



In the chat...

- Where are you from?
- What's not on your LinkedIn profile?

The Accidental Accessibility Evangelist

**Katherine Lewis
Software Engineer
LinkedIn**



It was an
accident!

There are no
Accidental
Accessibility
Evangelists



In the chat...

**What was your
favorite class in
school?**





You're [In]

“You didn’t
make it this
far because
you got
lucky”



Type of Disabilities

Acoustic Neuroma

- Slow growing tumor on the eighth cranial nerve
- Affects hearing, facial movement, and balance



In the chat...

**What is your dream job?
Let's get intentional.**



Katherine

- 1 Software Engineer
- 2 UX Designer
- 3 Accessibility Advocate
- 4 ERG Co-Lead

A circular inset image on the left side of the slide shows a woman with long brown hair, wearing a black fedora and a tan coat over a white turtleneck. She is smiling and looking towards the right. The background of the circle shows a vast, hilly landscape under a cloudy sky.

Accessibility

- Impacts anyone, any where, any time
- Increases product quality
- Improves 1 Billion+ lives

In the chat ...

**What leadership
skills make for a
great accessibility
evangelist?**





Build a Network

Linked in

In the chat...

- What is your mission statement?



**Serve Widely,
Give Greatly**



Remove False Beliefs



Go & Do!

Places to Start

- Architect
- Executive
- Teacher
- Storyteller
- Model





Architect

Executive





Teacher

Storyteller



Model



Progress, not Perfection

- Accessibility is intentional
- Accessibility is multidisciplinary
- Accessibility is accessible

-
- Find your why (mission statement)
 - Build your network
 - Remove false beliefs



“At the end of the day, what our country, and honestly any country, should be is a collection of people who are trying their best to build each other up”

– Mr. Brian Dennis



Let's Connect!

Katherine Lewis

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Q&A

A close-up photograph of a person's hand with dark skin touching a document with Braille. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. The Braille dots are visible on the paper. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

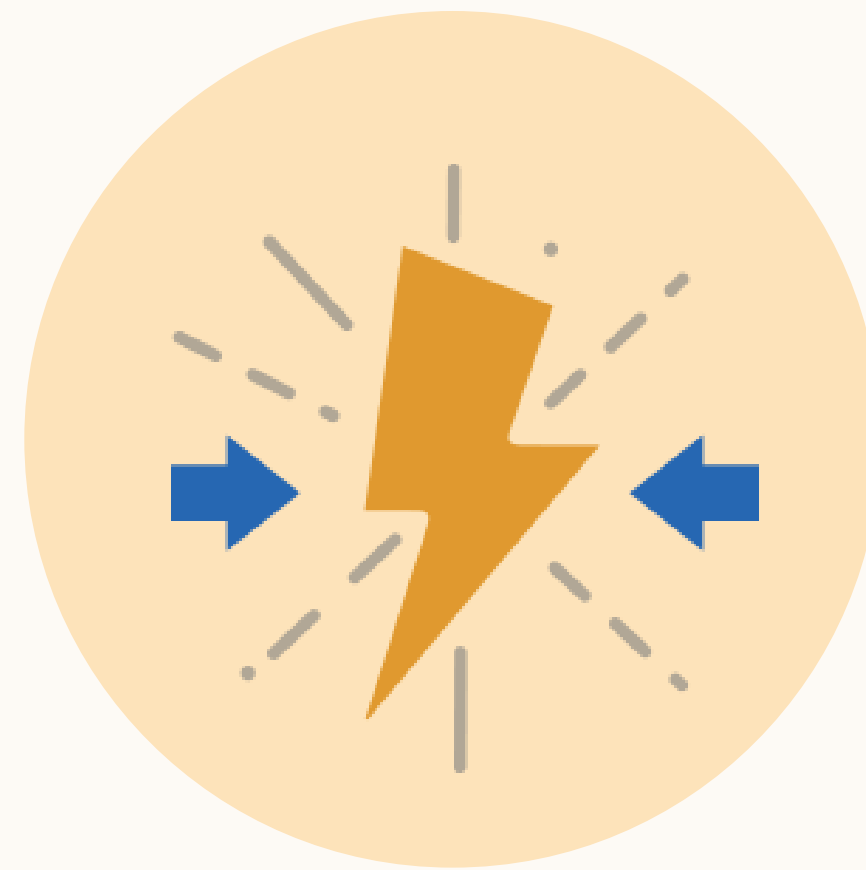
Appendix

Begin the Journey

First steps to becoming an accessibility evangelist



Natural Skills



Bring the Fire



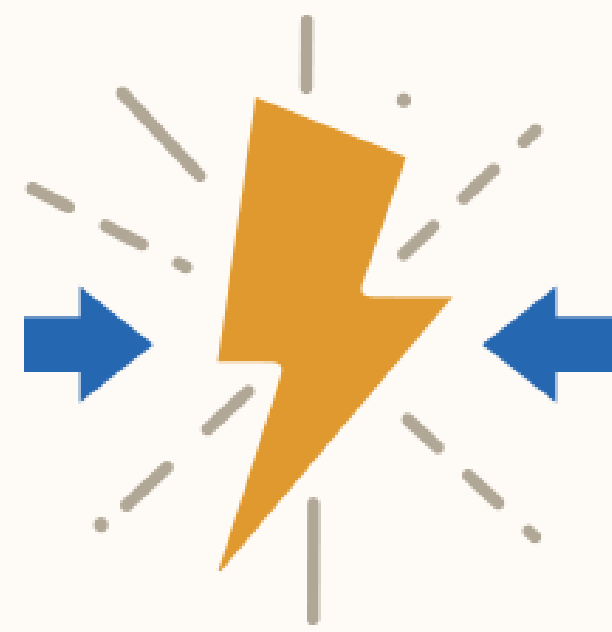
Make Moves

Natural Skills



- What skills come easily to you?
- How do you spend your spare time?
- What's the hardest part of your job?

Bring the Fire!



- Why is accessibility important?
- What excites you about accessibility?
- What impact are you hoping to make?

Make Moves

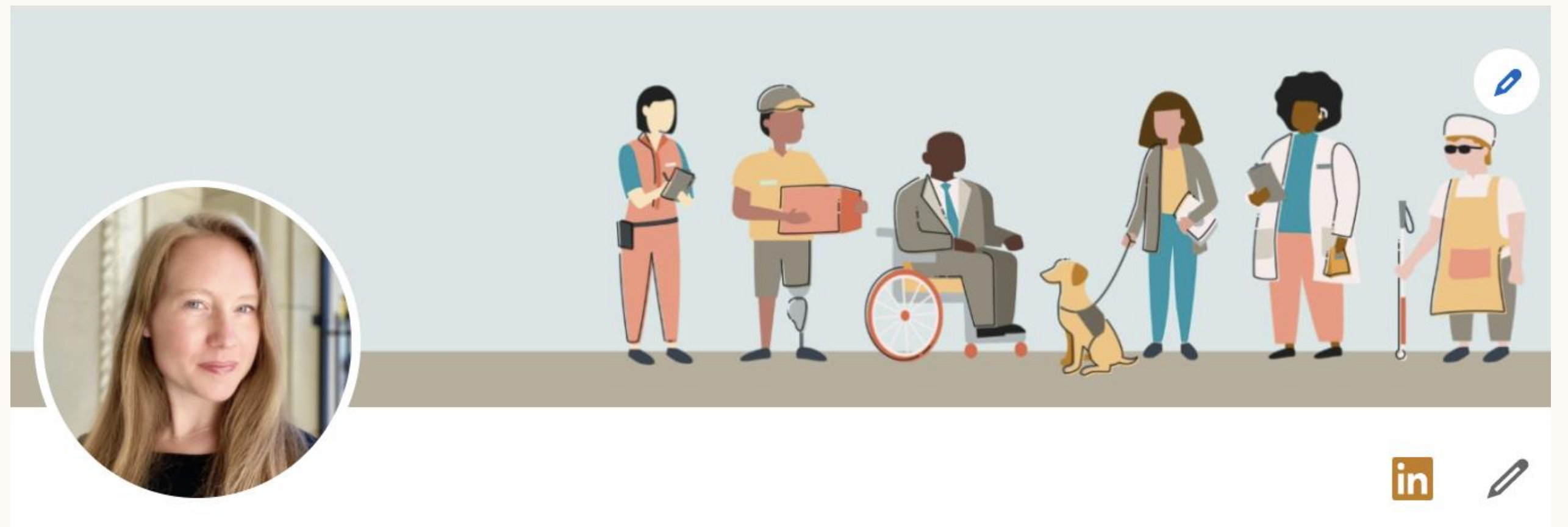


- Does your company build accessible products?
- Does it have an accommodations process?
- How does accessibility align with your company's mission and vision?

Actionable Steps: On LinkedIn



- Add a text description of your headshot in the About section
- Change your Header image to promote accessibility
- Post about your accessibility journey, challenges, or company accessibility wins! **#accessibilitymatters**
#opportunitymade



The Forrest

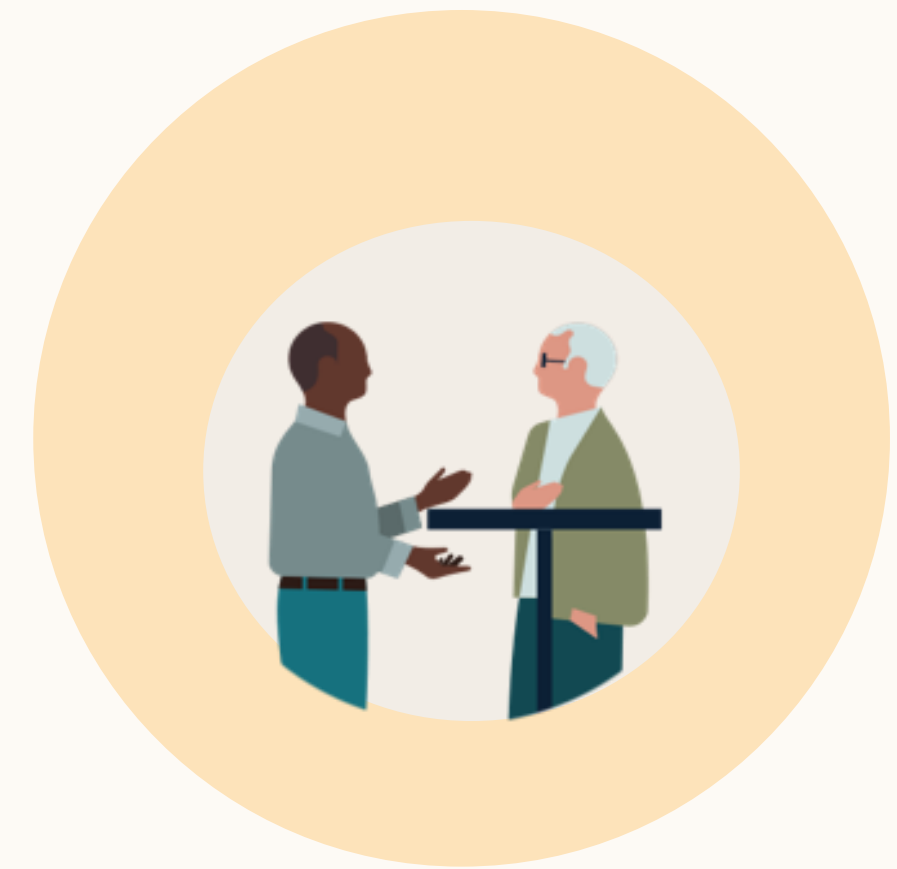
Next steps to becoming an accessibility evangelist



Study



Raise Concerns



Start to Dream

Study



- WCAG Standards
- Microsoft Accessibility Resources
- LinkedIn Learning - Microsoft's Hector Minto
- YouTube - Google's Rob Dodson
- IAAP Certification



Raise Concerns

- What is not working for you or others at your company?
- Does your company have any employees or customers with disabilities? If not, why not?
- Are the things you build and buy accessible?

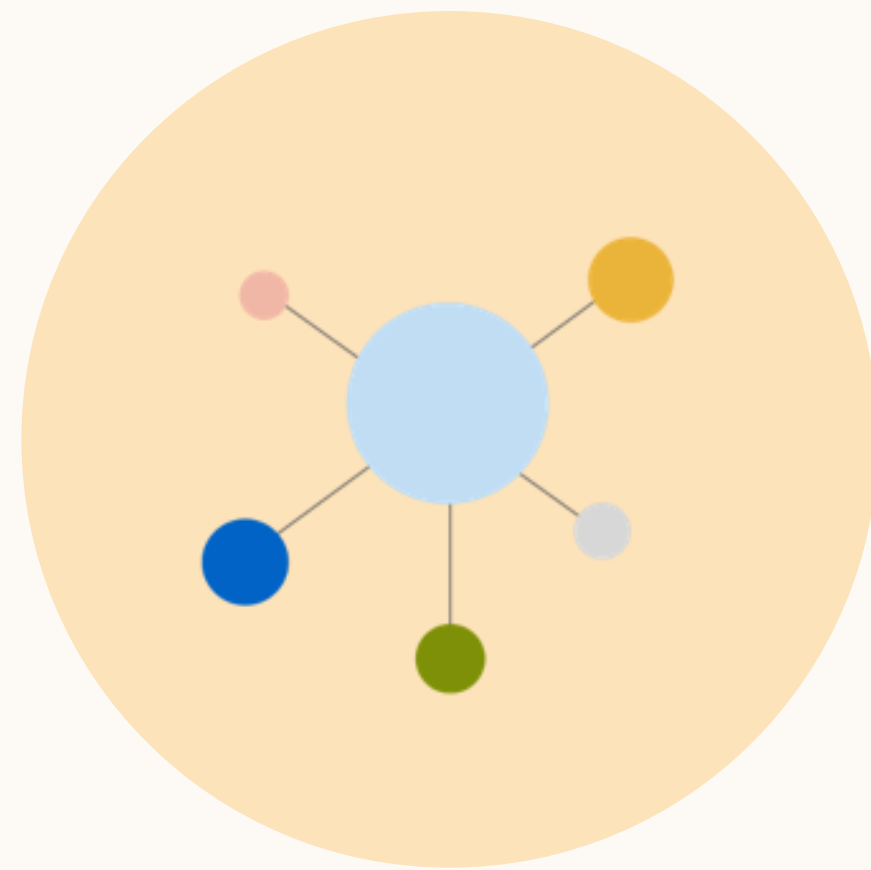
Start to Dream



- What simple change would be a quick win?
- What opportunity is leadership overlooking?
- What problems are you uniquely positioned to solve?

The Bridge

Mid steps to becoming an accessibility evangelist



Build a Network



Solve Problems



Know the Ecosystem



Build Your Network

- Attend a meetup, panel or workshop
- Research your company org chart
- Browse your LinkedIn connections and connect with other accessibility evangelists and PwDs
- What teams are involved in your company's accessibility efforts?
- What teams can you introduce to each other?



Solve Problems

- Ensure DEI efforts include PwDs
- Create internal resource hubs
- Test accessibility before code commits
- Make inclusive product designs
- Host accessibility office hours
- Provide employee accommodations



Know the Ecosystem

- Where does company culture change come from?
- What parts of the ecosystem are missing?
- Who should be hired to fill those missing roles?

The Hill

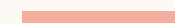
Advanced steps to becoming an accessibility evangelist



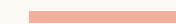
Be Visible



Be Vocal



Be Valuable



Be Visible



- Who can you connect with?
- What message do you need to share?
- Whose story needs a platform?
- Whose time can you ask for?
- Where can you post and who can you follow?
- What meeting could you be a part of?

Be Vocal



- Speak up
- Provide feedback
- Ask questions
- Make suggestions
- Offer help

Be Valuable



- Share what you know
- Demonstrate simple wins
- Provide feedback
- Model accessible and inclusive behavior

Actionable Steps



- Lead an Employee Resource Group
- Host a tech talk , workshop or company event
- Sign up to speak at a conference
- Be on a podcast or YouTube channel
- Spotlight the a11y work of others on your channels
- Post on LinkedIn and LinkedIn Live

Evangelist's Pledge

1. Speak up
2. Show up
3. Solve Problems
4. Model Behavior
5. Think Big

