



### ONLY 3% OF ARTICLES DISCUSSING DIVERSITY REFERENCE DISABILITY

- *On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, global businesses Allianz, American Express, Expedia Group, FARFETCH, GSMA, L'Oréal, Philip Morris International, Philips and Schindler Group sign up to put disability inclusion on their board agendas*
- *This comes as data highlights that only 3% of articles discussing diversity referenced disability in 2019 and 2020*
- *Global disability inclusion movement The Valuable 500 is calling for the next decade to be the decade of disability inclusion in post-Covid-19 recovery*

**03.12.20:** Today, on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, The Valuable 500 – the largest network of global CEOs committed to diversity – announces the latest businesses to have become members.

This comes as new international data reveals only 3% of media articles discussing diversity referenced disability – and this has only risen by 1% in the last five years. In addition, despite references to 'disability' in the media rising by 55% in the last five years, only 1 in 3 articles talking about disability referenced business.

It is clear that while there is a growing increase in awareness around disability inclusion, it is still not as firmly embedded in the diversity & inclusion agenda as it should be and is often a forgotten aspect of this conversation – particularly when it comes to business leadership. The Valuable 500 is working to tackle this critical issue.

Those signing up recently to The Valuable 500 include, Allianz, Allied Irish Banks, American Express, Amplifon UK, Anthem, Inc., The Asahi Shimbun Company, Birds Eye, The Clorox Company, Costain Group, DTEK, EDF Energy, ENEOS Holdings, Expedia Group, FARFETCH, FleishmanHillard, Grant Thornton UK LLP, GSMA, Hinduja Global Solutions, Hogan Lovells, Innocent Drinks, Keelings, Kin + Carta, Kmart Australia, L'Oréal, Ottobock SE & Co, Philips, Philip Morris International, PSEG, Regions Bank, Schindler Group, Schrodgers, Sekisui House, Telstra, ThoughtWorks, Unisys, ViacomCBS Networks UK, Westpac and Wickes.

These latest global companies to join the movement are drawn from across the world, including the USA, Australia, Sweden, India, Ireland, Japan, Ukraine, Germany, UK and France.

Launched at Davos in January 2019 by Caroline Casey and Paul Polman, The Valuable 500 remains the only global CEO community dedicated to radically transforming the business system across the whole supply chain for the benefit of all those with a disability. In under two years, 360 CEOs have joined this community.

The new sign ups revealed today bring the combined revenue of The Valuable 500's current members to over \$5 trillion, encompassing 55 sectors, with over 12.8 million employees and reaching across 31 countries.



The Valuable 500's announcements are made on the UN-sanctioned International Day of Persons with Disabilities, as we enter the 10 year countdown to the completion of the UN's 2030 sustainable development goals. This year in particular, in light of the global pandemic, the day focuses on Building Back Better towards a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world.

The Valuable 500 is calling for a shift in mentality, and for business and society alike to make the next decade the decade of disruption when it comes to inclusion of persons with disabilities. Ensuring disability inclusion is firmly embedded within the whole business supply chain will not be achieved in a single day of awareness – but it can be a critical focus for the next 10 years as the world looks to build back better.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities – referenced in five of the SDGs – and therefore The Valuable 500's mission – will be integral to meeting the UN's 2030 agenda in time over the next decade. Currently, 15% of the global population are persons with disabilities. This number increases to 53% when you include the families of persons with disabilities. Businesses cannot afford to exclude such a significant pool of talent, diversity of thought and customers with a spending power of \$8 trillion per annum.

This year has prompted much reflection on disability inclusion, from the changes to society COVID-19 has catalysed to it being the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Britain's Disability Discrimination Act. It is now time to look forward and to focus on the impact and change that can be engendered in this space by the deadline for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The Valuable 500 itself is continuing to work to lay the foundations for a more inclusive society over the next decade, as it readies to announce the next phase of its mission in early 2021, looking at six key pillars, three internally in organisations and three externally, so together we can co-create and co-shape the business system to look at how disability is valued within business. The Valuable 500 is also embarking on joint ventures with the International Paralympics Committee.

Caroline Casey, Founder of The Valuable 500, commented:

“This is an historic moment for disability inclusion on the eve of a decade of disruption which will contribute to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030. The Valuable 500 will be launching a transformational change programme for business system change in 2021.

“Today is a day for celebrating the immense contribution persons with disabilities bring to business and society more broadly – this 15% of the global population bring diversity of thought and lived experience and a wealth of talent, all vital for the business sustainability agenda. But it must also be a day of reflection, because we are not there yet with disability inclusion, and a fair and accessible society for all.

“We are thrilled to welcome the newest of The Valuable 500 members on board in the midst of the continuing pandemic. We believe in collaboration rather than competition and the multiplier effect of the collective impact of 500 leading CEOs and brands. I am confident that over the next decade, if the business community pulls together and stands united in ensuring disability inclusion is a central part of their leadership agenda, we can truly make a difference globally.”



Colin Hunt, CEO of AIB, comments:

*“AIB is proud to support Valuable 500 and their commitment to putting disability on the business leadership agenda. AIB has over 9,000 staff and 2.8 million customers, and this makes us acutely aware of our responsibility to ensure that everyone is given the same chance. We hold economic and social inclusion as one of the pillars of our sustainability strategy, and constantly seek ways to increase our positive impact on society. This is why our relationship with the Valuable 500 is a powerful match in what we do and want to achieve.”*

Gail K. Boudreaux, President and CEO, Anthem, Inc., comments:

*“Anthem is pleased to sign on to The Valuable 500 and continue our commitment to disability inclusion. Our focus on fostering an inclusive workplace where people with disabilities feel welcomed and accepted while contributing their talents to improving lives and communities across America is paramount to our mission. We are honored to be part of this effort to increase opportunities and access for people with disabilities around the world.”*

Maxim Timchenko, CEO, DTEK, comments:

*“We recognise that all people are unique and strive to create an environment in which everyone can fulfill their potential. This approach promotes the emergence of new ideas, the introduction of innovations and creative solutions. This helps DTEK company in our endeavors to ensuring societal progress and prosperity, as well as our efforts to help shape a favourable environment for people with disabilities and the elderly to thrive.”*

Ota Katsuyuki, Representative Director and President of ENEOS Holdings, comments:

*“ENEOS will continue to actively promote diversity and inclusion in order to create an environment where each and every employee can work energetically, and strive to enhance our corporate value in order to contribute to the development of society and the creation of a vibrant future.”*

Peter Kern, CEO and Vice Chairman, Expedia Group, comments:

*“We’re incredibly proud to join The Valuable 500’s global collective and turn our commitment to disability inclusion into action. We believe in the power of travel; that it can change lives, open minds and knock down barriers. As part of this, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for everyone and to helping put disability on the industry’s agenda.”*

John Saunders, President and CEO, FleishmanHillard, comments:

*“For FleishmanHillard, diversity is a top priority – not just for the future but for today. We are humbled to be part of The Valuable 500 and to commit our efforts in support of disability inclusion, as part of a stated ambition to be the most inclusive communications agency.”*

Dave Dunckley, CEO of Grant Thornton UK LLP, comments:



*“We’re passionate about creating an environment which feels fully inclusive every day, where everyone’s feelings and experiences matter, where all our people are treated fairly, and the mental health of our people is prioritised.”*

*“Enabling sustainable change requires collective action, which is why we’re really proud to become part of The Valuable 500. We’re looking forward to working with other organisations to create environments that are enabling to people of all abilities.”*

Partha DeSarkar, Executive Director and Global CEO of HGS, comments:

*“HGS’ diversity agenda is to engage, educate and empower our people based on their abilities. We believe in the ‘TogetherWeProgress’ philosophy, and are proud to collaborate with The Valuable 500’s global inclusion movement to enable meaningful opportunities for everyone who would want to contribute and grow.”*

Miguel Zaldivar, CEO of Hogan Lovells, comments:

*“Inclusion of individuals with different abilities is a key focus of our firm. We have had a longstanding commitment to people of different abilities across the globe, and we are excited that our participation in The Valuable 500 will accelerate our progress. We want our people of all abilities to understand that Hogan Lovells is a place where they belong and can thrive.”*

Jean-Paul Agon, Chairman and CEO of L’Oréal, comments:

*“L’Oréal’s commitment to disability inclusion goes far beyond our company, taking into account not only our employees but also our consumers and our communities worldwide. As such, we are particularly proud to join The Valuable 500 and to stand among a network of business leaders committed to this essential issue. Building disability inclusion into the new normal is essential to our mission to create the beauty that moves the world.”*

Philipp Schulte-Noelle, CEO of the Ottobock SE & Co. KGaA, comments:

*“For more than 100 years, we have been helping people to maintain or regain their mobility and thereby to get back into their everyday lives. Because for us, quality of life is closely linked to personal freedom and independence. Diversity is part of our DNA. With our engagement for the Paralympic sport we continue to push the topic onto the public agenda. We are proud to further expand our commitment to a diverse society by becoming a member of The Valuable 500 community.”*

André Calantzopoulos, CEO of Philip Morris International, comments:

*“Businesses with a global operating footprint, such as PMI, can make a meaningful impact by ensuring that everyone—including individuals with a disability—can prosper in the workplace. By signing The Valuable 500, I am proud to join forces with a host of other CEOs who are challenging their organizations and the business world to broaden the focus of their inclusion and diversity efforts, and to help create a more inclusive world for the 1.3 billion people with disabilities. This is the right thing to do as part of our broader work to create a more equitable society. And it is also the smart thing to do, allowing PMI to tap*



*into a population of talented individuals whose diverse perspectives and life experiences will help us to unlock the creativity and innovation needed to propel us toward our vision of a smoke-free future.”*

Thomas Oetterli, CEO of Schindler Group, comments:

*“Solving mobility challenges that many people with disabilities face is an essential part of our business. As an employer, Schindler Group is committed to advancing our inclusive culture and enriching our diversity. We have been embracing diverse abilities and already today have targeted programs to include differently-abled people in our operations. Going forward, a Group Executive led task force will define strategies for hiring and on-boarding more people with disabilities.”*

Yoshihiro Nakai, President & Representative Director of Sekisui House, comments:

*At Sekisui House, our commitment is to make home the happiest place in the world, by integrating housing-focused technologies, lifestyle designs and services through our various business domains. Putting priority on disability inclusion, we will continue to maximize the happiness and well-being of our customers, employees, and society as a whole, as a member of The Valuable 500.*

Xiao Guo, President and CEO of ThoughtWorks, comments;

*“Being a part of The Valuable 500 is a natural choice for ThoughtWorks; it is an important step in our journey of inclusion as we strive to be a positive force for change. We aspire to be a home for all technologists, and we will continue to take action to make that a reality. We are excited to learn and grow in this space and encourage others to think about how they can commit to disability inclusion.”*

*“Our commitment to The Valuable 500 is true to ThoughtWorks’ culture. We are a people business, a community of passionate individuals that are committed to building a better, more inclusive society and – through our work – to become advocates for sustainable, positive social change”.*

For more information please visit: [www.thevaluable500.com](http://www.thevaluable500.com).

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About The Valuable 500**

Launched by social entrepreneur and activist Caroline Casey at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in January 2019, The Valuable 500 aims to put disability on the global business leadership agenda.

The Valuable 500 was created by Binc, the organisation founded by Caroline Casey in 2015, with a mission to ignite a historic global movement for a new age of business inclusion - capitalising on Caroline Casey's 18-year track record of success engaging over 450 organisations. The campaign has won three awards: a Cannes Lion, D&AD, and a BIMA.

Our goal is to persuade 500 multinational companies that have at least 1,000 employees to make a public commitment to advance disability inclusion in their organisation. By engaging the most influential business leaders and brands, we want to create a tipping point within business that unlocks the business, social and economic value of the 1.3 billion people living with disabilities around the world, and the millions of us who will become disabled over time

We believe that if business takes a lead, society and government will follow, truly inclusive businesses can build truly inclusive societies.

### **About The Valuable 500: Phase 2**

We have approached over 2,800 leaders across the globe to commit to specific actions including putting disability performance on their leadership agenda.

The deadline to join the Valuable 500 has been extended to January 2021, and we will continue to build momentum and work with business leaders to complete the sign-up formalities to reach our goal of 500.

We also will inaugurate Phase II development in 2020: a three-year effort to turn The Valuable 500 into a community of like-minded business peers committed to raising their game on disability by sharing models, lessons learned, and energy. This will include:

- Helping our 500 CEOs boost inclusivity best practice at the leadership level through our Executive Inclusivity Programme
- Developing a peer-to-peer network of CEOs committed to inclusion
- Providing research and insight around inclusivity and business disability performance
- Empowering our CEOs to integrate disability across the entire value chain and
- Continuing to change the global narrative around disability.