credit as well. Not some, perhaps all the credit, he’s done all the work, and he in the practical sense walked me through what I’m about to walk you through. So, these are the characters, if you will. And the reason I put this up on the slides is if you’re thinking about point one, it’s pretty simple: who is your Randy Lewis, who is your Joe Wendover, and who is your Greg Wasson? The three are important, the individuals by themselves, I don’t believe, this is now my judgement and my opinion here, but I don’t believe Randy by himself could have done this, and I don’t believe Greg by himself would have been inspired. And nothing would have really happened without Joe making it happen every day. So, on your little sheets of paper, maybe you don’t have a name yet but I hope you’ve got a box that says, “Who is my Randy, who’s my Joe, and who’s my Greg?” That’s your first action. I would highly recommend that if you cannot get through those three actions, then don’t proceed further. Proceed if you like, I don’t even know. But I don’t know that you’re going to have sustainable change unless you’re spinning those wheels. So, find the small champion, find anybody, find someone with energy, and off you go. So that’s my first tip of the day.

The second one is an easy one. Which is… I hear this debate a lot, and look, I’m not a diversity and inclusion expert. But I do get the question a lot about targets and quotas and ambition. What I’d like to encourage you to do with this image of 30 per cent – and you can probably make it 50 per cent, why not? 35, 20, it doesn’t matter. But if you’re not thinking big, then I don’t think we’re going to get the change or the energy that’s rewired to get people’s attention. So, I’m replacing in my own mind the words ‘target, quota and ambitions’ to ‘a dream’. Dream big, dream targets for fun, not because someone made you do it. Not because you’ve got to measure and report it. In fact, maybe don’t even tell anyone. But just go - you know what – let’s go for 30 per cent. And if you put it in the scorecard and you start reporting on it, then I know the subconscious mind kicks in, fear comes back, your negative emotions play tricks on you and you start talking yourself out of it and go, “What if I fail?” So, have a secret dream and go for a big, big hit. And so, I often get asked a second question around here, which is, you know, we’ve got gender equity, we’ve got LGBTIQ, we’ve got disability employment, Indigenous employment, domestic violence, everybody comes with their little interest. Am I a line manager? What do you want me to do, Kevin? You know, how much of this stuff? And then what’s the target for women in leadership roles and women in boards? And everyone’s got targets. True. I wish in my lifetime that I live in a world where we don’t have to segment inclusion. I think we might see that, if places like Walgreens who see the power of inclusion… But we’re not there yet, as human beings, and don’t take this the wrong way, I am Australian and I say this, I’ve travelled the world. And in Australia, I’ve noticed it more than anywhere else in the world, we like to break everything down into their nice little boxes. Black/white. Gay/straight. With a disability/without a disability. For those of you that know me or have seen my picture; bald without hair/with hair. Tan/without tan. It’s just amazing! Where do you live? Which neighbourhood do you live in? What school did you go to? And they want to size you up based on all these preconceived biases. And I often wonder why we do that. And so, the spirit of this is, how do we lift these people, not segment people? How do I not judge people and box them in? So 30 per cent gets your energy going. 30 percent is designed – and I believe there’s some research on this – but 30 per cent is designed to make you feel uncomfortable. If there’s anybody on this call right now not feeling a little bit of discomfort with the word ‘dream’ and 30 per cent, I’ve got a simple solution for you. Just make it 50. Stop when you feel uncomfortable and that’s your point of inflection. Does that make sense? But don’t be a wuss and go with 5 per cent now! Don’t say I’m uncomfortable at 5. Go big.

OK, how do we go big? Someone’s laughing. I got an “LOL” out here, this is so cool! Is there a question there?

SAMANTHA

More a comment. Oh, here’s a question, we like to be inclusive for gender, sexuality, disability, is it unrealistic to have quotas for each?

KEVIN

Yeah, I think it is. I think quotas probably, I put that emotive word ‘quota’ in there just to get a bit of tension. I think if you say quotas and targets and ambitions, I personally think that inclusion experts will know more about this, so I’ll divert to them, but my personal view is that in the meantime, as we become a more mature, inclusive country, and perhaps world, you kind of have to focus, and unfortunately targets focus things, or dreams focus things. It’s such a weird thing that we have to target inclusion. The AICD had a target of at least 30 per cent of women on boards. And until they did that, we weren’t getting women on boards. No, it’s really not about, and you’ll see the answer to this question in a moment, because it is not about the targets, and it’s not about the quota. And in fact, I will tell you now that when Walgreens set out to do a 30 per cent target if you will, or dream, they weren’t able to achieve 30 per cent. They achieved 40 per cent. So, you’re not going to hold yourself back, this has got to be an inconsequential thing. To me, it is inconsequence to the extreme. What I think it does is it energises you, and then you’ll be going, I kind of holding myself back. You’ll never look at this target again. And you shouldn’t. Just work on the process now, I should say by focussing on the people, which is my next slide. And that will get you the result that you haven’t even imagined. And let me show you why.

Now, I usually do this at the end, but let me do this now. When Walgreens got their 40 per cent message on this target, let’s call it, it was really interesting that they got the results to back the stuff up. So, I’ve been talking to business leaders, and you can use this, and when I talk to business leaders I talk upfront. This is my opening line; “Would you like a 30 per cent improvement in productivity, 50 per cent reduction in absenteeism, zero injuries, the highest engagement scores, the highest retention scores, and people wanting and advocating and to work with you and lining up a year in advance when they hear you’re about to open up? Would you like any of this? 30 per cent productivity. 50 per cent absenteeism reduction? 20 per cent improvement in waste? Zero injuries? High engagement scores? If you find me a Chief Executive in the country, in the world, or any business leader who says they don’t want that, I’d like to go meet them. Because that is exactly what Walgreens achieved by getting a workforce of 30 per cent. So, all those beliefs I spoke about, gone. The opposite is true. Make sense?

So, let me sure you – I’m just going to put up one more slide before I take you to the secrets of three so to speak. What we don’t want to do in this equation, which I have been guilty of myself, is creating jobs and then having this sort of mascot approach; look how great we are, because I’ve got one of ‘these people’ here, and so we must be good right? And so when I heard Randy’s story and, in case some of you are about to fall into the same trap I fell into, I walked out of that story, I bumped into a colleague who was at the session with Randy, and he said, “You know what I was thinking, Kevin? You know that job at Big W at the front where we have the door greeters? That’s a job for people with disabilities, that’s great isn’t it? You should think about that for a second.” So I went, “Yeah! Yeah, great idea. And within about five seconds, he wo of us looked at each other and went, “We’re idiots”. We just missed the whole point. The job is for anybody, and I’ll show you now what I mean by that. So we’re going to make sure at Woolworths that when we are building - while we’re doing this – we are building a distribution centre in Victoria. It’s a new distribution centre. And we have a dream that 30 per cent of that workforce will be people with disabilities. And we are unashamedly copying what Walgreens have done. And just to let you know, Walgreens give a way their roadmap and everything, anyone in the world can go and see and learn like I did, it wasn’t a special Kevin privilege. And therefore, when we complete the task and continue to learn, we want to give away everything we’ve learnt in Australia too. So it wasn’t our gift to keep in the first place, so that’s what we’re trying to do, we’re trying to replicate this. So we could wait, I could wait, and say, “I’ll see you in 18 months”. But that’s 18 months of lost opportunity for anyone on this phone hook-up. So as we move forward, I encourage you to start, too, and together we’ll meet at a point and we’ll share and we’ll learn from each other and we’ll evolve, and it won’t be one place you might go to learn. There’s I believe about 60 people on this call. Maybe there’s at least 60 people, or 60 little places where you can go and learn. So that’s why I’m talking to you now, because otherwise, we’re just waiting for no reason and we’re losing time. So let me show you the roadmap to implementation. And let me give you one little story before I do that.

So the first thing I will say is, “Who should we exclude?” I asked all these types of questions. Really, everybody? Not everybody with a disability? And they went, “What do you mean?” I said, “I’m sure there are some people who just can’t work”. And he went, “Who?” And I could see myself digging a hole going, “I don’t know”. So I panicked. So I said, “What about someone with Tourette’s, and he uses the F-word every day?” And as I said it, I went, “Where did I get this stereotype in my head from, that people with Tourette’s use bad language?” Now they said, “Yeah, we had someone here who’s got Tourette’s, and, they had been using the F-word”. So I went, “Oh, that was a close call for me! OK, it’s real, the stereotype is real.” And they said, “Let us go and show you, come with us.” And the picture you’re looking at right now, with respect I didn’t want to take a picture of the person, because I didn’t get the chance to ask them. But when they walked away, it was Christmas, and I thought I was listening to the radio, but what I was listening to is the person singing, and they de-stress when they’re singing, they’re singing the most – I thought it was radio quality right – wow what a voice. And I know that The Voice in Australia had, I can’t remember his name now –

SAMANTHA

Ryan

KEVIN

Ryan I think right, yeah. And anyway, they told me, look, they created some space so he can destress. And I said, “OK, that’s nice, but what about the F-word?” So they said, “Look, we have a rule at Walgreens. We pay the same amount that we pay everybody, so it’s equal pay, there’s no subsidy, no government subsidy or grant, it’s equal pay. And we expect the same, or better standard of performance”. Equal pay, same or better standard of performance. Part of that performance is your behaviour and your conduct at work. “So we said to that person, ‘do you like working here?’ ‘Yes’ ‘Why?’ and he said so. ‘Well, remember when we hired you we said equal pay, same standard of performance? Well, your standard of performance is not acceptable for a work place. What would happen if you lost this job?’” And it’s pretty obvious what a person with disability who finds it hard to get a job would say; I can’t afford to lose this job. They went, “Good, what are you going to do?” And he went, “I’m going to stop using the F-word.” And I said, “And?” And they go, “He stopped!” So don’t claim the stereotype that you can’t set clear expectations for someone like someone with Tourette’s. Now, I don’t know much about Tourette’s but I went, “Oh, that’s interesting,” but then I said, “Really? He doesn’t use the F-word?” And they went, “Kevin, do you use the F-word when you hit your finger with a hammer?” And I went, “Yeah”. And he goes, “Look, we’re not silly out here, we’re practical. From time to time, we slip up, we say the wrong thing. What we’re saying is, sustained and repeated use of the F-word in the workplace is not acceptable. And then we clarified that with this person.” And the other one that came up was, Randy spoke about this and I asked him, I said, “What about intellectual disabilities?” And Randy’s response was, “Have you seen half our board and leadership team?” Now, he was making a bit of a joke, but he said, “Let me walk you through this place.”

So this next picture here is a picture of the Anderson distribution centre in South Carolina. A beautiful morning. Our meeting here started at 10:00, I arrived – you might laugh at me – but I arrived at about 7:30 for a 10:00 meeting. But I was respectful because Americans, if nothing else, are very punctual; you don’t come in early, you don’t come in late, you come on time. So I went down to the local McDonalds and listened to all the locals speak about Donald Trump. And eventually at about 9:00 a drew up the courage to, even though it was a 10:00 meeting, I drove up there and I spent, you cant see it in the picture but I parked the car and was sitting in the car just watching this place and I’m thinking about what I’m going to say, and what I’m going to ask, and I better not say the wrong thing, I don’t want to offend anybody, and so I’m kind of, so excited about this. Finally, ten minutes before the meeting, I drive up to the gate and the guy says, “You finally drew up the courage, huh?” He said, “You should have just come in and got a coffee.” I said, “Well, I wasn’t sure,” because he was obviously thinking it’s weird, I’m just driving around the place and parking in a spot that’s outside the gate. But anyway, I was really excited about being there. So into Anderson I go.

And the next slide here you’ll see what I said in the beginning, you know, they said to me, “Look, most people want to prove they were here, so here’s the place where our visitors stand.” Take a picture, give us your phone. And it’s got this big sign that says, “No them”. And that “them” applies to everything, not just people with disability, but they started off with disability. We don’t want this “us” and “them” thinking. And this comes from the Randy story at the beginning, if you remember, that says “They’re not one of us”. This is the reminder to correct that in a very practical way. But the reason I took this picture is because I had to present back to my friends in safety and I wanted to say, “You didn’t believe me, I went, I saw it, and here’s what I saw”. So, let me show you the third, I’ll talk to you about ATP. Some of you already know about ATP. ATP is this technology that Walgreens has, and because I visited them, they’ve given us access, if you like, to use this world-wide. But I’m also licensed to be a distributor of ATP now. So if anybody would like ATP – in fact one of the gifts you get today for your time is you get to use ATP as part of joining the webinar. At this point, there might be some people going, “OK, what is it?” Ah, there it is! “What is ATP?” says Ian. It stands for “Ask The Person”. Ask the person. So it’s not some fancy technology you can use, it’s “ask the person”. So let me show you ATP in action. So, by now you’ve got your champion, you’ve got your Joe Wendover, you’ve got your CEO sponsoring it. By now you know to set a big ambition and a dream to make cool things happen. And ATP is how you make it happen, you ask the person. No mascots. So let me walk you through ATP one step at a time.

The first one, the gateway. For anyone here who’s in employment, how do you get the job in the first place? They open a side door at Walgreens, because Gerard here on this picture on the left is at a work station with a box on it, and there’s a conveyor belt and a monitor and a screen that tells him what to do and what sort of activity it is. And Gerard failed the online test, and he couldn’t – I think it was a maths aptitude thing he couldn’t do. But when they got him into the distribution centre, they didn’t go, “There’s the door greeter job”. They just went. “What would you like to do?” And he said, “I think I like this thing, I’ll give this a crack”. Turns out that he was the most productive person they’ve ever had doing that job. With one exception. I don’t know if this was Gerard or someone else, but one of the things I noticed with people with some intellectual disabilities is, when they got there they were very productive, but they couldn’t get to that location, and some people couldn’t remember numbers. Now, this slide is titled “Candyfloss and popcorn”. If you look carefully, there si a sign that says “34 popcorn” and another one that says “35 candyfloss”. What they realised is, say you go to station 35, the person is getting lost. But say you said 35 candyfloss, they remembered candyfloss. Now, such a simple correction. In Australia, I know what we would do. We would have listened to corporate and say, “Well, the guy’s getting lost, we need to get him out of here”. Or, “The guy’s getting lost, what do we need to do?” But what they did was just simply ask the person. And they realised they remember, you can just put up a sign with an image or something, and they’ll remember to go there. So ask the person is the most productive place.

Now, let me show you the next slide, which is my earlier statement, “We accept the same standard so we can pay the same wages”. This is a picture of the screen that’s in front of Gerard. On the right-hand-side of that screen there’s two bars; one on the left is red, and one on the right is green. The one on the right, the green bar, basically shows, this is the only but of technology they had, which we have here by the way, we don’t use it his way. So on the right hand side, the green bar, that shows my daily productivity. The left-hand bar shows my productivity for half hour intervals. When my left-hand bar drops to amber or red, my supervisor shows up and says, “Hey, I’ve noticed you’ve dropped down to red or amber, what can I do? How do I help you get that bar back up?” In the past it would be, in some of our businesses, we would wait until the end of the week, end of the month, and get there and go, “You failed again. If you don’t pick up your performance, then you won’t have a job here”. And this is what supervisors at Walgreens learnt to be, more kind, to help people succeed not fail, to not show up after the fact and say, “Well if you’re so clever as my boss, why don’t you help me succeed?” So they are helping them succeed before the day is over, and course correcting along the way. That simple statement says, “What can I do to help?” They began asking the person. So this is the only bit of technology, if you’re wondering, I saw that went, OK, that’s about it.

Now, I thought it was a really interesting leadership context. But let me show you this ATP in action. This slide’s titled “Push my buttons”, it’s got a little green button next to it. And, a lady here at this workstation – in hindsight I should have taken all the workstations, but I got a picture of this – but this lady, she couldn’t hit control-alt-F something, to let this tote bin go through the coordination, it was a bit off, and it stressed her. So if she couldn’t do the job, well she doesn’t have a job, but they used ATP. They said, “Hey, what do you think we can do to help? And she said, “Look, it would be nice if I could use a button”. And of course, In Australia we call this reasonable adjustments, because we’re focused on the process, and fill out the form to get it in, but they don’t focus on that, they call it accommodations there anyway. But in effect, they said, “Ah, let’s put a green button here.” And so they found that within a week this was again one of the most productive workstations. So if you’re thinking how the one third, 30 per cent extra productivity improvements come from, it’s coming from things like this. So they realised very quickly, if it’s good for her, it’s good for all 18 of the lines that are there. So they put the buttons along where people who don’t have disability are using the same buttons and now you’re getting a productive environment.

[Music plays]

SAMANTHA

I think someone’s just places us on hold so we’ve got your hold music coming through. Can everyone hear us on the phone?

PARTICIPANT

I can hear you, it’s a bit distracting but I can hear.

KEVIN

Yeah I can hear it.

SAMANTHA

You have a backing track.

[Music stops]

SAMANTHA

Oh there you go, thank you. Just so you know, whoever just placed us on hold, we got your hold music coming through, just in case you feel you want to place us on hold again, we just had your hold music.

KEVIN

We know who you are!

[Laughter]

[Inaudible]

KEVIN

So this is supplied to everybody, not just to people with disability by the way. So what happens is it started off with ATP with people with disability, but then you start realising, this is just the way we lead. So, the other thing they got from this is that as the got the productivity up, what they started to see was that people who didn’t have disability, whether you like it or not were going, “Hold on, if Sam can do this and she’s got disability, Kevin can do this who has disability, well I can do it better”. So there was this kind of competitiveness that kicked in in a positive way, not a competitiveness at the expense of someone, but the halo effect of energising the place and go, “You’re inspiring me to make things happen quicker and faster. So, every distribution centre in the world they made productivity in real time , because if you don’t measure that productivity, some incentivise it, some don’t, then you start falling back. So that is a time and motion and quality and safety, so there’s all these balancing equations with that.

This next picture is a picture called “wrap it up”. And it’s a picture of a bin which has a lid on it. But before they put that lid on it, there were these plastic wrappers in there, and they would get stuck on the people, and no one complained and it was all fine. Until it got stuck on one person who didn’t like it at all, and had an anxiety reaction. So they applied ATP and they said, “What can we do to fix this?” As you can see here, there’s lots of innovation happening at the point of work, as opposed to corporates like us where someone would send the problem to the corporate office and say, “Oh well, I’ve got this problem, what are you going to do to fix it?” So it’s the way this would work in Australia, I believe, and in fact Walgreens said it was the same for them, is that the packaging is wrong, so we call the design team and we complain. They call the manufacturer, we complain, this is going to take months if not years because of how the machinery is done and baggage is done before someone finally decides to change the packaging. But what they did is they just realised by asking people that that grey tray thing on top of it, the lid, came with the bin anyway, they simply threw it out. So they went back and got it, put it on, cut two holes in it, and then simply dip your hand in there and you scrape the plastic which doesn’t then come out and fly everywhere in front of you. So they got that improvement in productivity there. I could go on and on and on really about this.

But I’ll stop at these three examples and I’ll show you some other little interesting things for anyone who’s safety-inclined. So look at this slide here – how much time do we have?

SAMANTHA

Ah, 7 or 8 minutes?

KEVIN

OK, so let me go fast. So here’s an example in Australia of what we would do, is we’d open a catalogue called the safety catalogue. We would buy a special, $300 broom holder. And then we would wait for the approved safety contractor to come on-sight a month later, and spend another $200 to put screws in the wall. And then once we put it all up, nobody actually used it. By contrast, Walgreens’ engineering team bought a $20 pipe, cut it into the pieces that you see there, put it on a board, put it up, and they used it. So they have good discipline, innovation, they make everything in-house when they can, where they’ve got a place for everything, and everything in its place. But you can see here ownership on the sites.

The lab, let me show you the lab. The lab is a place where they used to train people with disabilities. And they stopped using this lab for two reasons: one, they realised that people learn better where the work is being done, not in a lab setting. So they started to train people at the lab setting. The second reason they said is, quite frankly, we’re in here to make money, and this is not productive. Whereas down where the work is being done, you’re doing some productivity while you’re working, whereas here you’re just moving stuff around in a room for no real purpose. So the purpose of this is we did it, we learnt, we won’t do it again, but the lab is still here as a reminder we don’t use it anymore.

The next slide shows the power of why. And this is a subtle difference. You might see in your workplaces, if you’re like Woolworths, signs that say, “Tick, do this”, and “Cross, don’t do this”. But their signs are subtly different. They say, “When you do this, you make this happen. Please don’t do this”. So they’re actually telling people *why* they’re telling them what to do. It’s the same picture, but no tick and cross. They say, “If you do this, this is the consequence. Please don’t do this”. Now you’re respecting the person by giving them they ‘why’, not just the ‘do’, the ‘what’. So, the ‘what’ is obvious once you get the ‘why’, right? And so, a lot of their signs look very simple, like this, two pictures; if you do this, this will happen. If you do this, this will happen. Please don’t do this. If you do this, this will happen, please do this. So they have these different kind of optic signs on there.

The next slide is my favourite slide of all these slides. In that lab I mentioned, there’s a chart with goals on it. You can see people’s names on it. And as they get trained and competent in the skills you can see there like safety and accuracy, social skills, etcetera, you get a star. When you get your stars, you then are competent to go and do the job. And that’s coaching like we have here, and so on. And so, you look at that slide and you go, “What happened to Chase, and what happened to Raul? Did they not succeed?” They still keep this, this is such an old thing. They said, “Actually, we learnt a very valuable lesson. And the lesson we learnt was that some people are motivated by stars, they get fired up when you give them a star. Some people are motivated by money, don’t judge them, they’re just motivated by money. But some people are motivated by elevator buttons, and some people are motivated by cars.” So, the supervisor goes home that night, cuts out elevator buttons, goes to Walmart and buys – maybe he should have gone to Walgreens – he goes to Walmart and he bought stickers of cars, and he motivated both those two individuals with elevator buttons, and with stickers of cars. Can you imagine, someone, anyone of us, not even in disability, where for you in the workplace setting, even in a life setting, someone actually got you? They got that you loved elevator buttons? And they took the trouble to go get these things and laminate them and reward you with them? So you can imagine the trust that gets created. Think about the leadership that is getting created; that is so in tune with you individual. Let me tell you, let me tell you something that you probably don’t know: these supervisors, these managers at Walgreens, do not know who has a disability. They don’t get given a list of names, that Tony has X disability, therefore thou shall use this reasonable adjustment and treat them this way. They do not know. They don’t know from what they call typically able-bodied people – there must be an actual description for that?

TONI

We don’t use that.

KEVIN

What do we use here? Person without a disability. They don’t know. So they have to connect and seek to understand. Even though you might say, well, what about the person in the wheelchair, the person who doesn’t have one arm or… disability is obvious. Well you can’t judge because you don’t know what the ability is. So maybe I don’t even need my left arm to do this job, because my ability is to use my mind to do it. So you cant make a judgement call. When they use ATP and they find an answer, they do not procedure line it. So they don’t assume that the Deaf forklift driver – yes, they have Deaf forklift drivers – they say, “Well, how would you know when the horn’s working?” One forklift driver said, “I put my hand in front of the manifold, you hit the horn and I can feel it vibrate”. Now, what we would do in Australia is we say, “That’s a great, neat way to do that”. So we’d write that in – when I say Australia I mean Woolies, you know, but I’m pretty sure when I talk to my colleagues they say the same – but we would write in the procedure, “Every time we hire someone who’s deaf, just make sure that they know to put their hand in front of the manifold before they hit the horn”. Now at Walgreens, the next Deaf forklift driver came in, they said, “Hey, how would you do this?” And he said, “Look, I would jump on that forklift, I find where there’s three or four people standing, I hit the horn, they move out of the way, I know the horn’s working”. So, it’s enabling the innovation, not just stagnate. It’s saying, “Don’t trap yourself in procedure lines and systematise everything. Ask the person what’s right for them. And in asking that, you are getting innovation. So, I’ve started to realise that, I believe now, that reasonable adjustment are simply a proxy for innovation. And so, we think about it as a reasonable adjustment for someone with disability. I’m saying, actually, yeah, call it what you want, but you’re innovating. You’re making something better every time. And people with disabilities, we’ve learnt, are very good at problem solving, because they have to solve problems all the time, literally, even what training to take, what bus to take, what car to get in, what taxi to get in. And so, very in tune to problem solving skills. And that’s how you get these productivity improvements.

Finally, I told you about the results. If you don’t believe me, get this Professional Safety magazine, I believe it’s the June 2012 version.

TONI

We can send it around.

KEVIN

We can send it around.

TONI

Yeah, we’ve got the excerpts.

KEVIN

Yeah, and read it. Don’t take my word for it. There’s a professional magazine, disclosure, I’m a member of this organisation, I’ve been for a long time, but I didn’t know it was in there, I missed it.

So, there you go. Safety, productivity, absenteeism, engagement, I gave you all the stats. So, your next steps, friends of AND, are to find a champion, to dream big, and to ATP.

Randy has, obviously, a TED talk, he also has a book if you’d like to read it, it’s called ‘No Greatness Without Goodness’ by Randy Lewis. I will add to that by saying there is no greatness without kindness. If there’s one thing – I’ve learnt so much – but if there’s one thing I’ve learnt at Walgreens, it’s how kind people were. Not caring, by the way. They were caring by default, they were kind because they care. You could see the kindness. The kindness that connects people together, for purpose. People, they used to say, “What’s your job?” “I’m here to move boxes”. Now they say, “I have a sense of purpose. I work in a place that serves each other, that serves the community, we come together, and we change lives, and there’s a sense of belonging.” So, if you’d like, you can read the book.

And I’ll finish off by saying in the end, it’s all about leadership. And this is how you change the world. So, it’s about leadership. Everything I’ve just mentioned, you could apply to anything else. I’m hoping the price of giving you the secret means you apply it to disability employment first. But nonetheless, it starts at Walgreens, perhaps we bring it to Woolworths, perhaps others implement it, and before you know, Australia changes. And before you know it, the world changes. Thank you for listening, I’m happy to take any questions.

SAMANTHA

Thank you, Kevin, that was fantastic. We can take questions for Kevin via the chat function, and also over the phone. It is 11, so I understand if some people need to duck off. I’m happy to continue for a few more minutes and take some questions if there are any. We’ve got here from Tim on the chat function, “Kevin, what are Woolworths’ next steps to implement the same framework?” And we also have a “thank you” from Libby as well.

KEVIN

Thank you, you’re welcome Libby. So we set up a steering group, we have identified the Randy Lewis, which is Paul Graham, he’s the Chief Supply Chain for Woolworths. We have identified the Martin, ah sorry, the Joe Wendover, which is Martin Bruni, who happens to be a safety guy by the way in Melbourne, and the sponsorship is with Brad, but I’m encouraging the influence of Brad yet, so that’s a work in progress. Not that he’s against it, he’s trying to learn like the rest of us, and he’s as inspired by the possibility here. Not because it’s a charity by the way, this is not feeling sorry for a bunch of people, we realise that this is a competitive advantage if you can get ahead of this curve. But we don’t want to compete. I would be delighted if our competitor called dare I say it, even recorded, there’s nothing competitive about this. We’re human beings. And I think in thinking about all things that make us different, we think about humanity. At Woolworths, though, we set up those three aspects, we have set up a steering committee, we are going to trial this exclusively at one DC. But we’re already starting the conversation around… So AND have just done a review of our practices at Woolworths. I think it’s fair to say that in the last five years we’ve lost our way a little bit with all the change that we’ve had in the organisation. Our processes, our systems, our recruitment processes need a complete review and refresh. We’ve done that review, and we’re about to reset the partnerships that we’ve had in the past, the processes we’ve had in the past. But really, that’s being innovative, because we know we’ve done that before. What we’re now doing is trying to send that through ATP. And send that to leadership, and send that to making sure our communities, our store is connected to our communities in which we operate. So that’s that one, but there’s lots of other stuff that we’ve always done that we’ll continue to do, like employment in stores. We have to reconnect with the disability employment services, but we need help to make sure that it’s done nationally and consistent, not in a haphazard way. Otherwise, I can get 50 DES providers calling me going, “I want to help”, I don’t have a way to activate that, until we have a central way to do that. So I hope that answers a little bit of the question.

SAMANTHA

Thanks Kevin. So from Natalie, she’s asking, “Do you offer disability awareness training to your employees?”

KEVIN

We don’t at the moment, and in fact yesterday I was with an organisation that actually does provide services like this, and AND does as well. And we are actually looking at what’s the most effective way to do that. We do provide training around unconscious bias, which incorporates things like disability. But while that’s been great in many ways, I don’t know that… You know people want practical things to do or not say or not do, and so we are looking at what training we need, and in fact everything we’re going to trial, we want to trial it to see as well. So we will be looking to identify what is out there, and what can we use. But we think it’s an important thing to do.

SAMANTHA.

Fantastic. And Grazia’s made a comment. So, she said, “I really like how you’re sharing the knowledge. Like we saw with Westpac, Lendlease and AND with the development of the Barangaroo campus, everybody gains when the knowledge is shared. Thanks for a great download, Kevin”.

KEVIN

Thank you very much.

SAMANTHA

And Lucy just said, “You’ve got a great space to build on, Kevin, go well.” And there’s been lots of “thankyous”. Are there any other questions? Would anyone like to ask a question over the phone for Kevin? No?

KEVIN

If you promise to shop at Woolworths I’d be happy to come talk to your leadership teams, if you want me to do that.

SAMANTHA

OK, well I would like to thank Kevin for his time, for his great presentation today. Thank you so much. It was a great insight into what you learnt from Walgreens and how you’re going to apply that at Woolworths. We’re hoping that some of our members have taken down some actions and food for thought from today. So thank you for dialling in, everybody. And thanks for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS

Thank you

KEVIN

Can I get a drink of water?

TONI

Why not.