



GLOBAL BUSINESS LEADERS AND BUSINESSES THROW SUPPORT BEHIND THE DISABILITY INCLUSION REVOLUTION

- *Virgin Group Founder, Sir Richard Branson and Unilever's Paul Polman among global leaders backing the campaign*
- *Virgin Media and Omnicom announce strategic partnership with #valuable*
- *#valuable to play a leading role at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting focused on bolstering inclusion for the one billion living with a disability*
- *#valuable aims to recognise the value of the one billion people living with a disability globally, and their families*

London: High profile global business leaders and companies have today committed to take accountability for disability inclusion in business, by supporting #valuable - a worldwide call to action for business to recognise the value and worth of the one billion disabled people globally.

Founder of #valuable, Caroline Casey, commented:

"Disability inclusion is an issue that has been pushed to the sidelines of business for far too long. Momentum is now building and we have reached a tipping point. We're delighted that the World Economic Forum have announced that the need to bolster inclusion of those living with a disability will be a main message at Davos in 2019."

To drive forward this change, the following global business leaders have committed to be accountable for disability within their businesses and across their full supply chain. They are the first to support the #valuable campaign, helping to put disability inclusion on the international business agenda, and keep it there:

- Sir Richard Branson, Founder, Virgin Group
- Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever
- Janet Riccio, EVP of Omnicom Group and Dean of Omnicom University

Virgin Media and Omnicom have become strategic partners of #valuable, representing a major milestone for the campaign which continues to be at the forefront of the global conversation around disability inclusion:

- **Virgin Media** is becoming a leading business voice on disability in the UK. The company has joined forces with the disability equality charity, Scope, to support a million disabled people to get and stay in work by the end of 2020. The business is also transforming its workplaces, practices and policies for disabled employees and customers. As a key partner of the #valuable movement, Virgin Media will encourage UK business leaders to join its campaign to create workplaces where disabled people can thrive.
- **Omnicom** will take the lead in spreading the message of disability inclusion in business and igniting a global conversation about a world where everyone is valued equally. Omnicom has long supported its employees by creating a diverse and inclusive environment that nurtures their creative energy. That means diversity in backgrounds, race, gender, age and experience, as well as embracing those with disabilities.



#valuable is also proud to announce that it has joined forces with the World Economic Forum, which announced last week that disability inclusion will form part of its Annual Meeting agenda for the first-time next month. As part of its focus on bolstering inclusion for the one billion people in the world living with a disability, the World Economic Forum will announce its official support of #valuable.

Among other highlights of the Forum's disability inclusion agenda, Caroline Casey and Paul Polman will co-host a press conference on The Accessibility Revolution and talk about the ambitions of the #valuable campaign on Thursday 24 January 2019.

#valuable is delighted to announce that it has teamed up with a range of experts who will lend their skills and experience to #valuable's mission to activate the business community to tackle disability exclusion around the world. They already include the ILO GBDN, The Marketing Society, Business Disability Forum, EY and Ruh Global.

Launched in 2017, #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.

Learning from past campaigns, which have led to systemic change, #valuable is working to engage the world's most influential businesses leaders, brands and platforms to make a global call to action. Last year, this ambitious campaign was launched at One Young World – known as the “Junior Davos” for young leaders. It reached over 810 million people and activated a new generation of future leaders who care passionately about disability inclusion and aren't afraid to be vocal about it.

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.

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.

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.

Yet, combined with their friends, families and communities, the one billion disabled people hold a disposable annual income of \$8 trillion a year – an opportunity that business cannot afford to ignore.

Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever commented:

“Creating a more inclusive world for the 1.3 billion people in the world with a disability is not just the right thing to do, it also makes a lot of business sense. To create real traction in this space, we need a movement in which Business takes leadership and authentic action to move the needle for this large section of humanity. This issue has my personal commitment and hence my support for Caroline Casey, one of WEF's first Young Global Leaders with a disability and founder of the global campaign #valuable. It is critical now, that we make visible the 1.3 billion people in the world with a disability in the business ecosystem and most vital that it is discussed by Business Leadership across all industries.



#valuable is calling on businesses around the globe to put disability on their agenda. I am proud to say Unilever is already fully on-board with a commitment to hire 8,000 additional disabled people.”

Jeff Dodds, Managing Director, Virgin Media, commented:

“Businesses and business leaders have a vital role to play in transforming the lives of disabled people and that’s why Virgin Media is proudly joining #valuable as one of its strategic partners and making disability and inclusion one of our highest priorities.

“At Virgin Media we celebrate the fact that everyone is different. It’s these differences that help us to come up with new and innovative ideas and better address the needs of the customers and communities we serve.

“Around 20% of the UK population are disabled, so any business not engaging with disabled people is doing its customers a disservice. Just like #valuable we believe that by being an inclusive business, we’re helping to create an inclusive society.

“We’re on a mission, in partnership with Scope, to support a million disabled people to get and stay in work by the end of 2020 and, by becoming a strategic partner with #valuable, we’ll now be able to reach more business leaders and encourage them to do all they can to create better opportunities for disabled people across the UK.”

Janet Riccio, EVP of Omnicom Group and Dean of Omnicom University, commented:

“I am proud to join forces with such an incredible group of people who are advancing a cause so near to my heart. #valuable is challenging the business world to take a second look at its definition of ‘inclusivity’ and commit itself to a population of people whose talent, perspective and ideas have often been untapped yet have the potential to propel industries forward. Omnicom is committed to elevating this issue to a priority place on its agenda and remaining an ally of this important movement.”

Caroline Casey added:

“It is incredible to have such amazing businesses, business leaders and expert organisations come forward to back #valuable – they will truly be at the vanguard of the global inclusion revolution. I’m happy to declare that the time of ‘a la carte’ inclusion is well and truly over.

“The route to a truly inclusive world is through the creation of truly inclusive business. We know that if business values disabled people equally then society will too. In the last 30 years, bold business leadership has played a crucial role in driving social change. Now is the time for bold business leadership to do the same for disability inclusion.

“Business has proven its social muscle time and time again, making huge progress advancing gender, race and LGBTQ+ equality over the last 50 years. #valuable believes that now is the time for business to take disability seriously, and this strategic onboarding is just the first step.”

#valuable – it’s everyone’s business.

- Ends -



Media contacts:

For interviews and further information, please contact:

Eloise Keightley, Seven Hills
Telephone: +44 207 199 2218
Email: eloise.keightley@wearesevenhills.com

Marianne Waite
#valuable Campaign Director
Email: marianne.waite@interbrand.com

About #valuable & Binc

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.

About Virgin Media

Virgin Media offers four multi award-winning services across the UK and Ireland: broadband, TV, mobile phone and landline.

Its dedicated, ultrafast network delivers the fastest widely-available broadband speeds to homes and businesses and it's expanding this through its Project Lightning programme, which could extend its network to up to 17 million premises.

Its interactive Virgin TV service brings live TV, thousands of hours of on-demand programming and the best apps and games to customers through a set-top box, as well as on-the-go through tablets and smartphones.

Virgin Mobile launched the world's first virtual mobile network and offers fantastic value and innovative services with 4G connectivity. It is also one of the largest fixed-line home phone providers in the UK and Ireland.

Through Virgin Media Business it supports entrepreneurs, businesses and the public sector, delivering the fastest widely available broadband speeds and tailor-made services.



Virgin Media is part of Liberty Global, the world's largest international TV and broadband company. Liberty Global connects 21 million customers through operations in 10 countries across Europe subscribing to 45 million TV, broadband internet and telephony services. It also serves 6 million mobile subscribers and offers WiFi service through 12 million access points across its footprint.

About Omnicom Group

Omnicom Group (www.omnicomgroup.com) is a leading global marketing and corporate communications company. Omnicom's branded networks and numerous specialty firms provide advertising, strategic media planning and buying, digital and interactive marketing, direct and promotional marketing, public relations and other specialty communications services to over 5,000 clients in more than 100 countries.

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.'

¹ http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/chapter8.pdf

² WHO

³ http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/chapter8.pdf

⁴ Return on Disability, 2016

⁵ Scope and Landman, Enabling Work

– 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 people with disabilities to fully access the job market and guaranteeing equal and accessible education through the creation of an inclusive environment.