**WEBEX FORUM**

**"ACCOMMODATING EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE IS EXPENSIVE: MYTH OR REALITY?"**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2016**

**> Operator:**

GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. WELCOME TO THE “ACCOMMODATING EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKLACE IS EXPENSIVE: MYTH OR REALITY?” CONFERENCE CALL.

THIS IS THE SECOND IN THE WEBEX FORUM SERIES ON WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PRESENTED BY EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA, IN COLLABORATION WITH CANADIAN BUSINESS S SENSEABILITY.

I WOULD NOW LIKE TO TURN THE MEETING OVER TO JOAN TURNER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE CANADIAN BUSINESS SENSEABILITY. PLEASE GO AHEAD MS. TURNER.

**> Joan Turner:**

HELLO, EVERYONE, AND WELCOME TO OUR SECOND SEMINAR IN THE SERIES ON WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION. BEFORE WE BEGIN TODAY, I UNDERSTAND WE HAD SOME TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES LAST WEEK FOR SOME OF YOU WHO ATTENDED. I JUST WANT TO ENSURE YOU ALL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN US TODAY.

WEB EX IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PIECES. IN ORDER TO LISTEN TO THE SESSION, YOU MUST DIAL IN FROM A TELEPHONE, THE TELECONFERENCING NUMBER, 1-877-413-4813 AND THE CONFERENCE ID IS 3231818. IN ORDER TO SEE THE SLIDE PRESENTATIONS, YOU MUST CLICK ON THE WEB EX LINK IN THE E‑MAIL INVITATION THAT YOU RECEIVED. ONCE YOU ARE CONNECTED, YOU CLICK JOIN NOW AND YOU WILL SEE THE SLIDES BEING PRESENTED. IF YOU ARE HAVING DIFFICULTIES, PLEASE GO INTO YOUR E‑MAIL INVITATION AND CLICK REPLY AND IT WILL SEND AN E‑MAIL TO THE ORGANIZERS TO HELP YOU.

WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE TWO VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE GUEST SPEAKERS TODAY, DR. EMILE TOMPA AND DR. GARY BIRCH. THEY WILL BE PROVIDING THEIR VIEWPOINTS ON THE QUESTION: ACCOMMODATING EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE IS EXPENSIVE, MYTH OR REALITY?

EMPLOYERS FREQUENTLY RAISE CONCERNED ABOUT THE COST AND COMPLEXITY OF PROVIDING WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND IT IS BELIEVED THESE ARE EXPENSIVE.

WE WILL HEAR FROM BOTH OF THE PRESENTERS FOR 20 OR 25 MINUTES EACH AND THEN WE WILL HAVE ABOUT 15 MINUTES AT THE END FOR QUESTIONS FROM ALL OF YOU PARTICIPATING TODAY.

I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE OUR FIRST SPEAKER DR. EMILE TOMPA WHO IS A SENIOR SCIENTIST AT THE INSTITUTE FOR WORK AND HEALTH AND HE IS CO‑DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON WORK DISABILITY POLICY. HE ALSO HAS A STATUS APPOINTMENT AS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AT MCMASTER UNIVERSITY. HIS PRESENTATION TODAY IS ON “EMPLOYER COSTS AND BENEFITS OF ACCOMMODATION, WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE?” HE WILL BE LOOKING AT SOME OF THE RESEARCH AND LITERATURE ON PROVIDING ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE.

PLEASE BEGIN.

**> Emile Tompa:**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH JOAN.

IT IS A PLEASURE TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TO YOU SOME OF THE WORK THAT MYSELF AND MY COLLEAGUES AT THE INSTITUTE FOR WORKER HEALTH HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKING. IT COMES FROM A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICE EVIDENCE AND PART OF THAT IS LOOKING AT THE COST AND BENEFITS OF ACCOMMODATIONS. THIS IS JUST A HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE FINDINGS THAT WE FOUND IN PEER REVIEWED AND GREY LITERATURE. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

I WILL START WITH A SUMMARY THAT WE FOUND AND THEN DIG DEEPER INTO SOME OF THE SPECIFIC STUDIES. WHAT WE FOUND IS THAT EMPLOYERS OFTEN RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT THE COST OF ACCOMMODATIONS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. OBVIOUSLY THAT IS A CONCERN THEY HAVE AND THEY WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT DOES IT REALLY COSTS. SO WE WANTED TO GET A SENSE OF WHAT THE LITERATURE SAYS ABOUT THESE COSTS.

WHAT WE FOUND IS THAT THE EVIDENCE FROM BOTH THE PEER REVIEW AND GREY LITERATURE OVERWHELMINGLY SUGGEST THAT THE FEAR OF HIGH COST IS UNFOUNDED IN MOST CASES. THE TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS BEING DONE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WERE VERY SIMILAR FOR THOSE WITHOUT DISABILITIES.

THE LITERATURE EMPHASIZES THAT THE EMPLOYERS, WHICH SOMETIMES ARE DESCRIBED AS THE DEMAND SIDE (THEY ARE THE ONES DOING THE RECRUITING AND RETENTION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES), ARE REALLY IMPORTANT TO FURTHER DEVELOP THIS AREA, TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE COST OF ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AND TO REALIZE THE BENEFITS OF IT AS WELL.

PARTICULARLY, WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING TO FIND OUT ABOUT IS KNOWLEDGE OF BEST PRACTICES. HOW DO YOU DO ACCOMMODATIONS WELL, HOW DO YOU DO IT ON AN INDIVIDUALIZED BASIS? THAT'S REALLY CRITICAL. AND ALSO THE LITERATURE EMPHASIZES THE NEED TO HAVE INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND A CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS INCLUSION OF ALL PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE, NOT TO DISCRIMINATE AND TREAT IT AS A SEPARATE ISSUE BECAUSE OFTEN PEOPLE WITHOUT DISABILITIES HAVE NEEDS AND ACCOMMODATION NEEDS THEY HAVE TO HAVE LOOKED AT. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO, MEASURING THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT OF ACCOMMODATION. WHEN WE THINK ABOUT RETURN ON INVESTMENT, WE THINK ABOUT THE COST, BUT ALSO THE BENEFIT AND PUT THE TWO INTO THE PICTURE AND THAT'S THE KIND OF FRAMING WE THINK IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE WITH THESE KIND OF ISSUES. WE DON'T JUST WANT TO FOCUS ON COST BECAUSE THERE'S RETURNS WHEN YOU INVEST MONEY IN YOUR WORKFORCE AND YOU WANT TO MEASURE AND ACCOUNT FOR THOSE BENEFITS AS WELL.

MOST OF THE STUDIES WE LOOKED AT WERE FOCUSING ON JUST THE DIRECT COST AND WHAT WE REALLY THINK IS IMPORTANT TO EMPHASIZE IN THE LITERATURE GOING FORWARD AND THE EVIDENCE BASE IS LOOK AT THE FULL RANGE OF COST AS WELL AS THE BENEFITS. I WILL GIVE SOME DEFINITIONS HERE TO HELP PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW THE TERMINOLOGY OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT.

USUALLY, THE DIRECT COSTS IS A TERM USED TO IDENTIFY EXPENSES INCURRED FOR ACCOMMODATING WORKERS SUCH AS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT THEY HAVE TO PURCHASE IN THE MARKETPLACE TO MAKE THE ACCOMMODATIONS. INDIRECT COSTS MIGHT BE SOME OF THE RESOURCES USED IN THE PROCESS OF MAKING THOSE ACCOMMODATIONS. OFTEN TIMES, IT IS THE PEOPLE TIME IN THE HR DEPARTMENT OR THE SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER, THEIR TIME IS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS. SO THAT HAS TO BE IN THE PICTURE AS WELL.

IN TERMS OF BENEFITS, THE DIRECT BENEFITS ARE GENEREALLY SEEN AS THE WORKER'S PRODUCTIVITY AFTER THEY ARE ACCOMMODATED SO THERE'S A RETURN ON THAT INVESTMENT. INDIRECT BENEFITS ARE THE SPILLOVER EFFECTS THAT HAPPEN, ALL OTHER WORKERS ARE MORE PRODUCTIVE, TEAM PRODUCTION, THE MORALE IS BETTER, HIGHER LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT ACROS THE WORKFORCE. JUST TO EMPHASIZE THE POINT, IT'S IMPORTANT TO VIEW ACCOMMODATION COSTS FOR WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES IN THAT BROADER CONTEXT OF ACCOMMODATING ALL WORKER'S NEEDS.

SOME OF THE EVIDENCE WE FOUND IN A WEBSITE AND SERVICE THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE TURN TO FOR THE COST OF ACCOMMODATION IS THE JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK, OR JAN. IT IS AN AMERICAN SERVICE AND THEY COLLECTED DATA ON THE COST OF THEIR CLIENT BASE FROM 2004 TO 2015. IN FACT, THEY INTERVIEWED OVER 2,000 EMPLOYERS TO GET A SENSE OF WHAT THE COST OF ACCOMMODATION WERE. THE SAMPLE INCLUDES A RANGE OF INDUSTRIAL SECTORS AND EMPLOYER SIZES, SO IT'S BROADLY GENERALIZABLE, THEIR FINDINGS.

THE KEY FINDING IS THAT THEY FOUND THAT BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS OF WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FAR EXCEED THEIR COSTS, IN MOST CASES. THE KINDS OF BENEFITS THAT EMPLOYERS OFTEN MENTIONED WERE RETENTION OF A VALUABLE EMPLOYEE, IMPROVEMENT IN PRODUCTIVITY AND MORALE, REDUCED WORKERS COMPENSATION AND TRAINING COST, AND IMPROVED ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY. SO THESE ARE THE KIND OF THINGS THAT EMPLOYERS FOUND TO BE VALUES OF INVESTING IN ACCOMMODATION.

58% OF ACCOMMODATIONS HAD NO DIRECT COST AND THE REMAINDER HAD AN AVERAGE ONE‑TIME DIRECT COST OF 500 DOLLARS. SOME PEOPLE QUESTION THE 500 DOLLAR AMOUNT. IT SEEMS QUITE LOW, BUT I THINK THEY PROBABLY TASKED THIS BROADLY, WHERE, IN A LOT OF CASES, THERE IS NOT A NEED TO DO MUCH IN TERMS OF EXTERNAL SERVICES OR COSTS, BUT MIGHT JUST BE ABOUT FLEXIBLE TIME ARRANGEMENTS AND RESCHEDULING, AND THINGS LIKE THAT, SO SOME OF THAT IS IN-HOUSE INDIRECT COST.

THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT BENEFITS BECAUSE WE REALLY WANT TO GET THOSE BENEFITS INTO THE PICTURE AS WELL. HERE ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSES FROM THE EMPLOYERS THAT THEY HAD SURVEYED. 90% OF THEM SAID THEY REALLY VALUED RETAINING A PRODUCTIVE AND VALUED WORKER IN THE WORKFORCE BY MAKING THE ACCOMMODATIONS. THE INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY WAS MENTIONED BY 72% OF EMPLOYERS SURVEYED AND THE ELIMINATION OF THE COST OF TRAINING AND HIRING A NEW WORKER WAS MENTIONED BY 60% OF THE EMPLOYERS.

IN TERMS OF INDIRECT BENEFITS, MANY TALKED ABOUT IMPROVED INTERACTION WITH CO‑WORKERS, SO THE MORALE AND COMMUNICATIONS WERE BETTER. 62% MENTIONED MORALE AND INCREASED OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY WAS MENTIONED BY OVER HALF OF EMPLOYERS. SO THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU TRY TO LOOK AT THAT BIG PICTURE AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT THAT BIG PICTURE OF ALL OF THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS AND BENEFITS WHEN YOU ARE DOING ACCOMMODATION. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

HERE'S SOME WORK THAT WAS DONE BY THE CANADIAN WORKING GROUP ON HIV AND REHABILITATION. THEY DID A LITTLE BROCHURE ON THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ACCOMMODATION. THEY REALLY FOCUSED ON THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF PEOPLE WITH EPISODIC DISABILITIES. WITHIN THE DOCUMENT THAT THEY PREPARED, THEY PROVIDED 4 CASE STUDIES FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS TO GIVE A SENSE OF HOW YOU CAN THINK ABOUT FRAMING THIS KIND OF ISSUE OF THE COST OF ACCOMMODATION, THE LARGER PICTURE OF COST AND BENEFITS. AT THE END OF THE DAY, IN MOST CASES, THERE WAS A NET RICH POSITIVE RETURN OF INVESTING IN ACCOMMODATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

ONE OF THE SCENARIOS WAS A TAX ACCOUNTANT WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT WITH ARTHRITIS, A MANAGER WITH HIV, AND SECURITY OFFICER WITH A MAJOR DEPRESSION. TENURE IS A THING THEY LOOKED AT TOO BECAUSE IF A PERSON IS A LONGSTANDING EMPLOYEE, OBVIOUSLY THEY HAVE A LOT OF SKILL SETS THAT THEY ARE OFFERING AND THEY KNOW THE ORGANIZATION WELL, THE PRODUCTS, THE SERVICES AND THE CLIENT BASE. TURNOVER COST WAS A KEY PART OF THE THINGS THAT THEY WERE LOOKING AT, THE TURNOVER COST THAT WERE AVOIDED BY RETAINING THAT EMPLOYEE. ACCOMMODATION COSTS WERE RELATIVELY LOW FOR ALL OF THESE FOUR CASES. THEN, THEY CALCULATED THE MONETARY RETURN. THEY DIDN'T DO A DIRECT MONETARY ESTIMATE OF THE INDIRECT BENEFITS. INDIRECT BENEFITS AREN'T REALLY PART OF THIS PICTURE. THEY ARE MORE COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT TO CAPTURE BUT OBVIOUSLY CRITICAL TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN YOU ARE ASSESSING THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF ACCOMMODATION. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

HERE IS A STUDY BY SHUR, AN AMERICAN STUDY, THAT IS QUITE A LARGE SCALE EXPLORATION OF THESE ISSUES. THEY LOOK AT OVER 5,000 WORKERS AND MANAGERS ACROSS 8 COMPANIES. THEY ARE COLLECTING A LOT OF DATA ON THIS ISSUE. WHAT THEY DID WAS ANALYZE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR WORKERS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES. SO TO ME THAT'S THE NOTION OF LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE OF ACCOMMODATION ACROSS THE ENTIRE WORKFORCE. THEY CONSIDERED ORGANIZATIONAL COSTS AND BENEFITS AS PERCEIVED BY THE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS, THE ACCOMMODATED WORKERS THEMSELVES, THEIR CO‑WORKERS AND THEIR MANAGERS. THE FINDINGS WERE QUITE CONSISTENT NO MATTER WHO THEY SPOKE TO. THEY FOUND OUT THAT THE TYPES OF REQUESTS ARE SIMILAR FOR PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES, WHICH IS INTERESTING TO KNOW THAT PEOPLE WITHOUT DISABILITIES ARE ALSO ASKING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS (WORK STATION REDESIGN, MORE CONFORTABLE CHAIRS, THOSE KINDS OF THINGS). THE MOST COMMON REQUEST THAT WAS ASKED FOR WAS WORK RESCHEDULING, SO MORE FLEXIBLE WORK HOURS TO ACCOMMODATE MAYBE FAMILY OR PERSONAL NEEDS.

MOST ACCOMMODATIONS HAVE NO OR ONLY SMALL MONETARY COSTS. IN FACT THEY FOUND 40% WAS ZERO, 25% WAS LESS THAN 500 DOLLARS AND LESS THAN 10% HAD A ONE‑TIME COST OF 5,000 DOLLARS. THE KEY BENEFITS WERE IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY, RETENTION, AND MORALE. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO SUMMARY MESSAGES FROM THAT STUDY. THE RESULTS SEEMED TO BE CONSISTENT WITH PRIOR EVIDENCE THAT MOST ACCOMMODATIONS ARE INEXPENSIVE AND FOR MOST CASES, THE MONETARY BENEFITS EXCEED THE COST.

THE KEY POINTS FROM THEIR STUDY. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD BE FRAMED IN THE CONTEXT OF MAKING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYEES. GROWING RECOGNITION THAT AMONG LEADING ORGANIZATIONS, THE GENERALIZED BENEFITS OF WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE REALLY HIGH AND IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT. FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKPLACE CULTURE AS A FACILITATOR OF SUCCESSFUL ACCOMMODATION. REALLY, THE ORGANIZATION MUST HAVE A CULTURE THAT REALLY PROMOTES INCLUSIVENESS AND ENCOURAGES WORKERS TO COME FORWARD WHEN THEY NEED SOME KIND OF ACCOMMODATION. THERE IS RESEARCH NEEDED ON HOW TO ORGANIZE, DEVELOP AND MANAGE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TO FACILITATE ACCOMMODATION PROTOCOLS ACROSS DEPARTMENTS AND MANAGERS. A LOT OF ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO DO SOME LEARNING ON HOW TO DO THIS WELL. THERE'S SOME TRAINING NEEDS ON THE EMPLOYER'S SIDE TO REALLY BE A GOOD EMPLOYER AND GOOD AT DOING THESE KINDS OF ACCOMMODATIONS, BEING INCLUSIVE AND KNOWING WERE TO TURN FOR SERVICES IF NEEDED FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES AND THINGS LIKE THAT. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

THIS IS ANOTHER STUDY BY SOLOVIEVA FROM 2013. AGAIN, EMPHASIZING THE DEMAND SIDE OF FACTORS. LESS ATTENTION WAS PAID TO THE DEMAND SIDE FACTORS IN THE LITERATURE, EVEN THOUGH EMPLOYERS OBVIOUSLY PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE BOTH WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES. SO, REALLY EMPHASIZING THE EMPLOYER'S SIDE. SEVERAL CRITICAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED WERE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CORPORATE CULTURE AS I MENTIONED, EMPLOYER'S KNOWLEDGE OF BEST PRACTICES, CONCERNS ABOUT LITIGATION THAT ARE OFTEN UNFOUNDED, AND EVIDENCE ON COSTS AND BENEFITS OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS. IT'S NOT ALWAYS AN EXPENSIVE UNDERTAKING TO ACCOMMODATE THE WORKER. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO HERE'S SOME RECOMMENDATIONS THAT I REALLY THINK SUMMARIZE WELL THE WAY TO DO THIS WELL. THIS IS FROM THE CANADIAN WORKING GROUP ON HIV AND REHABILITATION.

SO CREATE AND COMMUNICATE THE STRATEGIC DECISIONS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. IF YOU ARE GOING TO CHANGE THE CULTURE, YOU REALLY WANT TO HAVE GOOD COMMUNICATIONS THAT YOU ARE AN INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER.

ENSURE BUY-IN AT THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL AND ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION. REALLY CRITICAL. IF YOU DON'T HAVE BUY-IN AT THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL, IT JUST OFTEN DOESN'T WORK, REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION. IT HAS TO COME FROM TOP DOWN THAT WE VALUE THIS.

SET GOAL AND OBJECTIVES IN LINE WITH BUSINESS NEEDS AND MEASURE RESULTS. YOU WANT TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE AND SEE WHAT'S WORKING AND WHAT NOT SO YOU CAN KNOW WHERE TO TWEAK OR MAKE MODIFICATIONS IF IT IS NOT WORKING.

REVITALIZE ACCOMMODATION POLICIES AND PLANS AND ROLL THEM OUT SO EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT THEM. THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS, GET EXPERT ADVICE. THAT'S REALLY CRITICAL. AN ORGANIZATION IS NOT ALWAYS EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH ALL OF THESE ISSUES ON THEIR OWN SO THEY NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO TURN WHEN THEY NEED EXTERNAL ADVICE.

I HAVE LISTED HERE A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS HERE IN CANADA THAT PROVIDE SERVICES IN THIS ARENA. THERE'S OTHERS TOO. OBVIOUSLY I COULDN'T BE COMPREHENSIVE ON ONE SLIDE, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHERE TO TURN WHEN WE NEED EXTERNAL SUPPORTS TO HELP DO A GOOD JOB OF ACCOMMODATIONS. I PUT NEIL SQUIRE ON HERE FIRST BECAUSE GARY IS THE NEXT PRESENTER. YOU CAN HEAR WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

THAT'S IT FOR ME. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR LISTENING.

**> Joan Turner:**

THANK YOU EMILE. VERY INTERESTING PRESENTATION.

OUR NEXT SPEAKER IS DR. GARY BIRCH, AND GARY IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY. HE'S AN EXPERT ON ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND ACCESSIBILITY. HIS PRESENTATION TODAY IS ENTITLED, “THE COST OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND RELATED ERGONOMIC INTERVENTIONS, A CASE STUDY FROM THE NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENT”.

WELCOME, GARY. PLEASE BEGIN.

**> Gary Birch:**

THANK YOU, JOAN, AND THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR JOINING TODAY. I REALLY APPRECIATE THIS CHANCE TO BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU A BIT OF A PICTURE OF WHAT WE ARE FINDING HERE AT THE NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY. I DECIDED TO GO OVER THE CASES THAT WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH, WITH OUR SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENT, WHICH IS THE DEPARTMENT THAT FOCUSES ON ADDRESSING THE WORKPLACE BARRIERS AND PROVIDING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES. I WENT BACK ABOUT A YEAR THROUGH OUR DATABASE AND CAME UP WITH SOME AVERAGES, WHICH I WILL SHOW LATER.

THE NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY IS NAMED AFTER A GUY NAMED NEIL SQUIRE WHO WAS A HIGH LEVEL QUADRIPLEGIC IN 1980. AFTER HIS PASSING IN 1984, THIS SOCIETY WAS CREATED. FOR OVER 30 YEARS WE HAVE BEEN DELIVERING SERVICES, PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON HELPING PEOPLE USE TECHNOLOGY TO THEIR BEST ADVANTAGE AND WE HAVE SERVED OVER 30,000 PEOPLE TO DATE. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

OUR FOCUS IS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL IN SOCIETY AND OFTEN THERE'S A BIG FOCUS ON HELPING THEM BECOME PRODUCTIVE, INDEPENDENT IN A FULFILLING CAREER. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

WE ARE SOMEWHAT NATIONAL, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT SPARSELY, WE ARE IN BRITISH COLOMBIA, SASKATCHEWAN, ONTARIO, AND NEW BRUNSWICK, AND WE ALSO HAVE THE ABILITY TO DO DISTANT SERVICES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

THIS IS THE SOLUTIONS TEAM HERE IN BC WHERE I TOOK THE DATA FROM. IT INVOLVES OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS, CERTIFIED ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANTS. SO, THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD SPECIAL TRAINING SPECIFICALLY TO DO WITH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY, AND A COUPLE OF TECHNICIANS TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL THE STUFF WORKS.

SO THE KIND OF SERVICES THAT THE SOLUTIONS PROVIDES ARE: WE DO CONSULTATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS AND INDIVIDUALS, WE TRY TO MAKE THAT A VERY HANDS ON APPROACH. WE REALLY WANT PEOPLE TO COME IN, OR WE COME TO THEM, WITH A RANGE OF OPTIONS SO THAT THEY GET A CHANCE TO TEST AND TRIAL AND MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE FINDING THE BEST SOLUTIONS FOR THEM. VERY CLIENT DRIVEN PROCESS. SO WE ACTUALLY INVOLVED IN THE PROVISION OF THE ASSESSMENT SERVICES AND HELP THEM EVALUATE THE EQUIPMENT THEY NEED.

ANOTHER BIG PIECE OF THE WORK, AND IT'S SOMETIMES BIGGER THAN SOME PEOPLE WOULD THINK IS WORKING ON MAKING SURE THE ORDER, SOURCING THE CORRECT STUFF, GETTING IT INSTALLED AND A REALLY IMPORTANT ISSUE IS MAKING SURE PEOPLE GET SUFFICIENT TRAINING TO USE THE ACCOMMODATIONS EFFECTIVELY. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

THIS IS A SLIDE TO REMIND US ALL THAT IT'S A VERY INDIVIDUALIZED PROCESS, NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL SOLUTION. WE FIND THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL NEEDS TO BOTH HAVE THEIR NEEDS AS AN INDIVIDUAL, BUT ALSO THE NEEDS THEY ARE RUNNING INTO IN THEIR WORKPLACE. LIKE I MENTIONED BEFORE, THE PERSON WHO NEEDS THE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS TO BUY INTO WHAT CHANGES AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS TO BE THERE FOR THEM. AGAIN, I'M REPEATING A LITTLE BIT, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT, THAT THEY NEED THE TRAINING AND SUPPORT WHICH MAY BE ON‑GOING FOR A SHORT WHILE TO MAKE SURE THEY USE THE ACCOMMODATION SUCCESSFULLY.

I WON'T GO THROUGH ALL OF THIS, BUT JUST TO GIVE YOU A RANGE OF THE KINDS OF PEOPLE WE HAVE WORKED WITH, INSURANCE COMPANIES, WE HAVE DONE WORK WITH FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS, MANY WORKSAFES ACROSS CANADA, ALL SORTS OF PRIVATE FIRMS, ENGINEERING FIRMS. JUST A WIDE RANGE OF EMPLOYERS AND TYPES OF EMPLOYERS. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO JUST A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THOSE POINTS I WAS MAKING. IT'S NOT A ONE SIZE FITS ALL SOLUTION. NEEDS ARE DETERMINED THROUGH INDIVIDUALIZED ASSESSMENTS. IT CAN INVOLVE SOME VERY LOW COSTS AND IN SOME CASES SOME HIGHER COST SOLUTIONS, AND IT'S MOST SUCCESSFUL WHEN IMPLEMENTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH TRAINING AND SUPPORT. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

JUST BEFORE I GET INTO SOME OF THE AVERAGES OF THE COSTS INVOLVED, I WANTED TO POINT OUT SOME OF THE ASSUMPTIONS. THEY AREN'T REALLY ASSUMPTIONS, BUT SOME OF THE FACTORS I INCLUDED WHEN I CAME UP WITH THE AVERAGES.

IT INCLUDES THE HARD COSTS OF BUYING THE TECHNOLOGY. AS EMILE WAS REFERRING TO, THE MORE DIRECT COSTS. THE ASSESSMENT COSTS ARE INCLUDED. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING COSTS ARE ALSO INCLUDED. COLLECTIVELY, THE ASSESSMENT, ORIENTATION AND TRAINING ARE CAPTURED UNDER ONE COLLECTIVE TERM IN THE NEXT SLIDE CALLED “SERVICES”. AND THE AVERAGES PROVIDED ON THE SLIDES COMING UP ARE BASED ON OUR SERVICES PROVIDED OR APPROXIMATELY THE LAST YEAR IN OUR BC BASED OFFICES. THESE AVERAGES, AND I WILL COME BACK TO THIS BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND, THESE AVERAGES INCLUDE MANY CLIENTS WITH QUITE COMPLEX NEEDS. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO OVERALL, ALL DISABILITY TYPES, THE AVERAGE EQUIPMENT COST, SO THE DIRECT COST, IS $4,931. THE AVERAGE RELATED SERVICE COSTS PER PERSON IS $405, FOR A TOTAL AVERAGE INTERVENTION COST PER PERSON OF $5,336. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

I DID MY BEST AS I COULD, WITH THE DATA WE HAD, TO BREAK IT INTO DISABILITY TYPES. SO THE FIRST ONE IS VISUAL, SO THAT WOULD BE ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACCOMMODATIONS RELATED TO VISION. THIS INCLUDES THINGS LIKE HANDHELD AND VIDEO MAGNIFIERS, DESKTOP VIDEO MAGNIFIERS, LIGHTING, ZOOM TEXT, JAWS, CCTV, ERGONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, INCLUDING POSITIONING OF MONITORING, MONITOR ARMS, LARGE KEYBOARDS AND ERGONOMIC CHAIRS. IN THIS CATEGORY, THE AVERAGE COST IS $2,748 WITH A SERVICE COST OF $723, FOR AN OVERALL AVERAGE PER INTERVENTION OF $3,471. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO IN THE AREA OF HEARING, THIS PRIMARILY INCLUDES HEARING AIDS AND FM DEVICES SUCH AS BLUETOOTH MICROPHONES AND THE ROGER PEN. AGAIN, YOU CAN SEE THAT THE EQUIPMENT COSTS HERE PER PERSON IS $5,791 AND THE AVERAGE RELATED SERVICE COSTS PER PERSON IS $56. I THINK THIS IS AN ANOMALY BECAUSE MANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, THE INTERVENTION WAS A HEARING AID AND WHEN WE DEAL WITH HEARING AIDS, THE COST THAT WE PAY INCLUDES THE ASSESSMENT OF A HEARING AID SPECIALIST AND THE SERVICES TO MAKE SURE THAT HEARING AID IS RIGHT. SO I THINK IN THE HARD COST OR THE DIRECT COST, THE EQUIPMENT COST, IT'S INCLUDED IN THERE A FAIR BIT OF SERVICE AS WELL. THE TOTAL OVERALL AVERAGE FOR HEARING IS $5,847. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

PHYSICAL MOBILITY. THIS INCLUDES A WIDE RANGE OF THINGS, ALL THE WAY FROM ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT, WHICH CAN BE MONITOR ARMS, ERGONOMIC OFFICE CHAIRS, ARTICULATING KEYBOARD TRAYS, DOCUMENT HOLDERS, ADJUSTABLE WORKSTATIONS, ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES, SUCH AS SPECIALIZED KEYBOARDS AND MICE, TELEPHONE HEADSETS, SPEECH RECOGNITION SOFTWARE. WE HAVE EVEN DONE SOME VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS. THOSE ARE OFTEN LARGER ITEMS, INCLUDING VEHICLE CONVERSIONS INCLUDING RAMPS, AND HAND CONTROLS. I THINK BECAUSE THERE'S SOME VERY LARGE TICKET ITEMS IN THERE, THE AVERAGE EQUIPMENT COST IS LARGE, AROUND $6,210. THE AVERAGE SERVICE RELATED COSTS ARE $817. THE OVERALL AVERAGE PER INTERVENTION COST PER PERSON IS $7,027. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO WE HAD THIS OTHER CATEGORY CALLED MULTIPLE BARRIERS. THE ONLY POINT I WANTED TO MAKE HERE IS THE AVERAGE EQUIPMENT COST IS $2,948. WHAT IS INTERESTING WITH THE MULTIPLE BARRIER ONES, THOSE ARE THE ONES WHERE YOU SEE THE HIGHER RELATED SERVICE COST WHICH IS AROUND $1,100 OR $1,200. THE OVERALL AVERAGE FOR INTERVENTION FOR MULTIPLE BARRIERS IS AROUND $4,144. NEXT SLIDE PLEASE.

SO IN SUMMARY, THE OVERALL AVERAGE OF WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS IS $5,336. IT IS IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE BOTH THE HARD COSTS OF THE EQUIPMENT INVOLVED, ALONG WITH THE ASSOCIATED SERVICES TO ENSURE THAT THE EQUIPMENT AND ACCOMMODATION ARE BEING USED EFFECTIVELY. THIS RECENT EXPERIENCE OF THE NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY IS THAT THE AVERAGE COST OF ACCOMMODATION IS WELL ABOVE THE HEAVILY CITED 500 DOLLARS PER PERSON. BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT MANY OF THE FOLKS THAT GET REFERRED TO US AND GET SUPPORTED TO OBTAIN THE TECHNOLOGY AND ACCOMMODATIONS THROUGH US ARE THOSE WITH FAIRLY COMPLEX NEEDS. EXPECT THAT OUR HIGHER AVERAGE IS RELATED BOTH TO THE COMPLEXITY AND THE FACT THAT WE INCLUDED THE ASSOCIATED SERVICES.

FOR REASONS I WON'T GO INTO BUT WERE WELL STATED BY EMILE IN HIS PRESENTATION, IT'S STILL WELL WORTH THE INVESTMENT TO KEEP INDIVIDUALS AT WORK FOR ALL THE COST BENEFIT STUFF THAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT, AND MANY OF THESE COSTS I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT, AND THIS WAS ALSO MENTIONED BY EMILE, YOU WOULD COME ACROSS MANY OF THESE COSTS BY HIRING ANY NEW EMPLOYEE IN TERMS OF MAKING SURE THEY HAVE A PROPER CHAIR AND PROPER DESK AT THE RIGHT HEIGHT AND ALL OF THAT KIND OF IMPORTANT DETAILS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS. NEXT SLIDE.

I'M DONE, JOAN, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

**> Joan Turner:**

THANK YOU, GARY. GREAT PRESENTATION ON REAL COSTS. WE WILL OPEN IT UP TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS.

**> Operator:**

WE WILL NOW TAKE QUESTIONS FROM THE TELEPHONE LINES. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION AND YOU ARE USING A SPEAKERPHONE, PLEASE LIFT THE HANDSET BEFORE MAKING YOUR SELECTION. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, PLEASE PRESS STAR ONE ON THE TELEPHONE KEY PAD. IF AT ANY TIME YOU WISH TO CANCEL YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE PRESS THE POUND SIGN. PLEASE PRESS STAR ONE AT THIS TIME IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION. THERE WILL BE A BRIEF PAUSE WHILE THE PARTICIPANTS REGISTER FOR QUESTIONS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE.

**> Joan Turner:**

PERHAPS I CAN GET THE QUESTIONS STARTED, GARY AND EMILE. YOU SEEM TO PRESENT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS ON THE AVERAGE COST OF ACCOMMODATION. GARY, I THINK YOU SAID THE AVERAGE FOR YOURS WAS SOMETHING LIKE 5 THOUSANDS, THREE HUNDRED SOMETHING. AND EMILE TALKED OF SEVERAL STUDIES, INCLUDING THE JAN STUDY, WHERE THE AVERAGE COST OF THOSE WHO REQUIRED ACCOMMODATION WAS ABOUT $500.

GARY, WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS, THE DIFFERENCE?

**> Gary Birch:**

THANK YOU. FIRST OF ALL, THE JAN STUDY HAS A MUCH BROADER, I'M ASSUMING, A MUCH BROADER SET OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THAT ARE RANGING FROM FOLKS THAT NEED VERY SMALL OR NO ACCOMMODATIONS TO THOSE WHO ARE REQUIRING FAIRLY COMPLEX ACCOMMODATIONS, AND I THINK WHAT WE HAPPEN TO SEE AT THE NEIL SQUIRE IS MORE OF THE PEOPLE ON THE COMPLEX END OF THINGS.

ALSO, I WOULD LIKE EMILE TO MAYBE COMMENT TOO. I'M NOT SURE IF JAN ALWAYS INCLUDES THE OTHER RELATED COSTS THAT ARE RELATED TO SOURCING THE EQUIPMENT, ENSURING THE EQUIPMENT IS, YOU KNOW, THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND ANY FOLLOW‑UP TRAINING COSTS, WHETHER THOSE ARE INCLUDED IN THAT 500 DOLLARS. I'M NOT SURE.

AND JUST TO SHOW YOU THAT IT IS NOT ALWAYS COMPLETELY OUT OF LINE WITH SOME OF THE STUFF EMILE IS SHOWING YOU, LOOK AT THE ONE COST BENEFIT SLIDE, THOSE 3 OR 4 INDIVIDUALS. I THINK ONE WAS AN ACCOUNTANT, ET CETERA. IF YOU LOOK AT THEIR ACCOMMODATION COSTS, THEY ARE PRETTY MUCH IN LINE WITH THE KIND OF COSTS THAT I WAS SHOWING.

**> Emile Tompa:**

GARY HAS MADE SOME EXCELLENT POINTS, AND I THINK HE'S RIGHT ON THE MARK. ONE OF THE THINGS I THINK ABOUT AS A STATISTICIAN IS THAT THERE'S ALWAYS A DISTRIBUTION OF THINGS. NOT EVERYBODY HAS THE SAME NEEDS, THEY AREN'T DOING THE SAME JOB AND THEIR ABILITIES ARE DIFFERENT, SO THEY HAVE A DIFFERENT DISTRIBUTION, AND WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT DISTRIBUTION LOOKS LIKE. ONE OF THE STUDIES I HAD REFERRED TO BY SHUR, SHE HAD IDENTIFIED SOME OF THAT RANGE. BUT THERE WAS JUST UNDER 10% HAD COSTS OF 5,000 DOLLARS OR MORE KIND OF THING. SO CLEARLY, THERE'S A DISTRIBUTION, AND AS GARY SUGGESTS, ONCE THEY ARE GETTING ARE THE MORE COMPLEX CASES WHICH FALL INTO THAT CATEGORY. I AM NOT SURE IF WE HAVE DATA HERE IN CANADA OF HOW MANY ARE IN THAT RANGE OF BEING COMPLEX AND WHETHER IT'S EQUIVALENT TO THIS SHUR STUDY THAT SHOWS LESS THAN 10% IN THAT HIGHER RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION COSTS.

THE JAN STUFF, I DON'T KNOW ALL THE DETAILS. I WOULD HAVE TO DIG IN THEIR WEBSITE TO SEE IF THEY PROVIDE SOME INSIGHT INTO IT, THEY MIGHT BE JUST LOOKING AT THE VERY IMMEDIATE DIRECT COST AND HAVE A RANGE OF EMPLOYERS AND CASES THAT THEY ARE LOOKING AT, SOME OF WHICH ARE NOT REQUIRING A LOT OF ACCOMMODATION COSTS, SO THAT'S PROBABLY WHERE THEY GET THE 500 DOLLARS. THEY HAVEALSO LOOKED AT IT OVER A LONG TIME PERIOD SO I DON'T KNOW IF THEY ADJUSTED FOR DIFFERENCE IN VALUE OF A DOLLAR OVER THE 15 YEARS OF DATA THEY WERE COLLECTING. THEY WERE PUTTING IT ALL FROM 2004 TO 2015 AND GETTING AN AVERAGE KIND OF THING. SO THERE'S SOME DETAILS THAT ARE MISSING IN THEIR COMPUTATIONS, BUT MY SENSE IS THAT THEY ARE PROBABLY LOOKING AT THE MOST IMMEDIATE COSTS AND NOT LOOKING AT SOME OF THOSE SERVICE COSTS GARY IS MENTIONING, WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND. I THINK YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT INDIRECT COSTS, AS WELL AS ALL THE BENEFITS THAT ARISE FROM THOSE ACCOMMODATIONS.

**> Operator:**

WE HAVE A QUESTION FROM THE LAURENTIENNE BANK. PLEASE GO AHEAD.

**> Speaker:**

HI, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TERM MULTIPLE BARRIERS? THANK YOU.

**> Gary Birch:**

THANK YOU. THIS IS GARY SPEAKING. IT'S A RANGE. MULTIPLE BARRIERS WAS JUST A CATEGORY I USED FOR PEOPLE WHO, SAY, MAY HAVE HAD MOBILITY OR SOME OTHER AGILITY DISABILITY, AS WELL AS MAYBE A DISABILITY RELATED TO THEIR VISION, SO IT'S REALLY JUST SOMEONE THAT HAS MULTIPLE DISABILITIES THAT WOULD CROSS OVER ACROSS THOSE DEFINITIONS.

**> Operator:**

OUR NEXT QUESTION IS FROM RICHARD BELZILE WITH CONSUMER SERVICE ONTARIO.

**> Speaker:**

YES, I THINK IT'S A QUESTION MORE FOR GARY BIRCH. IN MY WORK, I WORK MAINLY WITH PEOPLE. NOT MAINLY, BUT OFTEN WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE A HEARING DISABILITY BUT USE SIGN LANGUAGE. SO THE SERVICE COSTS FOR THEM ARE OFTEN ASTRONOMICAL IF WE ARE HIRING DAILY INTERPRETERS, OR EVEN AN INTERPRETER FOR A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ONE DAY, A WEEK OR WHAT NOT. I WONDER IF YOU HAD ANY EXPERIENCE IN CATEGORIZING THOSE SERVICES COSTS AND MAYBE IN, NOT… WELL, I WILL LEAVE IT AT THAT FOR NOW.

**> Gary Birch:**

THANK YOU FOR THE QUESTION. IT'S GARY BIRCH SPEAKING. I DON'T HAVE ANY DATA ON THAT. THAT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT WE ARE EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE AT THE NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY. WE HAVE HELPED TO PROVIDE SOME SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF. NOT SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION, OBVIOUSLY, BUT SOME TOOLS THAT HAVE HELPED THEM TO COMMUNICATE BETTER AT WORK USING, LIKE, TABLETS AND OTHER PIECES OF SOFTWARE THAT HAVE ALLOWED EASY COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN COLLEAGUES, BUT NO. WE DON'T PROVIDE THE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION.

**> Speaker:**

CAN I FOLLOW‑UP?

**> Gary Birch:**

SURE.

**> Speaker:**

FOR TECHNIQUES AND FOR THE PROVISIONS OF ACCESSIBLE SERVICES, I AM WELL AWARE OF, BUT IT'S MORE OF THE COST ASSOCIATED WITH IT, AND THE ARGUMENTS AND THE SUPPORT FOR THAT. SO MAYBE YOU MAY HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE WHERE THERE ARE ASTRONOMICAL COSTS. FOR EXAMPLE, PROVIDING A PERSONAL ATTENDANT EVERY DAY FOR A PERSON WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES. IT'S IN THAT SITUATION WHERE THE COST IS MORE THAN 5,000. IT'S OFTEN A YEARLY COST OF A FULL SALARY OF 50,000 OR MORE. DO YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE OR ANY DATA ON THAT, THAT COULD ASSIST US?

**> Gary Birch:**

I DON'T HAVE ANY DATA, AND YOU RAISE A VERY GOOD POINT. OUR EXPERIENCE AROUND HERE, WHEN WE HAVE HIRED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WHO REQUIRE ATTENDANTS, ET CETERA, BECAUSE WE DO HIRE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AND IT VARIES A LOT FROM PROVINCE TO PROVINCE TO PROVINCE, BUT THEY, THROUGH THEIR ATTENDANT CARE SYSTEM, CAN, IN SOME CASES, GET ATTENDANT CARE TO HELP THEM OUT AT WORK AS WELL, AND USUALLY THAT'S THE KIND OF SCENARIO THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WORK OUT. SO IT'S THROUGH THEIR EXISTING ATTENDANT CARE SERVICES AND HAVING AN ATTENDANT SHOW UP. IT MAY NOT EVEN BE THE CASE THEY NEED TO BE HERE ALL DAY. THEY MIGHT SHOW UP HERE IN THE MORNING WHEN THEY FIRST ARRIVE AND COME BACK OVER LUNCH AND AGAIN MAYBE IN THE AFTERNOON OR SOMETHING THAT.

**> Speaker:**

SO THAT WOULD TAKE THE COST OUT OF THE DATA YOU HAVE ON YOUR CHARTS, OKAY.

**> Gary Birch:**

YEAH, OUR DATA DEFINITELY DOES NOT INCLUDE THAT.

**> Speaker:**

OKAY THANK YOU.

**> Joan Turner:**

THANK YOU.

**> Operator:**

ONCE AGAIN, PLEASE PRESS STAR 1 AT THIS TIME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS. OUR NEXT QUESTION IS FROM TRACY ODELL WITH THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

**> Speaker:**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH AND THANK YOU BOTH FOR THOSE GREAT PRESENTATIONS. MY QUESTION IS FOR GARY BIRCH, AND I'M JUST WONDERING OUT OF YOUR SOLUTIONS, HOW MANY PERCENTAGE WISE MIGHT BE CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS VERSUS OFF THE SHELF KIND OF EQUIPMENT OR ASSISTIVE DEVICES THAT IS AVAILABLE.

**> Gary Birch:**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR QUESTION. THE WAY I WOULD ACTUALLY LOOK AT THAT IS THAT THEY ARE ALL CUSTOMIZED. WE DO RELY ON, VERY HEAVILY IN MOST CASES, OFF THE SHELF, I THINK THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN, COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES, WHETHER THEY ARE SPECIALIZED ASSISTIVE DEVICES OR SOMETIMES MAINSTREAM TECHNOLOGIES WE ARE UTILIZING TO HELP FACILITATE AN ACCOMMODATION, BUT THEY ARE CUSTOMIZED IN THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL WE WORK WITH IS SET UP SPECIFICALLY FOR THEM AND TWEAKED FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL NEEDS AS WELL AS THEIR NEEDS AT WORK. SO EVEN SOMETHING LIKE DRAGON DICTATE, FOR INSTANCE, WHICH IS A SPEECH RECOGNITION SOFTWARE, WE WOULD MAKE SURE THAT IT IS SET UP WITH THE RIGHT MACROS AND STUFF TO ALLOW THE PERSON TO DO THE TYPE OF JOB THEY ARE DOING.

SO NOTHING IS COMPLETELY JUST OUT OF THE BOX. DOES THAT HELP WITH YOUR QUESTION?

**> Speaker:**

YES, THAT'S VERY GOOD, THANK YOU.

**> Operator:**

THERE ARE NO FURTHER QUESTIONS REGISTERED AT THIS TIME. I WOULD LIKE TO TURN THE MEETING BACK OVER TO MS. TURNER.

**> Joan Turner:**

THANK YOU. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR TWO PRESENTERS TODAY, EMILE TOMPA AND GARY BIRCH FOR SHARING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHTS WITH US.

FOR THOSE OF YOU PARTICIPATING TODAY, I HOPE YOU FOUND THE SESSION INFORMATIVE AND USEFUL. THIS CONCLUDES OUR WEBINAR. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ATTENDING. GOOD BYE.