

**Explorable | Season One, Episode Seven: Transcript of interview with Expedia Group and Leonard Cheshire**

**Toby**: Hello everybody and welcome to this episode of Explorable, the premiere podcast for accessible and inclusive travel. Before we get started meeting our guests today, I just want to say hey Josh. How are you doing?

**Josh**: Hey, man. I'm good. Toby, how are you doing?

**Toby**: I'm doing great. And I couldn't be more excited today than to welcome our two guests, Verity Ayling-Smith and Veronica Velasquez.

**Verity**: Hi, Toby. How are you?

**Toby**: I'm doing well, thank you. Verity is the Training and Consultancy Advisor for the Leonard Cheshire organization out of London. And hi Verity. Thanks for joining us today.

**Verity**: Thanks, Toby. Really lovely to be here. As you very kindly said I work in the training and consultancy team at Leonard Cheshire. So my role essentially is to work with organizations in the UK and globally and support them to work in more inclusive ways.

**Toby**: I've known you for just a short time, but it's been a pleasure working with you. Veronica, I've known for quite some time. Veronica Velasquez is the Lead Inclusion and Diversity Manager for the Expedia Group and she's based out of New York. And Veronica, you want to introduce or not introduce yourself but tell us more about yourself and your work in the disability inclusion space?

**Veronica**: Sure. Happy to do so. I joined Expedia Group a little bit over a year ago, as Toby mentioned. Though what a year it's been, the year 2020, when it comes to inclusion and remote working. And in that year the Expedia Group inclusion team really solidified. So now we have a full-time eight-member team that's growing. We decided that we were not only going to focus on employees but also on partners and customers.

And so my role specifically has been more geared towards external. Yes, we need to make sure we are providing a supportive environment for employees with disabilities, but Expedia Group also has this really important role where we're interacting with travel partners daily and we're driving travelers to their sites, their hotels, their airlines. So we have a responsibility to be giving them guidance and sharing best practices about how to support travelers with disabilities. That's the spark for partnering with Verity and the Leonard Cheshire team to put together a report that

would help companies in the travel industry, no matter where they are in their journey, to find some case studies and some learnings that they could apply immediately to be more inclusive.

**Josh**: Veronica, we met once before I think in Washington D.C. at the TravelAbility Roundtable.

**Veronica**: Yes, I remember. Oh, that was right before lockdown?

**Josh**: It was right before lockdown. So it's a pleasure to get to connect again virtually.

**Veronica**: Yeah. Same.

**Josh**: And Verity, welcome as well from London, correct?

**Verity**: Yes. Yes. I am in a very dark London. So I apologize for my creepy looking lighting that's going on behind me.

**Josh**: Hopefully, this podcast comes out on International Day of Persons with Disabilities, recognizing the value and validity that people with disabilities across the globe have to share with their community and that we all want to travel and explore as many places as possible. And also, recently I believe in the UK the Purple Pound was just celebrated as well, right, Verity?

**Verity**: Yes, we had Purple Tuesday, which is recognized as a kind of accessible shopping day to recognize the value of consumers with disabilities. Yeah.

**Josh**: So Verity, tell me a little bit more-- I'm unfamiliar, I apologize, with Leonard Cheshire. If you could maybe share a little bit more about the history of it and maybe a day-to-day role of what you do is all about?

**Verity**: Yeah, absolutely. Very happy to. So my sort of day-to-day role ranges from giving employees the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to work more inclusively with their colleagues, for managers to work in more inclusive ways with their teams, and for HR and recruitment teams to think about how they operate and ensuring that we're being a disability-inclusive workplace. But also, it spans into organizations ensuring their products and services are more inclusive. Are we designing things in an inclusive way? So I've got a super exciting and broad remit in that respect. I also work with lots of organizations in terms of providing guidance and support.

So the consultancy work that we do, some of the research and insight we provide to organizations around, how can we make changes that empower individuals and make our organizations, our products, and services more inclusive? So it's a really interesting role and really

delighted that we've been working with Expedia Group. So as an organization, we define our mission as supporting individuals who live, learn, and work independently, whatever their ability.

So we're a global organization. I'm obviously based in London in the UK, but we operate globally as well. And we have a number of different programs and services that operate in Africa and Asia as well. What our aim is really as an organization is to break down barriers and open doors to opportunity in communities all around the globe. So I think this partnership with Expedia Group has been a really exciting way for us to expand that vision and support. Veronica and her team in that work as well.

We have a broad range of programs and services that try and meet that live, learn, and work ambition that we have. So in the UK here, we have around 130 services. So social care services, supporting individuals in residential care or supported living. We have a number of programs in Africa and Asia, which support inclusion within education. So giving people access to education where perhaps they previously have faced barriers. And we have a number of different programs supporting individuals to gain skills, to access employment opportunities, and to work with employers to educate and support them to be more inclusive organizations.

So I think we're currently-- I think we currently have around 6,000 staff, we have eight and a half thousand volunteers, and we support about 46,000 disabled people globally every year. So we're growing and growing but our ambition stays the same. That we want to support individuals to live, learn, work independently - as independently as they choose - whatever their ability.

**Toby:** I couldn't agree more. I think that's something to know an organization such as yours is doing is phenomenal, and the footprint that you have across the globe. And to that point, Veronica, circling back to Expedia Group, it's amazing how you share that there's a dynamic shift in your role and how diversity, equity, and inclusion isn't just an internal employee initiative, but rather you're looking to establish partnerships across the globe. How did you connect with Leonard Cheshire initially and how do you see that evolving?

**Veronica:** I believe our story goes back to June 2019. One of my colleagues met up with Leonard Cheshire at a London tech week in the summertime. They were giving accessibility tips. And from that moment on, our teams kept connected - in particular, with our ability inclusion movement employee resource group - sharing best practices, challenges, especially in the accessibility space. So that's where we first became aware of their work. And then in 2020, earlier this year, we actually launched our first inclusion related report that was on gender diversity in the travel industry. One of the first type of segues, usually in inclusion and diversity, is the gender equality imperative. But we wanted to go further than that.

And so that's where we started thinking, "Okay, what's another group that merits our focus?" And with all the work that we've started to do internally, externally, knowing that there were great organizations like Leonard Cheshire out there who we've worked with, we decided to focus our next report on travelers with disabilities. And we specifically wanted to support an organization

whose primary focus is individuals with disabilities. Not just somebody - a publishing organization - that takes in requests all the time. We wanted it to be somebody with the expertise and somebody who could bring us the voices and the learnings from individuals in that community.

**Toby:** Hey Verity, I'm wondering if you can sort of take us through the study and how it came to be and take shape? And what was the planning that went in to bring it to fruition? The strategy you took?

**Verity:** Yeah. Absolutely. I think as Veronica said, we really wanted to work together to bring Expedia's mission and our mission together. I think Expedia Group's message of bringing the world within reach really resonated with us and looking at the sort of best practice guidance that we provide organizations. And as Veronica said, the insight that we collect from disabled people and those within our networks we felt was really valuable for organizations.

Veronica and I spent a long time talking about what we wanted the report to achieve in terms of supporting organizations, wherever they were on their inclusion journey. We recognize that the travel industry is vast and there are so many different types of providers in terms of, well, services, products, and scale as well. But we really wanted to create a piece of learning that enabled any organization, whatever their size, whatever their capacity, to read and to learn, but also to be inspired by some of the great things that are already taking place within the travel industry. I think often we hear about negative stories, perhaps in relation to travelers' bad experiences, and they're really valuable pieces of learning, but also, we want to encourage innovation.

And I think we really wanted to highlight and celebrate that, particularly given that the report is due to be released on the 3rd of December and to really showcase this is possible. People are already doing fabulous things. How do we learn from those? And let's learn from one another. Because I think that's a great commitment that Expedia Group has that they want to lead and also really shine a light on organizations who are already doing wonderful things.

So what we wanted to do was really talk to providers who are already doing good work in this space. So we set out a kind of call to action for organizations to come to us and to share their stories, share the impact that it's had on their guests or travelers that use their services and talk to them about what that means for their organization. What Leonard Cheshire also did was to speak with disabled people within our network.

So we held focus groups and we ran a survey to understand what's most important for disabled people when they are traveling, what factors do they consider, and also, if they could highlight any really great providers and positive experiences. We heard, unfortunately, quite a few negative experiences as well, but it really allowed us to ensure that disabled people's voices are at the heart of this report. And those stories, I think, will really bring the messages and the recommendations we're putting in the report to life.

We're strong believers in Nothing About Us Without Us. That any decision or product should be created in partnership with the organizations or the communities or the people that it's hoping

to serve. As an organization, we are led by people with the experience of disability as well. So that was a really important aspect of the report that we really wanted to bring to life. So in sort of combining those two factors together, combining the stories from providers and the stories from people with lived experience of disability, we then created a report which identifies key themes and recommendations based on our best practice guidance and consultancy support, which we hope is accessible for any organization, wherever they are on that journey to really implement change and commit to providing more inclusive and accessible services in the future.

**Toby:** Yeah. That's great. And I really appreciate the Nothing About Us Without Us attitude. I think that's something that everyone, regardless of disability status, can relate to is we all want agency. We all want choice. We all want autonomy. So I think that's really important for our audience to recognize. And our audience often consists of people who are new on their disability inclusion journey.

**Verity:** So I want to take just a second to talk about some details in the report. And before we get into some case studies and themes, I wanted to point out that disability inclusion doesn't just benefit those of us who are out and proud with our disabilities, but it's just more inclusive for people of a range of ability. So I believe the report calls out a pretty common number. That there's 1 billion people in the world with disabilities or around 15%. And I think it's important for our listeners to understand that that's just folks who have identified as such. But there are many, many people in the world who travel benefiting from accessible and inclusive design who don't necessarily identify as having a disability. So the reach of this work is really quite impactful for a large sector of society. So if you think about it, there's 8.4 billion people on the planet right now. 15% of that's 1.26 billion. And our average trip size is 2.5. So you're already multiplying that 1.26 billion out by a factor of 2.5 because everyone on the trip is impacted. And I think the 2018 CDC report here in the US reported that 27% of Americans have some sort of disability. So the numbers are quite staggering.

**Toby:** So Verity, can you just dive into that report a little bit and tell us more about the themes that are represented in the study and maybe some examples from travel and tourism professionals and providers of how they are going about making their products and services more inclusive?

**Verity:** Of course. Firstly though, to go back to your point in relation to the statistic, I couldn't agree more. And I think there are so many challenges in the way that we collect data about disability internationally and the understandings of disability and identity as well. People not referring to themselves as disabled, but preferring different languages. And what we hope to do through the report is to perhaps challenge some options of disability and people's understandings. So I think the report really gives that entry-level look at, what do we actually mean? Let's reimagine or let's

re-examine what we actually mean when we talk about disability. What impairments and conditions could be considered a disability?

We're not just talking about a mobility impairment or a sensory impairment. We're talking about lots of different individuals who experience the world in lots of different ways. And we want to ensure we're working inclusively with all of them. And also, we recognize that - as you mentioned, Toby - people travel with companions, with friends, with family. And we talk a lot in the report about the Purple Pound, which is the spending power of disabled people and their families. So for businesses to ensure that they understand what disability is and the impact it has on their business, on their consumers, on their guests is a really important point. So I just wanted to mention, we-- I think in the report, we kind of go back to basics and we say, "What does this mean, what is accessibility and what is inclusion." Once we understand those things, we can start to embed that understanding across different aspects of our organization and our products and services.

**Toby:** Yeah. So do you want to unpack the themes that the study is written around and maybe talk about some examples?

**Verity:** Absolutely. So our first theme is in relation to designing barrier-free experiences. So really when a travel provider is considering their next product, service, accommodation, ensuring that accessibility and inclusion are built into that concept from the beginning. So ensuring that we are always anticipating that our customers may have disabilities or face barriers, so we want to make it as inclusive as possible from the beginning. This theme also considers, whilst we can make all of our services as accessible and as inclusive as possible, individuals will still face barriers. And so we want to ensure that we have a really clear process for requesting changes, accommodations, or adjustments wherever you are in the world so that people can access those experiences. Can access those opportunities. It's about being proactive, and it's also about being reactive, but building that into your product and service from the very beginning.

One of the fantastic organizations we've spoken to about this is called Making Trax. They are an inclusive adventure organization based in New Zealand. Sorry. They offer adaptive adventure experiences. They're based in New Zealand. Their founder, Jezza Williams, has personal experience of a disability. He was previously an adventure guide. And following an accident, realized that the travel sector actually wasn't accessible for him at all. And he's done some fantastic work over in New Zealand ensuring that organizations can provide inclusive experiences for people with disabilities because he's an expert in that area. He's an expert adventure tour guide, but he's also an expert in inclusion and making changes. But also, putting that person first and making sure that they can still access fantastic things like paragliding and canoeing. Things that perhaps providers might be concerned about making adjustments to in relation to perhaps safety precautions and things like that. But given his expertise in this field, he's really been doing some fantastic work. As a part of his work, he's also created an inclusive directory of organizations.

So not only leading his own travel experiences but supporting other organizations in New Zealand to be more inclusive and access expert advice and guidance to enable them to feel more comfortable and confident when working with disabled people and ensuring that they get the adjustments or changes that they might need to jump out of a plane, for example.

**Toby:** Which sounds awesome. Yeah. It's not just about getting there. It's about having fun and having the experiences just like everyone else.

**Verity:** Absolutely. And I think one of the reasons that this case study is really important is, when speaking with disabled people about what travel means to them, one of our focus group participants said that travel for her is about trying new things and it's about choice. And I think Making Trax's is a fantastic example of an organization which enables that, not only through their own tours and experiences but also supporting other organizations to be more inclusive and to offer more opportunity and more choice. Because people have preferences for travel. Some people like to relax, some people like to explore, and some people like to have adventures and to kayak, canoe, jump out of planes, go paragliding. We need to be able to offer that choice. And I think Making Trax as a really nice example of that.

**Toby:** Yeah. We are a diverse group of people, just like everyone else, right? What's another theme that you looked at?

**Verity:** Our second theme is around making information clear. So some of the feedback we received from travelers with disabilities is, "Well, what about your service is accessible? What about your product or service is accessible?" We find that the word accessible is used quite a lot to mean a very broad-- well, it's a very broad word, isn't it, accessible?

But what is accessible for one person is very different to another. So supporting organizations to think about accessibility and be specific. Providing that really, really clear information. So that individuals are able to make fully informed and independent choices that they can go online or they can call up or go into a travel agent and they know what about that product or service is accessible and they can make the choice to use that provider. Unfortunately, it seems that often information about accessibility or accommodations and adjustments is not at the forefront, and so people have to hunt for that information, or they're not aware of some of the fantastic stuff that's out there. So our making information clear - recommendations, really - ask organizations to be specific.

Put that information at the forefront of their communication channels. But also, to make those communication channels accessible as well because we know that a lot of travel is booked online. So making sure that all of those websites or apps that you use are accessible as well so that people can access that information really easily.

And I think a really good example of an organization that's being proactive in giving information about their service is Alaska Airlines. So they partnered with an organization to develop an app called Fly for All. Previously, Alaska Airlines were running kind of trial flights for families.

They were particularly targeting families, including children with autism, for example. And they were being booked out in minutes because there was such high demand for the opportunity for families to test out a flight and see what works for them or see what changes they might need or perhaps alleviate any worry that those families might have about travel or inexperienced flyers, for example. Because of that demand, Alaska partnered with an app developer and developed Fly for All, which provides really clear information about every stage of that journey that customers are going to experience.

It provides pictures of the setting so that people know what to expect. There's also a kind of checklist to enable people to plan for their travel as well. I think there's also some interaction in the app. So you can kind of play a game, for example, if someone needs a sort of sensory distraction if they would like that. So we thought that was a really good example of proactively giving your customer or your traveler all of the information about your service in advance so they can understand if and when they might face barriers and then if and when they could request an adjustment or accommodation. So providing that information really proactively is really important.

And the feedback that they've received has been fantastic from a range of travelers, a range of customers. Not just those with disabilities, but families, people traveling alone.

So our third theme relates to providing inclusive customer service. I think this is often the first thing that people think about when we talk about providing products and services. What is your customer service do to support your aim? So obviously an element of this theme relates to giving customer service teams the knowledge, skills, and confidence to support your customers well. So answering queries about accessibility, enabling individuals to request adjustments and changes, and staff being able to answer those competently and ensure that they're done. I think when we're paying for a service, we want to get good customer service.

But when we're talking about disability, we need to ensure that customer service teams have a really good level of knowledge so that we can really effectively remove barriers. And that's really important wherever we are on that journey in terms of travel and inclusion. So our theme inclusive customer service talks about training, but it also talks about communication methods. Some research has shown that often specialist customer service teams or teams who have additional experience or qualifications in accessibility are often only available over the phone.

And so we really wanted to highlight that we need to make communication accessible. We need multiple forms of communication to enable anyone to access the team they need to reach, whether or not that's customer service or if that's an accessibility team. Again, we received some feedback from a focus group participant who said she received some fantastic customer service, and they said, " If you've got any problems, give us a call." But that individual has a hearing impairment, and despite receiving that great customer service, that customer service team still



didn't really understand that phone calls were not accessible for her. So making sure that she has multiple ways of getting in touch is really important.

An example of an organization we think doing this really well is Air Canada. They've recently reviewed their accessibility training for all staff. And it sounds like a fantastic initiative enabling staff to really understand disability and to think about how they can work in more inclusive ways with customers. What's really lovely is that Air Canada also involves all staff involved in policy development and strategy, and they also take part in that training. So I think they've got a real commitment to educating their staff, to raising awareness, and ensuring that everyone across the organization knows the role they have to play in creating that inclusive environment for customers. Also, Air Canada involved disabled people in the development and the delivery of that training. So whether or not that's their own employees, their customers or individuals from the Paralympic and Military communities, those real stories and real voices are at the heart of that training module, and we thought that was a really fantastic example to showcase in the report.

**Toby:** That's awesome. You want to carry on with the fourth theme?

**Verity:** Lovely. So our fourth and final theme relates to Nothing About Us Without Us and is the importance of involving people with disabilities. So really ensuring that when we are developing our products and services, we are consulting with and involving people with lived experience to enable us to create more accessible and inclusive opportunities.

This theme also relates to kind of turning it around and looking inward. How do we actually create that inclusive culture from the inside out as well? So starting to think about, how do we utilize the experience of our people internally? Because we will have disabled people that work at all organizations, whether we know it or not, but we really wanted to ensure organizations value the diversity of their people as well as the diversity of their customers. A really lovely example that we showcase here is from Marriott International, and they have a really innovative concept called Room for All.

This was launched in the innovation lab, in the basement of their headquarters last year, and really was a project to consider the changes that could be made or how they could change the typical accessible room, the accessible Marriott room. And really, they partnered with a disability organization to engage with disabled people, to ask them about how they use a hotel room. They visited the room, the prototyped room. They tested it out. The designers went to people's homes to see how they navigated around spaces, and they asked for feedback. And what Marriott did was then use that feedback and implement it into a new room for all, which is what they're hoping to use to test new accessibility concepts and provide recommendations to all Marriott hotels.

As a result of the input from disabled people, 200 Marriott hotels have adopted a new minimum bed height. And Marriott are now also exploring other solutions, such as new bathroom designs, voice-activated room controls, and new floor services. So I think that's a really great

example of how an organization is really involving disabled people in the development. And it's actually creating really impactful, tangible change across that organization.

**Toby:** Oh, I can't wait to try out a hotel room where I can actually change the thermostat independently. [laughter] Actually stay in the hotel room. It's clearly quite a comprehensive study. And I'm just wondering, Veronica and Josh, are you still with us?

**Veronica:** Yes. Of course.

**Toby:** Awesome.

**Veronica:** Definitely. And to that point, yeah. I just want to reiterate what you shared Toby. This is phenomenal. And this really is the first of its kind, the opportunity, to bring all of his powerful information together.

**Toby:** And so Veronica from Expedia Group's perspective, what do you see that this information and these insights can help your team to better connect with people with disabilities? What are some pathways that you want to kind of use this information in a way that brings it to life?

**Veronica:** I think there are two huge benefits. I think primarily, of course, for Expedia Group, there's a lot of work that we can do ourselves on our accessibility of our sites, as well as how we are encouraging our partners to promote their own properties or their own services. We've recently developed a guidance for hotels and properties who post on our sites of what to include, what kind of imagery to include, to depict accessible spaces, and just general guidance, even around language, what accessible might mean to you versus what it could mean to the community, and to think beyond just physical space and somebody who might be traveling with a wheelchair. Disability is so much more than that.

So I think there's a lot of work that we could learn ourselves from the report. And then secondly, sharing this out with all of our travel partners. We work very closely on an inclusion stream with about 30 different travel partners. So a lot of them were the ones who submitted case studies for this report, which is amazing. And so we'll make sure that they have access to this report. We'll work on a follow-up survey with Verity's team so that we could gain some feedback, right? Not just pass them the report, but what was most valuable. Do you have any follow-up questions? The report is also built out in a way that you can zone in on case studies and you can also zone in on the end of a section to pick up the quick, "Okay. This is what you definitely should take." Key takeaways in case you were looking quickly through. So definitely two-fold work that we can do and then work that we could help promote with our partners.

**Josh:** So a quick follow up question on that Veronica is your role, of course, expands beyond disability and accessibility to inclusion for everyone. Do you have, for example, resources or a place for your partners and your team to go to that has a variety of reports, for example, if somebody wanted to find out more about-- you had mentioned earlier a gender study. Do people have access to all of the different reports and all of the information easily and readily?

**Veronica:** Great question. Yeah. So this will only be our second report that we've had a hand in. Of course, there are plenty available online. But we post them to expediagroup.com. Specifically, on the inclusion page. So anybody can go access the gender report that's currently there. And then, of course, we'll publish this report there as well. And any future reports will go on the same page as well. We haven't locked in the next topic, but with the year that we've had, there's definitely a heightened focus on racial justice. Especially the duty of care for travelers of color and how they travel, as well as the LGBTQ+ traveler community, where some of our brands have also stepped up and are making sure that they're being more inclusive of those members of that community.

**Josh:** And Verity from the Leonard Cheshire side, has this collaboration inspired any work in the travel industry for you all?

**Verity:** Yeah, of course. It's been fascinating for us to really take a look at the travel industry as a whole and really apply a global lens to it. Leonard Cheshire already does quite a lot of work in terms of transport within the UK. We're also a campaigning organization. And so we've been working with the UK government to try and enable or to try and push the accessibility agenda in terms of public transport. Currently, the rate of accessibility changes that are ongoing in the UK means that our train stations here won't be fully accessible until 2070. And we're asking the UK government to speed that work up and to really commit to those changes. So it's been fantastic to apply some of our learning from that UK transport work to a wider lens. But we do engage with a lot of other hospitality partners, particularly around training and support. We've been working with a hotel both in the UK and also another in India to support them in their inclusive employment opportunities. So I hope that following this report, we can continue partnering with the organizations featured and also those that come back to us with questions and those requiring support as a result of the findings.

**Toby:** And then this question is for both. And I'll start with you, Veronica. Well, first I do want to say I just couldn't be more thrilled that Expedia Group took the initiative to be able to partner with such a phenomenal charity like Leonard Cheshire to put this report together. And what Expedia Group is doing is something that, at least in my opinion, and I'm sure others, hasn't been done before for the disability community. The disability community, as somebody with a disability and a professional who enjoys promoting and marketing and experiencing travel and tourism, this really is a watershed moment to show that people with disabilities have a voice. They want to travel. And for

Expedia Group it's just an amazing torch that you're guiding, and to be able to lead not only your partners but hopefully so many others in the industry. So Veronica, are there any takeaways that you feel are important to our listeners?

**Veronica:** Thank you for that lead-in. I'd say that we recognize that there are so many organizations focused on disability that are already doing fantastic work. And a lot of them we worked with on this report. We wanted to give them a larger audience. Maybe travelers with disabilities are only looking at those organizations for guidance. Maybe our travel partners aren't looking at those organizations.

They're looking at Expedia and they're looking at their competitors. So we wanted to make one holistic report, no matter where you are on your journey. No matter what sector within travel you're in, you can find definitions, guidance, tips, case studies on what works. So again, Expedia Group does not claim to be at the lead. We only hope that we're bringing everybody to the same table in that we can learn from each other and keep the conversations going. And we do have an inclusive travel subgroup, as I mentioned earlier, of about 30 travel partners. It's open to new partners. So with this report, if there are more travel providers who like this content and they want more of it, then, we'll be sure to keep them in the conversation going forward. It won't just be a one-time thing.

**Toby:** And Verity for you, what is a key takeaway that you feel like is important to everyone listening?

**Verity:** I really want people to read the report and feel empowered to make change. I think, as Veronica said, every organization, whoever they are, can make changes to create more inclusive and accessible opportunities wherever they are on that journey. So I really want people to see positivity in the report and to be inspired to make changes, however big or small that they are. I also want organizations to understand that we need to go beyond legal compliance. I think when we're talking about accessible services, often people relate to the law. And I really want people to understand the best practice approach to disability inclusion. I hope that the report does quite a lot to educate people in that and how we do that.

So I suppose that's a real hope for me in terms of the ambitions of the report. And really, I want organizations to commit to make changes. As I said, however big or small. So we have a list of commitments or calls to action at the end of the report asking organizations to join, as Veronica mentioned, her network or sign up to things like the Valuable 500. So requesting that organizations put disability on their board agenda and recognize it as an important part of their business strategy because it truly is. So those, I suppose are my kind of key hopes and takeaways from the report.

**Josh:** Well, I feel empowered. I have hope, and I'm committed. That's phenomenal.

**Toby**: Yeah. That's great work. I'm so proud of the work that Expedia Group and Leonard Cheshire has done here. And I hope all of our listeners, no matter where you are on your journey to disability inclusion, that you lean into this. Take an inclusive mindset. Because we, the disabled traveler, are a large segment of the market, and we have money we want to spend and we want to travel with your airline and stay in your hotel. So it has been such an honor to talk to you both, Verity Ayling-Smith, from the Leonard Cheshire organization in London, and Veronica Velasquez, from Expedia Group, coming to us from New York. Thank you both so much for being on the show. And Josh, thank you.

**Josh**: This has been an Explorable podcast.