

Heather Hansen's

## Accents at Work

Overcoming accent bias and building a linguistically inclusive workplace

As we strive to build more inclusive workplaces, we often overlook a fundamental component of inclusion: **how we speak**. Accent bias is the last acceptable form of discrimination in our society, mostly because so many people don't know it exists.

In this eye-opening talk, you'll learn all about accents - who has them, how we get them, and why we seem to prefer some accents over others. You'll learn how these biases affect the way you listen to and interact with the people around you, and how you can become a more inclusive communicator.

Heather doesn't only research and share knowledge about accent bias - she's lived it in three languages across three continents and has been both privileged and disadvantaged due to her own accents. Now based in Singapore, you'll hear how she and her top international clients have navigated the challenges of accent bias and found their voices in multi-national, -cultural and -lingual settings.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- All about accents - common language myths
- Where accent bias comes from
- How accent bias shows up at work
- When bias becomes discrimination
- How to become a more inclusive communicator

**"This is really an insightful talk! Heather really conveyed the importance of embracing linguistic diversity eloquently. The message was powerful, and it resonated with the audience! It was a great choice to include real-life examples, which made the issue relatable.**

**Bravo!"**

*Consultant,  
Adaptive Financial*

**"This is the best training that I have taken in recent memory.**

**Really appreciate it! Excellent content, well presented!"**

*Scientist, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center*

**"Heather's presentation has left a lasting impact, and it continues to be a topic of conversation among our team.**

**Her talk was not just informative; it was a truly enlightening experience for everyone attending."**

*Natalia Butera, Corporate Communications, Adaptive Financial*

**"I really enjoyed today's session as it's quite an unspoken topic (which makes it even more interesting) and is something myself and many others probably relate to a lot."**

*Consultant, Adaptive Financial*



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# Accents at Work

## Overcoming accent bias and building a linguistically inclusive workplace

As we strive to build more inclusive workplaces, we often overlook how disadvantaged people can be when they speak in a way that's different from the norm. Accent bias is the last acceptable form of discrimination in our society, mostly because so many people don't know it exists.

In this eye-opening, interactive workshop, you'll learn all about accents - who has them, how we get them, and why we seem to prefer some accents over others. How do these biases affect the way you listen to, trust and respect the people around you? What is it like to be on the receiving end of accent bias? You'll get to hear real stories and case studies, and learn how to stop inequities related to language and accent.

Whether English is your first language or your fifth, you'll learn how to speak up clearly and confidently in international settings as well as how to attune your ear to better understand accented English that is different from your own.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

#### 1. All About Accents

- Accents and language myths
- Accents and hierarchies in specific parts of the world most important for the audience
- How do we develop accents?

#### 2. Uncovering Bias

- Where does bias come from? Biological, neurological and cultural arguments
- What does accent bias look and sound like?
- When does bias become discrimination?
- Uncovering YOUR biases

#### 3. Becoming an Inclusive Communicator

- How to speak clearly and simply so everyone understands
- Techniques to check for understanding
- Becoming a more inclusive listener and attuning your ear to accents
- Bridging the Gap: what to do when you really can't understand

#### 4. Breaking Patterns

- Speaking up about accent bias and being an accent ally
- Rules of Engagement for more inclusive communication
- Company policy considerations

"This is the best training that I have taken in recent memory. Really appreciate it! Excellent content, well presented!"  
*Scientist, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center*

"Definitely one of the best [training programs] I have attended in GSFC."  
*Engineer, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center*

"Fabulous course. Very interesting material with things I never thought of before. A lot to contemplate after the course. I learned approaches to take when I can't understand someone due to a language barrier."  
*Administration, NASA*



## Testimonials - Accent Bias

### NASA - Overcoming Accent Bias Workshops

"This was excellent. I appreciate the practical materials. I'd love for all of our managers/supervisors in particular to take the training."

"Thank you Heather for the training. Definitely one of the best trainings I have attended in GSFC [Goddard Space Flight Center]."

"Heather, thank you for presenting Overcoming Accent Bias training! I am looking forward to thoroughly reading the Accent Bias workbook. My take-away is 'linguistic inclusion'! Looking forward to learning more about this topic."

"This is the best training that I have taken in recent memory. Really appreciate it! Excellent content, well presented!"

"Thank you for this wonderful training and for conveying this great information to us!"

"I'm so thankful for this phenomenal information. THANK YOU SO MUCH for acknowledging the 'privilege' that you possess just by belonging to a certain race or demographic. I APPRECIATE your public statement SO MUCH as it is now being promoted or even mandated by some politically to deny that 'privilege' even exists by a certain group. THANK YOU a thousand times."

### Adaptive Financial - Accent Bias Keynote



**Natalia Butera** · 1st

Corporate and Internal Communications

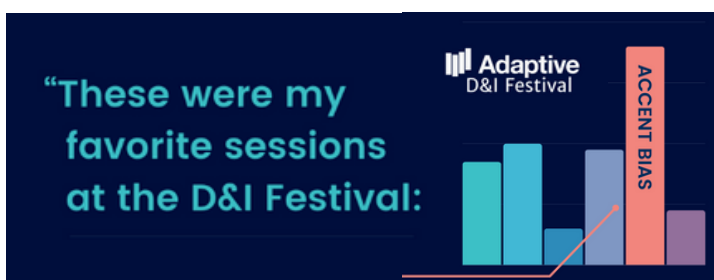
January 17, 2024, Natalia was Heather's client

Heather proved to be an exceptional professional and speaker at our D&I Festival - we were fortunate to have her share insights on Accent Bias and Discrimination.

Not only did she have a profound understanding of the subject matter, but she also demonstrated remarkable warmth, engagement, and a delightful sense of humour. Heather's presentation has left a lasting impact, and it continues to be a topic of conversation among our team. Her talk was not just informative; it was a truly enlightening experience for everyone attending.

Thank you so much, Heather.

Accent discrimination had a great impact on me. I find it very helpful. I felt like my capabilities are being judged with the way I speak specially as a multilingual (English, Japanese), as well as a female in the fintech industry. I always had to make sure my tone and the way I speak match the culture of the language. **This session addressed my insecurities and the way I deliver my thoughts. Thank you for including this topic in the D&I festival.**



**Adaptive Financial – Accent Bias Keynote (cont'd)**

“Thanks so much for your talk and for all the effort you put into making it relevant for all the offices. We have never had a speaker do it to that extent before and it is very much appreciated!”

“More ones like her, this is the best one yet. I really enjoyed this one, maybe because it applied to me a lot!”

“This is really an insightful talk! She really conveyed the importance of embracing linguistic diversity eloquently. The message was powerful, and it resonated with many in the audience to be honest! It was a great choice to include some real-life examples, which made the issue relatable. Bravo!”

“Learned a lot of things and had me think about a lot of stuff that I would have never imagined I would have thought about.”

“I really enjoyed today's session as it's quite an unspoken topic (which makes it even more interesting) and is something myself and many others probably relate to a lot.”