

Patricia Elgersma: Project Manager in Compliance



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HSBC is the leading international bank in the country with a footprint that spans the globe. In addition to leading the world in banking, they are leading the way in hiring and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Patricia Elgersma started with the organization as an intern in the Human Resources department. She was an Accessibility Analyst hired to determine how accessible the bank was and make recommendations for improvements. Upon completion of her internship, she transitioned to a Project Manager role and now works with various internal stakeholders on HSBC’s key strategies. She has had this role in various departments, most currently with Compliance, and is able to use her expertise in project management to achieve intended outcomes.

Patricia enjoys working at HSBC because she feels that the organization is aligned with her values. “Two of HSBC’s pillars are to be open and dependable. The openness to trial and error is essential to any employer hiring people with diverse abilities. HSBC does this well. In hiring me on as the first completely blind [HSBC employee] in Canada, it continues to be a learning process. Employers need to know that it’s not going to be perfect at the beginning, but remain a work in progress. We work at it together.”

“Visually impaired people are as diverse as anyone in the general population. We all have different strengths and abilities. We will work with you to determine what accommodations we might need and think of strategies to any remaining barriers. We are naturally fighters

because we have to prove ourselves more often than not. We have to fight to get the jobs we have, so when we have one, we are going to work hard for you,” Patricia Elgersma.

Patricia utilizes a screen reader called JAWS on her computer, has a braille display, and periodically engages a visual assistant to help with tasks such as reading graphs, charts, or other visually oriented documentation crucial to her role. She also has accessible software that allows her to work from home independently as her other colleagues do.

Her favourite part of the job is interacting with people, getting to know them, and trying to figure out how best to work with everyone. Patricia loves her team and feels well supported by her manager.

“Patricia is a constant source of value and inspiration to our project management team and to our organization as a whole. Providing the right support, leading open conversations, and building confidence all have a clear effect - projects are delivered in line with expectations often without people realizing that Patricia processes information non-visually. We're continually investigating new technology, new ideas, and new ways of working that will benefit Patricia, our company, and ourselves. This challenge is undertaken collectively with enthusiasm, and it is met with positivity throughout our organization.”

– *Dean Campion, Patricia's Manager.*

[VIDEO: Patricia gives tips on accommodating visual impairment at work](#)

