



## IS CORPORATE INCLUSION DIVERSISH?

### DISABILITY ACTIVIST CAROLINE CASEY TAKES TO SXSW TO END *DIVERSISH* ATTITUDES IN BUSINESS

- *Caroline Casey, founder of #valuable and The Valuable 500, yesterday took to the stage of SXSW to call on businesses to place disability on their board agendas*
- *The Valuable 500 is a global campaign to unlock the value of disabled people across the world*
- *SXSW screened *DIVERSISH*, a 'hard hitting' and 'satirical' film that calls out business leaders for not embracing diversity*

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019:** Disability activist and social entrepreneur Caroline Casey yesterday took to the stage of the world famous SXSW Film Festival to urge global business leaders to recognise the importance of the 1 billion disabled people around the world.

In her talk *Is Corporate Inclusion Diversish?*, Casey discussed the uncomfortable truth that plagues today's business culture: the cult of *diversish*, i.e. businesses who claim they are diverse, but exclude disability from their definition of diversity. According to research, 90% of companies claim to prioritise diversity, but only 4% actually do: without disability inclusion on their board agenda, a business cannot truly claim to be diverse Casey argued.

The event included a screening of [DIVERSISH](#), a satirical look at businesses that call themselves diverse, but overlook, ignore or postpone anything to do with disability. The film calls for business leaders to stop being *diversish* and commit to action on disability inclusion.

Caroline Casey, founder of #valuable commented:

*"It is an honour to be given the opportunity to bring my message to the SXSW stage today. Without platforms like this, the 1 billion disabled people around the world wouldn't have their voices heard.*

*"It is so important that we recognise not only the value of each of these incredible people, but the business case behind the #valuable campaign too. By ignoring the disposable income of the one billion disabled people worldwide, we are ignoring \$8 trillion a year. I cannot stress how huge a market this is for global business.*

*"I am so glad that SXSW have given me the platform today to take another step in ending a la carte inclusion, and in addressing those businesses who are not already a part of The Valuable 500, as we continue to call on global business to do their part in this journey, and to join the ever increasing membership base."*

Casey launched The Valuable 500 at the World Economic Forum's Annual Summit in Davos in January, and is urging global business leaders to become accountable for disability inclusion in their businesses by signing up to the campaign.

The campaign recognises that when businesses take the lead and take action, society will follow leading to real change being made. It is seeking 500 global businesses to place disability on their board agendas.

The SXSW musical festival and conference, which spans ten days and is set to round up on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, is expected to bring together almost 500,000 leaders from the creative industries, including



Oscar winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Jeff Zucker, President of CNN Worldwide.

Casey's appearance at SXSW comes just days after The Valuable 500 campaign announced its first official ten members, and signalled conversations are happening with a much larger number. The first ten members included three key US participants BraunAbility, Microsoft and Accenture. The other members announced were APM, Virgin Media, Cinopolis, Unilever, Barclays, Fujitsu, and Danske Bank.

These companies and leaders are taking a number of steps to support disability inclusion and equality throughout their businesses – reflecting a groundswell of corporate appetite to drive action on disability inclusion in business.

It also comes just a week after mic.com, a leading digital media company for society's change makers, partnered with Caroline Casey to launch a [digital video campaign](#) calling on CEOs to sign up to The Valuable 500. Having been well received, leading CEOs have already been inspired and have pledged their support by submitting [videos](#) on social media.

Jake Horowitz, co-founder & editor-at-large, Mic said:

"People with disabilities are a forgotten minority, far too often overlooked in conversations about diversity and inclusion worldwide. We are proud to support Caroline and The Valuable 500 and use our platform at Mic to help elevate disability rights to the forefront of the global conversation, and help put this issue on board room agendas across the world."

In the coming weeks, Casey will also take to the stage of Advertising Week Europe in London to speak about The Valuable 500.

The need for the Valuable 500 campaign comes as research by EY commissioned by #valuable has found disability is still woefully absent from the majority of board level discussions globally - with the majority (56%) of global senior executives rarely or never discussing disability on their leadership agendas.

Further research from Edelman's 2019 Trust Barometer found that 62% of employees are looking to their CEO for leadership during challenging times, and that "in 2019, trusted brands will be those who not only talk about change, but actively participate in driving it forward. The time for fence-sitting by large corporates is long gone – businesses must take a clear stance on issues and lead from the front."

Today, over one billion people across the world live with some form of disability - 15% of the global population, or 1 in 7 people - but their value is routinely ignored by business, equivalent to disregarding a potential market the size of US, Brazil, Indonesia and Pakistan combined.

The current global employment rate for disabled people is half that of non-disabled people, a gap that has widened since 2010. According to the World Health Organisation, up to half of businesses in OECD countries choose to pay fines rather than meet quotas on disability.

Along with their friends, families and communities, the one billion disabled people worldwide also hold a disposable annual income of \$8 trillion a year, equating to an opportunity that business



cannot afford to ignore. Of those one billion, 80% of disabilities are acquired later life, and our ageing global population means the prevalence of disability is on the rise.

#valuable, the organisation behind the launch of The Valuable 500, is supported by a number of high profile businesses and business leaders, including strategic partners Omnicom and Virgin Media, and leaders including Sir Richard Branson, Paul Polman, Janet Riccio and EY Chairman & CEO Mark Weinberger.

Founder of #valuable Caroline Casey launched the Valuable 500 at DAVOS in January, with the support of global business leaders, including former CEO of Unilever Paul Polman, Bloomberg Chairman Peter T Grauer and Procter & Gamble Group President, North America, Caroline Tastad. This was the first time the World Economic Forum has ever included disability on the main stage at DAVOS.

#valuable is a catalyst for an inclusion revolution that exists to position disability equally on the global business leadership agenda. It is spearheaded by award-winning activist, social entrepreneur and Binc founder Caroline Casey, who is registered blind.

In 2017, Caroline launched #valuable at One Young World, the global summit for young leaders, providing a platform to activate a new generation of future leaders who care passionately about disability inclusion and aren't afraid to be vocal about it.

Caroline set off on a boundary-pushing, month-long 1,000-kilometre horse adventure through Colombia to the opening ceremony of One Young World to engage next generation leaders with the power to make change.

Caroline took to the One Young World stage once more in 2018, speaking about the *Inclusion Revolution*.

To apply to be a Valuable 500 business, please visit [thevaluable500.com](http://thevaluable500.com).

#valuable – it's everyone's business.

- Ends -

#### Media contacts:

For interviews and further information, please contact:

Sophie Currah, Seven Hills  
Telephone: +44 207 199 2000  
Email: [sophie.currah@wearesevenhills.com](mailto:sophie.currah@wearesevenhills.com)

Marianne Waite  
The Valuable 500 Campaign Director  
Email: [marianne@thevaluable500.com](mailto:marianne@thevaluable500.com)

#### **Applying for Membership of The Valuable 500**

To apply to be a Valuable 500 business, please visit [thevaluable500.com](http://thevaluable500.com).



Membership of The Valuable 500 includes:

- Unlimited access to our executive disability performance resource hub
- Membership to a community of like-minded business peer leaders, committed to raising their game on disability
- The platform and opportunity to raise your profile as an early adopter helping to shape this vital emerging economic and societal agenda.

By becoming a member of The Valuable 500, you agree to:

- COMMIT: Table disability on your board agenda from 2019
- ACT: Make ONE firm commitment to action in 2019
- AMPLIFY: Share your commitment to The Valuable 500 internally and externally

### **About #valuable**

Launched by Binc, #valuable is a campaign working to ensure businesses globally recognise the value of the one billion people around the world living with a disability. We believe that building a global society that recognises the value of the 1 billion people living with a disability starts with business. We're on a mission to make sure businesses across the world recognise the value of the one billion people living with a disability.

Binc was founded by social entrepreneur and activist Caroline Casey in 2015, with a mission to ignite a historic global movement for a new age of business inclusion. Binc is capitalising on Caroline Casey's 18-year track record of success engaging over 450 organisations and working with 500,000 business leaders. Binc fundamentally believes that inclusive business creates inclusive societies and is initiating a new approach to business that genuinely includes the 1 billion people living in the world with a disability. Binc is the founding team behind valuable, an ambitious global campaign to put inclusivity on top of the business agenda around the world in 2019. Binc is using a tried and tested formula that has worked in the past for gender, race and LGBT to leverage the exponential rise of The Diversity and Inclusion Agenda.

### **Definition of disability:**

#valuable uses the definition provided by the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with disabilities, which defines a person living with a disability as 'those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/chapter8.pdf](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/chapter8.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> WHO

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/chapter8.pdf](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/chapter8.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Return on Disability, 2016

<sup>5</sup> Scope and Landman, Enabling Work

– [https://www.scope.org.uk/Scope/media/Images/Publication%20Directory/Landman\\_Report.PDF?ext=.pdf](https://www.scope.org.uk/Scope/media/Images/Publication%20Directory/Landman_Report.PDF?ext=.pdf)



## **Disability and the Sustainable Development Goals**

The need to advance disability inclusion around the globe is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Disability or 'persons with disabilities' are specifically referenced 11 times in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a further six references to 'persons in vulnerable situations'. Principally with reference to: promoting inclusive economic growth that allows disabled people to fully access the job market and guaranteeing equal and accessible education through the creation of inclusive environments.