

# ACCESS TO SUCCESS CHALLENGE

MBA Case Competition  
February 4-5, 2019



*Solve for One,  
Extend to Many*

# Welcome!

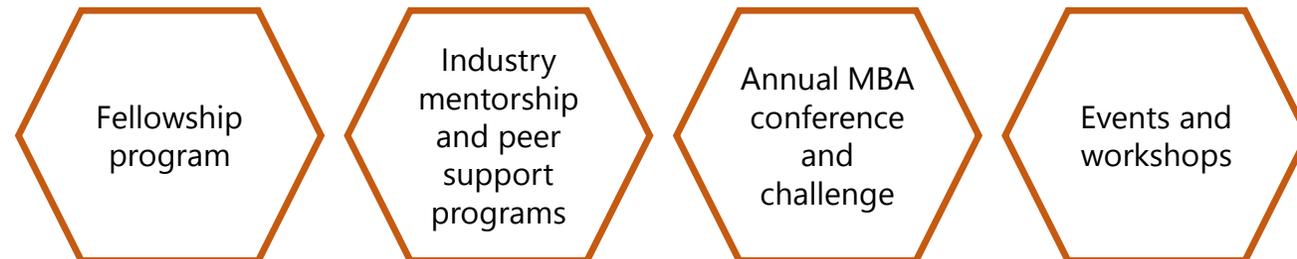


Welcome to the second Access to Success Challenge, the only MBA case competition in North America centered on accessibility and inclusive design. This two-day journey will provide participants with a deeper understanding of what inclusive design means and how it can unlock hidden value within a business context. Regardless of the career you aspire to have – be it in entrepreneurship, consulting, design, marketing, finance, or something else – this challenge will encourage you to think like a future leader and change maker.

## The Challenge

Pitch a business case for a product or a service based on Inclusive Design – something that addresses an accessibility limitation but is also of universal benefit.

**About Us:** Access to Success empowers MBA students with disabilities to become successful business leaders by cultivating networks, creating opportunities, and building allies. We do this through:



**Have a question? Give us a shout!**



[contact@accesstosuccess.ca](mailto:contact@accesstosuccess.ca)



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# Inclusive Design



## Recognize exclusion

Designing for inclusivity not only opens up products and services to more people, but it also reflects how people really are. All humans grow and adapt to the world around them and our designs should reflect that.



## Solve for one, extend to many

Everyone has abilities as well as *limits* to those abilities. Designing for people with permanent disabilities actually results in designs that benefit people universally. Constraints are a beautiful thing.



## Learn from diversity

Human beings are the real experts in adapting to diversity. Inclusive design puts people in the center from the very start of the process, and those fresh, diverse perspectives are the key to true insight.



Skype live speech-to-speech and speech-to-text translation  
([Link to video](#))



Eone watches tell time by touch or sight  
([Link to website](#))



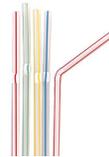
Google voice access for full voice-control of phones  
([Link to article](#))



Sensory soothing & gaming bean bags  
([Link to webpage](#))



Electric toothbrushes  
([Link to webpage](#))



Flexible straws  
([Link to webpage](#))



Roll-along suitcases  
([Link to article](#))



OXO's Good Grip products  
([Link to webpage](#))

# Suggested Approach (1/2)

## 1 Learn from someone with a disability

The most successful inclusive design products in today's market are a result of interviews—lots and lots of interviews. Before heading straight to the drafting table, inclusive design experts understand the importance of first learning about the people for whom they are designing. This involves observing, engaging and empathizing with people to understand their experiences and motivations. What energizes them? What makes them tick? This process allows designers to set aside their own assumptions about the world in order to gain insight into users and their needs.

That's why the Access to Success team set out to speak with a variety of people with different invisible and visible disabilities. The purpose of these interviews is to equip teams with a starting point for their insights gathering phase.

We invite you to select one of the people below as inspiration for your pitch. Your goal is to design a product or service that solves a problem for one of these 'extreme users,' and in so doing, also becomes universally beneficial. [Full interviews can be found in the appendix.](#)



**Name:** Eleanor  
**Age:** 88  
**Profession:** Retired  
**Disability:** Rheumatoid Arthritis



**Name:** Faith  
**Age:** 29  
**Profession:** Consultant  
**Disability:** Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)



**Name:** Arthur  
**Age:** 28  
**Profession:** Associate, Capital Markets  
**Disability:** Spinal cord injury



**Name:** Margaret  
**Age:** 52  
**Profession:** Mailroom manager  
**Disability:** Autism



**Want to conduct your own interviews? We encourage you to tap your own network!**

# Suggested Approach (2/2)



## 2 Identify, validate, and articulate the problem

- ▶ Select one of the five interviewees as your target persona, or conduct your own interview(s)
- ▶ Identify the problems faced by your chosen persona and consider how those barriers may manifest as situational disabilities or everyday problems
- ▶ Conduct primary and secondary research, including interviews and online research, to understand the accessibility limitation and existing solutions, if any
- ▶ Articulate the problem as a “How might we statement”. For example, “How might we help people with vision impairment read books, while also helping everyone “read” books without having to physically hold them?”

## 3 Design a solution

- ▶ Design a solution that addresses the accessibility limitation and also has a clear universal benefit
- ▶ Ensure that the solution is feasible within a one to two year time span

## 4 Create the business strategy

- ▶ Identify your key customer base and estimate the market size
- ▶ Determine how your solution will make money
- ▶ Identify and address key risks, including competition

# Evaluation Criteria



## Problem Definition



- ▶ Did the team clearly identify, validate, and articulate an accessibility need through the personas/interviews and market research?
- ▶ Did the team demonstrate sufficient understanding of the accessibility need and existing solutions, if any?

*20 points*

## Solution



- ▶ Did the team clearly demonstrate application of inclusive design principles for development of the solution?
- ▶ Is the proposed solution feasible within a one to two year time span?

*40 points*

## Strategy and Business Model



- ▶ Did the team have a clear business model, go to market strategy, and financial feasibility?
- ▶ Did the team sufficiently address competition and risks?

*30 points*

## Presentation and Q&A



- ▶ Was the team's submission professional and compelling?
- ▶ Did the team communicate with intelligence, confidence, and poise?

*10 points*

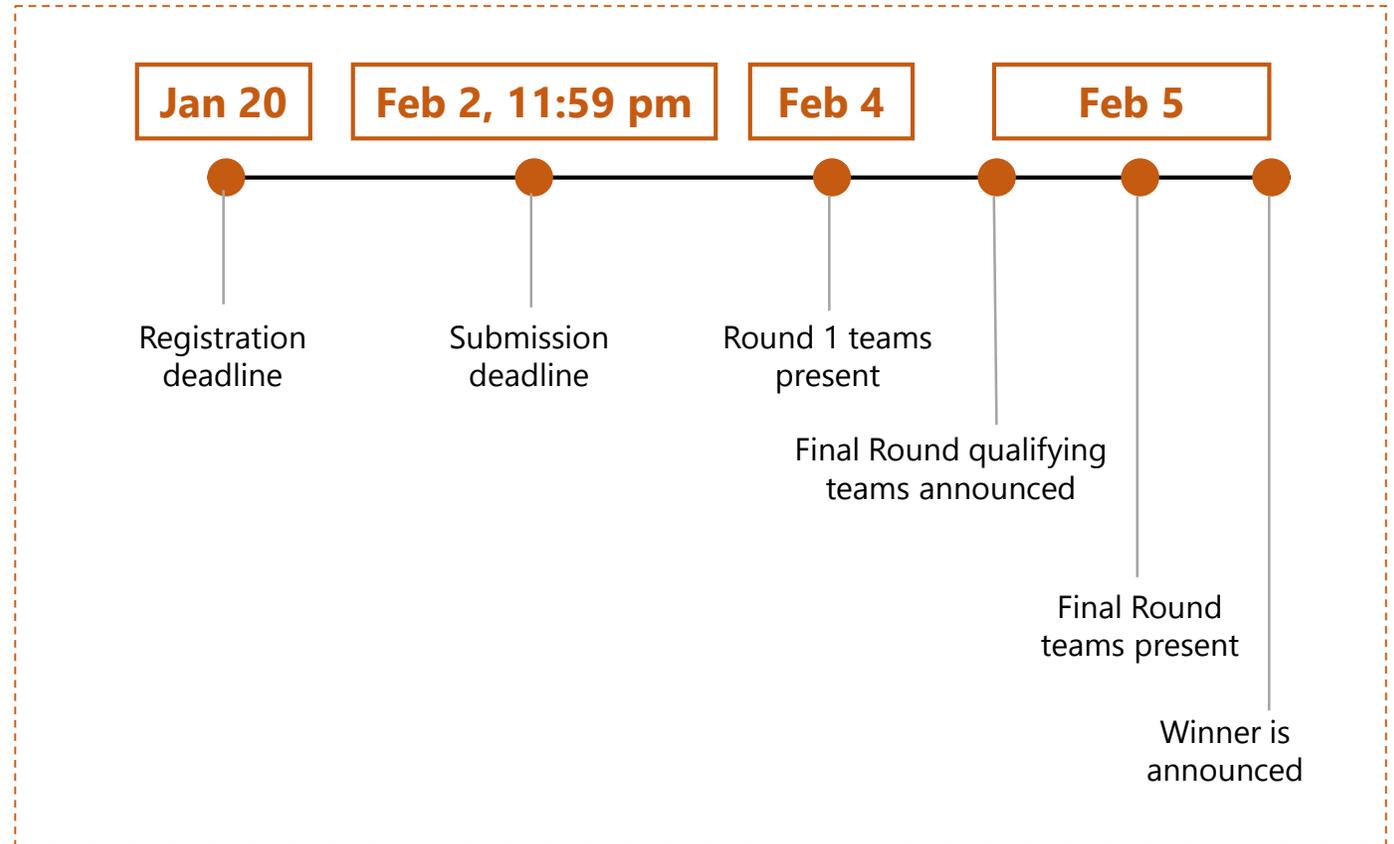
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*100 points*

# Guidelines & Important Dates



- ▶ Each team must have at least 2 members who are current or graduating MBA students from the same school.
- ▶ Each team will present in the first round of the challenge on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Presentations should last no longer than 7 minutes, followed by 5 minutes judges Q&A.
- ▶ The top 3 teams from the first round will present at the conference on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Each team will have 7 minutes for the presentation, with an additional 7 minutes for Q&A.
- ▶ **Presentations must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST on February 2, 2019**, in PPT or PDF format to [contact@accesstosuccess.ca](mailto:contact@accesstosuccess.ca).



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# 2018 Challenge Winners



## 1st Place: Path 2 Reserve

A multi-purpose social media platform that gives users full agency and autonomy over their social experiences including accessibility accommodations, wherever they might be.

### Issues addressed:

Any accessibility requirement



## 2nd Place: Summarize'it

Online service for smart summarizing of long texts based on natural language processing.

### Issues addressed:

ADHD



## 3rd Place: Vizzy

Image-based interactive engagement tool to enhance communication among all stakeholders.

### Issues addressed:

Learning disabilities

# APPENDIX





**Name:** Eleanor  
**Age:** 88  
**Profession:** Retired  
**Disability:** Rheumatoid Arthritis

***What disability do you have, and when were you diagnosed?***

I have Rheumatoid Arthritis, and I was fully diagnosed at age 60.

***Tell me a bit about how Rheumatoid Arthritis affects your day-to-day.***

It's an unpredictable condition. I might be fine today, but tomorrow my wrist might hurt, or my hip could hurt, or even my knee. Mount Sinai has done research about atmospheric pressure in relation to arthritis. They say that "rain days are pain days," which makes a lot of sense because my joints start hurting as soon as the atmospheric pressure goes down. My arthritis is progressive and has increased since my diagnosis several decades ago. I started off using hiking poles to help with my loss of balance, and I eventually graduated to a walker after my daughter convinced me three times over. I've had my knees replaced because they were destroyed. I have also had ankle fusion.

***Tell me about where you live now.***

I moved into the Hazelton Seniors Retirement Residence 2 years ago in January. My first impression of the Hazelton was that it was spacious. I was very happy about the hallway in my apartment unit where I could hang all of my drawings. I have a collection of Old Masters Dutch paintings and drawings that are dear to my heart. A drawback to my unit, however, is the size of my shower. It's very small and difficult to use without assistance.

In the afternoon, there are very interesting things you can do here. For example, the UofT music group and the Royal Conservatory come to perform once a week. We have lectures and talks about current events. We also have exercises in the morning three days a week ranging from Yoga to Tai Chi. There is a dining hall where residents can have their breakfast, lunch, and dinner, but I don't always eat my meals there. I find socializing a bit tiring, and I'm quite happy to be by myself.

# Q&A

***Walk me through a typical day.***

I wake up at 7am and get ready for breakfast at 8am. I check my computer after breakfast at around 9am. Going on the computer requires a great deal of discipline, otherwise I could spend all day at my screen! I have learned to limit my computer time to what matters most: my email and websites related to art history. After lunch, I take my nap for around 30 minutes. Then, I sit in the garden and read, or walk to a café nearby. I have a caregiver who comes during the day from 10am-5pm, and a night nurse who comes from 8pm-8am. I am very grateful to have this support. I also have three children, each of whom drop by once a week on a different day. We do different things together. My eldest daughter and I see museum exhibits together. My son is my Finance Minister. We talk about my financial matters of which I don't understand much. My younger daughter is very interested in tennis, so we talk a lot about that. I don't watch television because I much prefer reading. I like to listen to the radio, usually classical music.



**Name:** Eleanor

**Age:** 88

**Profession:** Retired

**Disability:** Rheumatoid Arthritis

# Q&A

## ***What do you like to do in your spare time?***

I am very passionate about art. In my early adulthood, I had little time to dedicate to my hobby since I was a mother of three and a neurologist. Most of my time as a neurologist was spent in research and in teaching. When I retired, I was finally able to do more with my hobby, and so I became a volunteer at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). I am now part of the Acquisition Committee, which has meetings 2-3 times a year. It's a group of collectors who give expertise when something is being donated or when something is up for purchase. I enjoy the time there very much. I have given tours and lectures to help people fall in love with art. I love hearing what people want to see, and I love teaching them about the details in art to inspire them.



**Name:** Faith

**Age:** 29

**Profession:** Consultant

**Disability:** Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

# Q&A

## ***What disability do you have, and when were you diagnosed?***

I have OCD, and I was diagnosed at age 14.

## ***What do you consider to be your greatest strengths at work?***

Seeing deeper and broader connections between things; diagnosing challenges and having empathy at a deeper level; seeing things in a more holistic way, which can help break down barriers and silos; making ties and being more forward-thinking.

## ***What are some ways in which your OCD manifests itself?***

Hyper-responsibility can be a trend in OCD, and is one of the main behaviours I exhibit. I still remember this one time when I was reading a book for summer reading and had a lot of pressure from my parents to finish it, so I lied about the amount of pages I had read. It

was extremely hard for me to let go of this lie and rid myself of the guilt, even years later. Another tendency I exhibit is the need to complete things, even little things. For example, it gives me a huge sense of discomfort to put a book down when I've read two thirds of the page, and not the full page.

Within the context of work, I am very detail-oriented. I often need to understand the details of a project before I can jump in and begin working. I often describe it to people as needing to see both the forest and the trees, and even the weeds. Sometimes, in order to manage my attention to detail, someone will have to remind me of the acronym GEMO, which stands for "Good Enough to Move On." It's often hard to balance work and personal life, because everything I do is very thorough. The big stressors that I encounter at work are inconsistent schedules, having to be agile in the moment, uncertainty and ambiguity.

I can get triggered anytime and unexpectedly—

usually multiple times a day. Whenever I am triggered, my emotional defenses are lessened for other aspects of life. It's like my tank is depleted. This, in turn, makes me more prone to having tense conversations, or getting into conversations that become circular or agitated. It also makes me more prone to migraines, because I'm trying so hard to focus on one task when there are other things in my brain getting in the way.

## ***Was there a time when you felt that your disability was undermined in your workplace?***

As a matter of fact, yes. In a recent role, I disclosed my disability and requested some minor accommodations that were within reason. I was hurt and disappointed to see the reaction of organizational leaders, who couldn't understand why I should need any accommodations since I am high-performing and capable, with lots of positive feedback, and came across as a normally functioning employee.



**Name:** Faith

**Age:** 29

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# Q&A

There was this expectation that I shouldn't need anything else beyond the regular flexibilities that "regular" people get because I come across as "regular" on the surface. It made me feel that, in order to be taken seriously, I had to share more than is actually required for an employee to receive accommodations under the human rights code, which requires employers to accommodate employees up to the point of "undue hardship." I was hospitalized in the past when my OCD was particularly acute, but I never expected I would have to mention that in order for my request to be seen as credible.

Taking a step back, the actual accommodation *process itself*—having to explain yourself over and over, going through layers and layers of validating—is cause alone to trigger anxiety and spur someone to opt out of the process. It is sometimes hard to know where the lines are with invisible disabilities—what's normal, and what's not normal—and that presents a challenge as well. It seems to me that people with other disabilities, particularly visible ones, often know

from the onset what accommodations they will need at work. But here, if you're a few months in, and only then you see what the unique stressors are in your workplace, it's a lot more complicated for an employer to accept your accommodations without hesitation. I think what's hardest for me is that OCD is the doubting disease: when other people are questioning or doubting what you have to say, you can start to think, "Well, maybe I'm not that different and the reason I have so much trouble is because I suck."

### ***What would an ideal disclosure process look like in an organization?***

There is certainly a lot to consider. Off the top of my head, an ideal disclosure process would involve comprehensive training for the leadership team and HR so that they are equipped to be sensitive, especially in conversations around disability disclosure and accommodations. An ideal process would also involve a disability advisor. Many large organizations already have one; I would have this advisor pay close

attention to helping employees with the anxiety of the disclosure process itself. Finally, another consideration that comes to mind is the fact that OCD can often times be co-occurring with depression. I have a feeling this also applies to other mental health conditions. That's another thing I'd want management and HR leaders to keep in mind. In an ideal world, I wouldn't want to jump through hoops because of my disability. I would want to feel like the organization would jump through hoops for me, especially given the benefits of diversity of thought that come with retaining a high-functioning employee who thinks differently.



**Name:** Arthur

**Age:** 28

**Profession:** Associate, Capital Markets

**Disability:** Spinal cord injury

# Q&A

## ***What disability do you have, and when were you diagnosed?***

I incurred a spinal cord injury from a hiking accident as a teenager.

## ***How have the hiking accident limited your mobility?***

Think about what your life would be like if you had to walk in ski boots everywhere. Imagine if you were permanently wearing ski boots. That's what my mobility is like.

## ***What challenges have you faced in your current workplace?***

I work at a Canadian bank which is pretty flexible and offers a good amount of accommodations. My challenge is that I work with very talented people and so performance expectations are very high. There are certain roles and functions that are more conducive to physical disabilities over others, and I'm

beginning to notice that my role at the Bank is not the most conducive to my mobility issues. In hindsight, had I known years ago about the mobility issues I have today, I would have considered a completely different career path—one in IT and programming. If you work in the IT world, you can charge by the deliverable and you get the full fruits of your labour.. You're fully in control of seeing how you can make something better. As you're learning something, you're directly making an impact. Right now, it feels like I'm running a race against professional runners, except that I've got a cast on my foot.

## ***What do you consider your greatest strengths at work?***

If you're going to run a race with a cast on your foot, you have to be extremely thoughtful about how to line everything up in a way that makes your race easiest. So, you could say that my disability has pushed me to look for process efficiency in everything that I do. One example of this is the way I've learned to automate much of

my work through coding. Excel files at the Bank are known to be a huge twisted pathway of information flows. It can quickly get complicated and difficult to manage the information. In light of this, I taught myself how to accelerate processes by consolidating multiple files into one, adding several tabs, rolling up the script, and ultimately having the new file run by itself.



**Name:** Margaret  
**Age:** 49  
**Profession:** Mailroom manager  
**Disability:** Autism

# Q&A

## ***What disability do you have, and when were you diagnosed?***

I was formally diagnosed with autism 3 years ago, when I was 49 years old.

## ***What was your childhood like?***

I exhibited signs of being autistic ever since I was a kid, but I was never diagnosed as such. My uncle is a social worker and suspected fairly recently that I might be autistic, and my mom said she knew from birth. That being said, I had a supportive family that never “threatened” me with going into special needs (but the school was talking about it), and for that reason, I’m very lucky. When you’re young, going into special needs feels like going to Siberia or something! The only remedial class that I was put into was gym, as I was always very klutzy and lacked coordination. That aside, I was able to take all the same classes as the other students in my cohort. I experienced some bullying as a kid, but nothing too bad – certainly mild compared to

what kids experience today! I had great teachers who inspired me and developed my interests.

## ***What was your university experience like?***

I went to University of Calgary where I majored in Literature. There, I participated in a lot of student politics and volunteered for the TV station and the newspaper. I went into the Student Office and ran for General Studies representative. I also went into Toast Masters for a year. I remember there was a specific deal with the newspaper where you could attend classical concerts for free if you wrote the review/story. So, I ended up getting into a lot of classical concerts for free!

## ***Tell me about your previous work experience.***

I worked in market research for 10 years, between part-time and full-time roles. Some of the surveys I worked on within market research were interesting, but others could be long and repetitive. It was not my favorite line of work, and

it was only exacerbated by a couple other problems: low pay and inconsistent working hours. I worked as much as possible both days and evenings, 6 days a week, and was still not guaranteed full time hours. This made it harder to budget and live a well-rounded life.

## ***What do you like about your current workplace?***

I’ve been working in the mailroom of Xerox for the past six years. My workspace is located on the 12th floor of a building, with lots of sunlight, and I’ve got my own room since I’m the only mailroom staff. I prefer having my own space; I want to be around people, but I also like having my privacy, and my current workplace gives me a good balance of both. In my previous job, I was interacting with people all the time. I was always within a few inches of coworkers since the office was in tight quarters. This was a bit challenging for me. I’m great one-on-one, but not as much in a group setting.



**Name:** Margaret

**Age:** 52

**Profession:** Mailroom manager

**Disability:** Autism

# Q&A

In addition to the physical space that I like, I also have a wonderful manager, as well as amazing benefits for both me and my husband.

### ***What are your main responsibilities at work?***

At work, I'm in charge of keeping good records of the incoming and outgoing packages, keeping the photocopiers working, checking for toner supply, communicating and staying organized with the staff, registering the information of new staff, etc. My value-add is enabling people to spend time on what they're *supposed* to be doing. Before me, there were two people in the mailroom as well as an automated mail machine. It's nice to know that I'm stepping up and making a process more efficient.

### ***What has been your favorite job to date?***

I really enjoyed working as a library technician at a newspaper. It was a small setting, with few people. In terms of the type of work, there was a lot of variety, and it wasn't solely about volume

and producing. Instead, a lot of it was about details and precision. It ended because of the move to digital, but it was challenging in the best way possible, and I felt like I was really using my brain. I felt part of the whole team.

### ***What are some challenges you've faced in current workplaces?***

Most offices are moving to an open-concept design. The problem, here, is that open offices cater to people who are extraverted. In one of my previous roles in an open-concept office, it took all the energy in me to block out the adjacent side conversations of coworkers and focus on my own work. I have also noticed that not every workplace has basic good management. By that, I mean that if any one employee asks for reasonable accommodations, it shouldn't be seen as a big hassle.

Something else I have noticed is that people can often jump to conclusions about my skills and abilities based on what they notice first. My fine

motor skills have always been below average; my handwriting has always been a challenge for me and has always looked sloppy. That said, my intellectual skills are above average, but sometimes, people don't get around to noticing that because they're hung up on my motor skills. The nature of my job often heightens my weaknesses in these lower-level motor skills, and at the same time, does not provide me with the opportunity to showcase my insightful ideas and creative thinking.

Often times, autistics are placed in teenage-level jobs that highlight their weaknesses—not their strengths. To make things more challenging, these teenage-level jobs do not give you access to different levels of management, nor do they give you the ability to prove that you are capable of moving up. Workplace structures are changing somewhat and are becoming less hierarchical, but there's still work to be done. Organizations have the best of intentions, but how much time do managers realistically have to speak with people at my level and ask for their ideas?



**Name:** Margaret

**Age:** 52

**Profession:** Mailroom manager

**Disability:** Autism

# Q&A

If you speak with me for 30 seconds, you think right away: “She’s awkward.” But if you give me the time of day, you realize I’m interesting and have lots to say.

## ***What do you consider your greatest strengths at work?***

My life experience, my ability to manage myself, my ability to organize myself, and my ability to think about and focus on the customer. Yep, you better believe it—autistics *do* have empathy!

## ***What do you like to do in your spare time?***

I do a lot of exercise: weights 3 times a week, aerobics, Yoga, Pilates. All of those have helped my mental health tremendously. I love cats and dogs; my husband and I have 4 cats - Biscuit, Cutie Pie, Lucy and Bear while my mom has a American Cocker Spaniel named Ozzy. My family lives on the West coast, and so we (my husband and I) love making trips out to Vancouver Island. I also really enjoy taking

Sunday drives to Canmore, Banff, and other neighboring cities with my husband. I also love taking on-line courses and keeping my brain in shape by doing Lumosity – brain training – exercises every day.

# GOOD LUCK!

