

BEFORE THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND
COMMERCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

HEARING ON “INCLUSION IN TECH: HOW DIVERSITY BENEFITS ALL AMERICANS”

March 6, 2019

TESTIMONY OF JILL HOUGHTON

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF DISABILITY:IN

Introduction

Chairwoman Schakowsky, Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Jill Houghton. I'm the President and Chief Executive Officer of Disability:IN, formerly known as the US Business Leadership Network. Disability:IN is a non-profit organization that empowers corporations to achieve disability inclusion and equality.

Disability:IN represents over 170 corporate partners, primarily Fortune 1000 companies, with almost one quarter operating in the technology industry. Disability:IN has strong alliances with other disability organizations, and other minority groups supporting women, LGBTQ individuals, and people of color.

In collaboration with corporate partners, Disability:IN develops disability inclusion best practices, benchmarking data and insight, and customized inclusion plans spanning hiring practices, accommodations, inclusive design and supplier diversity.

I bring to the committee my experience as a disability rights advocate and leader working in a long-standing partnership with top corporations.

The main points of my testimony are the following:

1. Diversity must include disability
2. Disability inclusion drives business performance
3. Disability inclusion drives technology innovation

Current State of Disability in the U.S.

Disability knows no race, gender, or ethnicity. Anyone can acquire a disability at any time. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 4 Americans live with a disability¹. Disability is often forgotten in the context of diversity because 70% of disabilities including learning disabilities, autism, and depression are non-apparent. With 61 million Americans with disabilities, we can no longer ignore disability as an integral component of diversity.

When the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, it was a historical moment for people with disabilities. However, you can't legislate attitudes. Exclusion of people with disabilities is still a widespread problem. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in 2018, only 33.3% of working-age people with disabilities participated in the labor force, compared to 76.9% of working-age people without disabilities.

Inclusion Drives Business Performance

At Disability:IN, we have committed ourselves to advancing disability inclusion efforts through data and insight. In partnership with the American Association of People with Disabilities, Disability:IN created the Disability Equality Index, a comprehensive tool benchmarking disability inclusion in corporate America².

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0816-disability.html>

² <https://disabilityequalityindex.org/>

The Disability Equality Index, or the DEI, analyzes disability inclusion across Leadership and Culture, Enterprise-Wide Access, Employment Practices, Community Engagement and Supplier Diversity. The technology industry actively participates in the DEI, which has grown on average 30 percent each year. The companies that score well on the DEI are publicly recognized as Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion.

Using historical data from the DEI, Accenture in partnership with Disability:IN and AAPD, produced the report “*Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage.*” The report identified that leading companies in areas specific to disability employment and inclusion had, on average over the four-year period, 28 percent higher revenue, double the net income and 30 percent higher economic profit margins than their peers³. Even if the company *begins* the journey of disability inclusion, they are four times more likely to earn stronger shareholder returns than their peers.

This concrete evidence confirms disability inclusion is good for business, and investors are viewing it as the next frontier of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing. By including disability in ESG investments, corporations and investors are leveraging disability inclusion for better outcomes. New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, manager of the third-largest pension fund in the nation, has already publicly announced he is encouraging the companies they invest in to be disability inclusive.

This year, over one-quarter of Fortune 500 companies registered to participate in the DEI, showing they are ready to start benchmarking their efforts.

Inclusion Drives Technology Innovation

Inclusion not only drives business performance, but also drives innovation. This is not something new; we’ve known this for a long time. Take for instance, digital assistants like Siri or Alexa. These tools help blind or low-vision people, but also benefit anyone looking to better manage their day.

Take for instance, Microsoft. Prioritizing disability inclusion was a decision made in the board room and was championed at the top. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella wants to empower all, which includes people with disabilities. To lead this, Microsoft has a Chief Accessibility Officer role, which is held by Jenny Lay-Flurrie, Disability:IN’s Board Chair.

By driving inclusion and accessibility, Microsoft is putting their bias to the side. Inclusive hiring like the Autism Hiring Program recognizes traditional hiring practices screens talent out⁴. Further, Microsoft joins with other companies, including tech companies DXC Technology, SAP, and IBM in sharing best practices in an Autism Employer Roundtable⁵. Disability:IN guides the Roundtable in advancing disability inclusion, and to put aside competition, for greater innovation.

³ <https://www.accenture.com/pwd>

⁴ <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/inside-microsoft/cross-disability/hiring.aspx#coreui-heading-sp7tqgq>

⁵ <https://disabilityin.org/what-we-do/autism-employer-roundtable/>

By building a culture of inclusion, where diversity includes disability, corporations are building a more innovative workforce. People with disabilities are creative, smart, and great problem solvers – after all, many of them have to solve challenges in their everyday life to find accessible solutions or alternative accommodations.

Disability inclusive workplaces also ensures the products or services the company provides are inclusively designed. Diverse teams drive diverse ideas. However, in order to innovate, in an inclusive way, there must be accessibility. Leading technology companies understand this; in order to get the talent with disabilities, they must be accessible.

The inclusive workforce creates inclusive products and services – which is giving them a competitive edge. Technology is used by everyone, and if your technology isn't inclusive, you are missing a huge audience.

Take for example, Comcast's X1, which includes a talking guide that gives customers with visual disabilities the ability to explore thousands of TV shows and movies. Comcast has also set up a specially trained customer support team via Comcast's Accessibility Support Center for Customers with Disabilities, to help troubleshoot issues of importance of their customers⁶.

Google also takes an inclusive approach. In 2017, Google launched a campaign with Local Guides to add accessibility information to Google Maps. Using local knowledge, the guides answer questions like “Does this place have a wheelchair accessible entrance” and many more. So far, Google has provided accessibility information for more than 40 million places on Google Maps, helping ensure they are the map of choice for people with disabilities⁷.

Facebook has recently rolled out automatic alternative text, with the help of artificial intelligence, which describes the content of photos to blind and visually impaired users⁸. Facebook also implemented an option to increase the default font size on Facebook for iOS, a feature 10 percent of Facebook users take advantage of.

Technology companies are realizing that everyone benefits from inclusive offerings. Any of the items I mentioned before can also benefit senior citizens, or people who have a temporary disability. On the other hand, when disability inclusion is an afterthought, there is a missed market opportunity and often times remediation is more costly.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today. Disability inclusion is a **business imperative**. There is an estimated 10.7 million people looking for work, ready and willing. If just 1% of the Americans with disabilities gained employment, the nation could see an increase in GDP by **25 billion dollars**. The potential for innovation and economic strength is right here.

⁶ <https://www.xfinity.com/support/articles/accessibility-services>

⁷ <https://www.blog.google/products/maps/building-map-everyone/>

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/accessibility/videos/automatic-alternative-text/1082033931840331/>

THE 2018

DISABILITY EQUALITY INDEX

A Record Year for
Corporate Disability Inclusion
and Leadership



2018 Disability Inclusion in Business

Leading organizations view disability inclusion as a priority in order to truly create an inclusive culture for all.

The Disability Equality Index (DEI) is a comprehensive assessment tool jointly designed by business leaders and disability advocates. The DEI helps businesses analyze their environment, identify opportunities and leverage disability inclusion as a competitive advantage.

The 2018 DEI measured:

- Culture & Leadership;
- Enterprise-Wide Access;
- Employment Practices (Benefits, Recruitment, Employment, Education, Retention & Advancement, Accommodations);
- Community Engagement & Support Services; and
- Supplier Diversity

By measuring across these various areas, senior business leaders can better understand and leverage the unique differences, talents and perspectives of employees, investors, customers, and suppliers with disabilities.

Top-scoring DEI companies receive the recognition **Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion™** and build brand recognition among potential and current employees, investors, and customers – including those with disabilities and their friends and families.

I firmly believe that hiring people with disabilities should be commonplace in every workplace. As a deaf woman, I see first-hand how it makes for an inclusive culture and fosters innovation. The Disability Equality Index has been instrumental in guiding Microsoft's disability inclusion journey and helped shape our Inclusive Hiring Program.

Jenny Lay-Flurrie, Chief Accessibility Officer, Microsoft and Chair of Disability:IN Board of Directors

The DEI has quickly emerged as the nation's leading corporate benchmarking tool for disability equality and inclusion. As a cancer survivor, amputee and life-long advocate for people with disabilities, I want to recognize organizations that have made employment and accessibility among their top strategic priorities. These companies know that disability inclusion is not just the right thing to do, but produces measurable results to their bottom lines.

Ted Kennedy, Jr, Chair of American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) Board of Directors

2018 Disability Equality Index Demographics

145

corporations participated
in the 2018 DEI,

a historic milestone signifying a

32%

increase from 2017.

These Fortune 1000-scope companies are from over 25 different types of businesses.

*The 2018 participating DEI corporations account for
a total U.S. workforce of*

7.8 million employees

Top participating industries include:

Financial Services

(14.5% of reporting
companies)

Technology

(9.7% of reporting
companies)

Healthcare

(8.3% of reporting
companies)

2018 Disability Equality Index Highlights

Of the 145 companies, **62.7% earned a 100 rating** – the highest score possible. This is a substantial increase from 2015 when **22.5% received 100 ratings** and also in 2016 when **50.6% earned 100 ratings**.

The **average score** of participating companies was **90**. This demonstrates how companies are using the **DEI** as a benchmarking tool to identify and address opportunities to further enhance their disability inclusion efforts.

2018 Trends and Gaps

AREAS WHERE COMPANIES EXCEL

CULTURE

99% of participating DEI corporations have a company-wide written statement of commitment to Diversity & Inclusion.

88% of corporations specifically mention disability – an increase from 79% in 2017.

LEADERSHIP

94% of DEI companies reported having a Senior Executive (within the first two levels reporting to CEO) who is internally known as being a person with a disability and/or as an ally for people with disabilities.

ENTERPRISE-WIDE ACCESS

92% of businesses have a process in place for employees to request disability accommodations for off-site company meetings/activities and **90%** communicate that process to employees.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

97% of DEI businesses pay all of their employees at least Local, State, or Federal minimum wage- whichever is highest.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES

99% of DEI businesses have a centralized communications/support center available to answer questions from those with whom they conduct business.

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

72% of DEI companies had expenditures with certified disability-owned businesses and/or certified service-disabled veteran-owned businesses in 2018.

AREAS WHERE COMPANIES HAVE SHOWN MARKED IMPROVEMENT

CULTURE

87% of the 2018 DEI companies have an officially recognized disability-focused Employee Resource Group (ERG) or Affinity Group.

This is a significant increase from 2014, when the inaugural DEI reported that 66% of DEI companies had a disability-focused ERG.

LEADERSHIP

33% of Senior Executives received individual performance evaluations that specified disability inclusion as part of a written diversity component. This is notable growth from 16% in 2015.

ENTERPRISE-WIDE ACCESS

47% of 2018 DEI businesses conducted usability studies for their highest traffic URLs to verify that their websites work effectively with screen reading and other assistive technology, compared to just 36% in 2016.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

95% of DEI companies have a written disability accommodation procedure available to employees that explained the process for requesting a reasonable accommodation, and this process was posted in places where employees could access it on their own. This is a notable improvement from in 2015.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES

69% of DEI companies offered training to their centralized communications/support center(s) staff on the process for responding to requests for documents in accessible formats, which is a noteworthy improvement from 49% in 2015.

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

81% of DEI businesses had a supplier diversity webpage on their external public-facing company website and **49%** specifically mentioned both disability-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses on their external public-facing supplier diversity website. Both of these numbers increased from 2015, when they were 79% and 39%, respectively.

AREAS WHERE COMPANIES HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

CULTURE & LEADERSHIP

95% of DEI businesses utilize an employee engagement survey and 88% provide a way for the business to track employee engagement by demographic. However, only **38%** review the results for employees who have identified as having a disability.

ENTERPRISE-WIDE ACCESS

Only **55%** of DEI businesses have a company-wide external and internal commitment to digital accessibility.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

44% of 2018 DEI companies make all job interview candidates aware of the option to request an accommodation(s) for the interview. Additionally, only **15%** of companies that utilize personality profile screening tests/instruments, allow applicants with a disability to opt-out (8% provide an alternative to the personality test).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES

71% of DEI businesses have a smart-phone app available for use by the public, but just **34%** of DEI businesses have audited the app for accessibility.

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

Only **30%** of DEI businesses have a company-wide disability-focused goal(s) in place for supplier diversity and inclusion. **28%** measure progress against the goal, and **21%** brief the CEO of their business on the progress against an established goal.

Looking Towards the Future

The results of the 2018 DEI shows the powerful and trusted tool this Index represents today. Above all, for the first time, business leaders have a deeper knowledge and recognition of policies and contemporary practices that increased job opportunities and advancement for all. Since the DEI's first pilot in 2013-2014, we have seen this tool and the enthusiasm of our corporate partners result in collaborative gains in inclusivity and diversity.

We are especially proud to recognize these path-breaking companies in the 2018 DEI for their commitment to workplace inclusivity and diversity and their desire to be an employer of choice for members of the disability community. We are confident that as we continue to work on the DEI and future ratings, we will see an expanded bench of self-reporting corporate partners, a growing number of corporate leaders earning 100 ratings, and perhaps most of all, a corporate community fully dedicated to enhancing their cultures and increasing opportunities for the disability community.

About the Disability Equality Index

America's business leaders understand the importance of data and insight to guide future performance. The Disability Equality Index (DEI) provides this intelligence as a tool to achieve greater equality for all people with disabilities wherever they work, whatever tasks they perform and however they contribute.

The Disability Equality Index (DEI) is a unique, joint project of **Disability:IN and American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)**. It serves as the nation's most trusted annual benchmarking tool allowing America's leading corporations to self-report their disability policies and practices. This evolving survey scores each corporation on a scale from 0 to 100, with 100 representing the most disabilities inclusive. The DEI was developed by the two national leading organizations in consultation with the appointed DEI Advisory Committee, a diverse and voluntary group of experts in business, policy, and disability advocacy.

The final DEI score reflects a company's inclusive disability practices and policies in the following five areas:

CULTURE & LEADERSHIP

- **Culture:** Formal statements, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), and Hiring goals
- **Leadership:** Internal advocacy and support, Executive sponsorship, Public statements, and Performance metrics

ENTERPRISE-WIDE ACCESS

- **Enterprise-Wide Access:** Emergency procedures, Physical accessibility, Electronic accessibility, Off-site meeting accessibility, Training and support for accessibility requests

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

- **Benefits:** Counseling services, Short-and Long-term disability benefits
- **Recruitment:** Outward statements, Recruitment accommodations, Proactive efforts
- **Employment, Education, Retention and Advancement:** Awareness training, Supervisory training, Self-identification processes
- **Accommodations:** Formal policies, Communication practices, and Funding

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Community Engagement:** Supplier diversity, Philanthropic support, and Public impact
- **Internal / External Support Services:** Communication support systems, Accessible format training, Online communication accessibility, Feedback programs

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

- Evaluating supplier diversity practices that fully include and utilize disability owned, veteran-disability owned businesses and service-disabled veteran owned businesses.

The DEI entrusts companies to quantify and earn recognition for their efforts to create an inclusive and forward-thinking business. Additionally, the DEI encourages all companies to be aspirational in modeling the best disability inclusive policies and practices—showing company leadership opportunities for improvement.

The DEI not only educates the American business community on best policies and practices, but also guides people with disabilities in choosing businesses that are authentically committed to providing a supportive work environment. This is especially important as millennials are more supportive of companies that are socially responsible.¹

Why the DEI?

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in 1990, promising reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities and accessibility requirements for public spaces, the United States has not fully embraced this commitment. The ADA was historic and visionary in its goal of economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. However, 28 years later, the labor force participation rate for people with disabilities is a dismal 20% compared to 68% for people without disabilities², proving despite the ADA and federal regulations there is still a major untapped market of employees.

Presently, many would-be entrepreneurs with disabilities are stunted in their efforts to start a new business; many top university graduates with disabilities have trouble finding work environments that transcend the legal baseline for accommodations; and the American marketplace is limited in its potential growth by not including people with disabilities in their product and services design and acknowledging the aggregate income of people with disabilities is over \$1 trillion³.

The DEI encourages changes to these issues by enabling companies to showcase and measure their efforts that go beyond the essential baseline provided by the ADA. Companies already realize environmental, social and governance factors impact their management, culture, brand and financial well-being. Increasingly, companies are realizing including people with disabilities creates a culture of belonging and acceptance, which ultimately contributes to long-term sustainability, across the business.

Top-scoring companies of the DEI become “Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion” by continuously building on progress through previous DEI scores, implementing best practices from other industry leaders, and tapping into the competitive nature of business. More importantly, they stand as leaders of the movement and encourage other companies in various industries to step up to fill critical gaps and realize disability inclusion drives real impact and results.

References

1 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/danielle-sabrina/rising-trend-social-respo_b_14578380.html

2 “May 2017 Disability Employment Statistics” US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy

3 U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

DEI Advisory Committee

AAPD and Disability:IN are honored to be working with the Disability Equality Index Advisory Committee – a diverse group of business leaders, policy experts, and disability advocates, who have assembled to share with AAPD and the Disability:IN their knowledge, expertise, and vision to enhance disability inclusion policies and practices across the enterprise.

CO-CHAIRS:

David Casey

Vice President, Workforce Strategies and Chief Diversity Officer, CVS Health

Helena Berger

President and CEO, American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

MEMBERS:

Andres Gallegos

Shareholder, Robbins, Salomon and Patt, Ltd.

Andy Imparato

Executive Director, Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

Anil Lewis

Executive Director, National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute

Bob Witeck

President, Witeck Communications, Inc.

Chris Soukup

Chief Executive Officer, Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD)

Deb Dagit

President, Deb Dagit Diversity LLC

Eric Bridges

Executive Director, American Council of the Blind (ACB)

Estrella Cramer

Corporate Finance Director, UPS

Fred Maahs

Senior Director, National Partnerships, Comcast Corporation & Vice President, Comcast Foundation

Jill Houghton

President & CEO, Disability:IN

Jim Sinocchi

Head of the Office of Disability Inclusion, JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Julia Bascom

Director of Programs, Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Kelly Buckland

Executive Director, National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

Kenida Lewis

Diversity Sourcing Lead, Accenture

Kirk Adams

President & CEO, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)

Kristen Cook

Manager, Diversity & Inclusion, McKesson Corporation

Lissiah Hundley

VP, Workforce Diversity & Inclusion, University Relations, & Military Hiring, Comcast Corporation

Mary Brougher

EVP, Operations, Bender Consulting Services, Inc.

Michelle Simmons

Senior Specialist, Inclusion & Diversity, American Airlines

Mike Ellis

Global VP of Accessibility, Sprint

Mike Oliva

Director, Employment Practices, American Multi-Cinema, Inc.

Neil Barnett

Director, Inclusive Hiring and Accessibility, Microsoft

Neil Romano

President, The Romano Group, LLC

Rona Fourt 

Director, Supplier Diversity, Diversity & Inclusion, Walgreens

Russell Shaffer

Director, Global Culture, Diversity & Inclusion, Walmart Inc.

Sarah Triano

Director of Policy & Innovation, Complex Care, Centene Corporation

Susan Mazrui

Director, Public Policy, AT&T

Zoe Gibby

SVP, Enterprise Disability Strategy, Bank of America

Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion

Top-Scoring Companies of the DEI



3M
Accenture
Aetna
AMC Theatres
Ameren Corporation
American Airlines
American Electric Power
Anthem, Inc.
Aramark
AT&T
BAE Systems, Inc.
Bank of America
Baylor Scott & White Health
Biogen
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
BMO Harris Bank
Boehringer Ingelheim USA
Booz Allen Hamilton
Boston Scientific
Brown-Forman Corporation
Capital One Financial Corporation
Cargill
Centene Corporation
Cigna
Comcast NBCUniversal
Corning
CVS Health
Dell Inc.
Deloitte
Delta Air Lines, Inc.
DTE Energy
DuPont
Express Scripts
EY
Facebook
Fidelity Investments
Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA)
Florida Blue
Freddie Mac
General Motors
Goldman Sachs & Co.
GlaxoSmithKline plc
Health Care Service Corporation
Hewlett Packard Enterprise
Highmark Health
HP Inc.
Huntington National Bank
Intel Corporation
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
Kaiser Permanente
KPMG
L'Oréal USA
Lincoln Financial Group
Lockheed Martin
ManpowerGroup
Mastercard
Mayo Clinic
Medtronic
Meijer
Merck
Microsoft
Northrop Grumman Corporation
Old National Bank
Pacific Gas & Electric
PNC Financial Services, Inc.
Proctor & Gamble
Prudential Financial
PwC
Qualcomm, Inc.
Southern Company
Spaulding Rehabilitation Network
Sprint Corporation
State Street Corporation
Synchrony
T-Mobile
TD Bank
The Boeing Company
The Dow Chemical Company
The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.
The Walt Disney Company
Thermo Fisher Scientific
Thomson Reuters
Travelers
Tufts Health Plan
U.S. Bank
United Airlines
Verizon
Walgreens
Walmart Inc.
Wells Fargo & Company
Whirlpool Corporation

Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion

Top-Scoring Companies of the DEI

90%

AXA
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Cisco
DXC Technology
Johnson & Johnson
M&T Bank
MassMutual
McKesson Corporation
MetLife

Nielsen
Northern Trust
Northwestern Mutual
OppenheimerFunds, Inc.
PPL
Quest Diagnostics
Raytheon Company
Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.
Sodexo

Southern California Edison
Step toe & Johnson LLP
Unilever U.S.
UPS
Voya Financial

80%

Amazon.com
Choice Hotels
CSX Transportation, Inc.
Entergy
Ford Motor Company

Monsanto Company
Norfolk Southern
Corporation
Southwest Airlines
USAA

United Technologies
Corporation
Unum Group
W.W. Grainger

GETTING TO EQUAL:
**THE DISABILITY
INCLUSION
ADVANTAGE**

“Persons with disabilities present business and industry with unique opportunities in labor-force diversity and corporate culture, and they’re a large consumer market eager to know which businesses authentically support their goals and dreams. Leading companies are accelerating disability inclusion as the next frontier of corporate social responsibility and mission-driven investing.”

– Ted Kennedy, Jr.,
Disabilities Rights Attorney,
Connecticut State Senator and
Board Chair, American Association of People with Disabilities

Introduction

What if you found out that your company is significantly underutilizing a critical talent pool? At a time when there are more job openings in the U.S. than workers, you'd want to know more, wouldn't you?

And, what if, by recognizing the value of that talent pool and leveraging it, your company could also realize significant gains in profitability, value creation and shareholder returns—as well as other business benefits?

New research from Accenture, in partnership with Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), reveals that companies that embrace best practices for employing and supporting more persons with disabilities in their workforce have outperformed their peers.

In large part, companies haven't leveraged the talents of persons with disabilities for three reasons:

- A lack of understanding of the scope of the talent available;
- A lack of understanding of the potential benefits; and
- Misconceptions about the cost versus the ROI of disability inclusion.

But leading companies that are working successfully toward disability inclusion have also achieved tangible financial benefits. For example, the research shows that leading companies were, on average, twice as likely to have higher total shareholder returns than those of their peer group.

A Vast, Untapped Market

Despite the strength of the U.S. labor market, persons with disabilities¹ are strikingly under-employed. As of July 2018, only 29 percent of Americans of working age (between ages 16 and 64) with disabilities participated in the workforce, compared with 75 percent of Americans without a disability. In 2017, the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities was more than twice that for those without a disability—9.2 percent versus 4.2 percent.

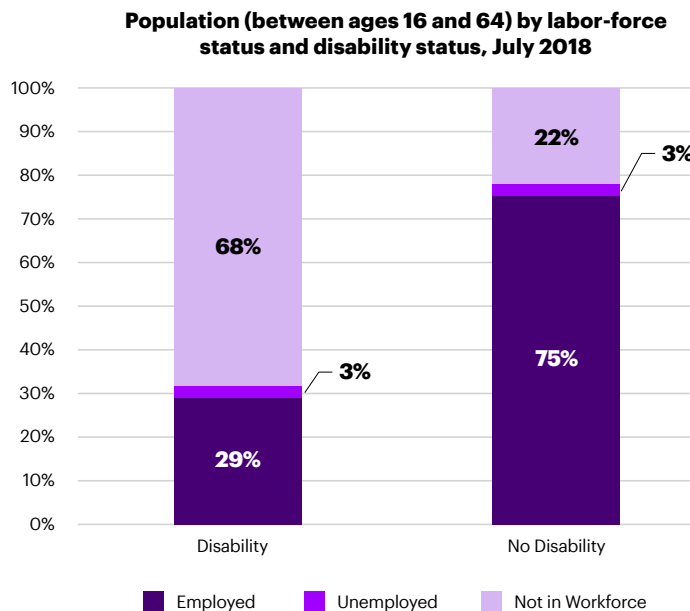
There are 15.1 million people of working age living with disabilities in the U.S., so the research suggests that if companies embrace disability inclusion, they will gain access to a new talent pool of more than **10.7 million people**.

That represents a significant opportunity to strengthen our businesses and our economy. According to other research cited within this report, employees with disabilities offer tangible benefits, including increased innovation, improved productivity and a better work environment. And, of course, workers are consumers, too. The GDP could get a boost up to **\$25 billion** if just 1 percent more of persons with disabilities joined the U.S. labor force.

The good news, according to our analysis, is that U.S. organizations are successfully employing persons with disabilities and initiating and developing their disability inclusion programs.

Figure 1: A Wide Employment Gap

Persons with disabilities are much less likely to be employed.



Source: Accenture analysis based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 2018

¹ The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. The ADA was amended in 2008 and became effective January 1, 2009. The ADAAA requires a broader interpretation of disability by schools, testing agencies and employers than the original law.



Accenture's internal disability champions network of more than 16,000 employees worldwide helps colleagues feel included at work.

A Market Worth Targeting

The U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy categorizes persons with disabilities as the third-largest market segment in the U.S., after Hispanics and African-Americans. The discretionary income for working-age persons with disabilities is \$21 billion—greater than that of the African-American and Hispanic segments combined.²

²A hidden market: The purchasing power of working-age adults with disabilities, American Institutes for Research, April, 2018

Disability Inclusion and the Bottom Line

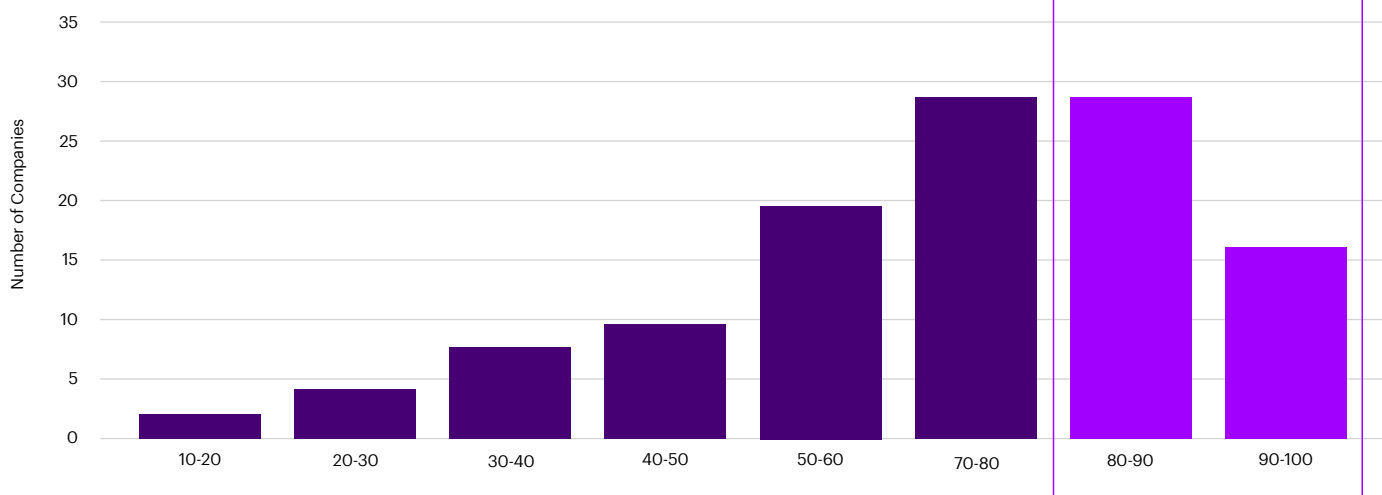
We took a closer look at DEI results over the past four years to unearth best-in-class companies—those that stood out for leadership in areas specific to disability employment and inclusion. We identified an elite group of 45 companies that excelled in these key categories, which we are calling Disability Inclusion Champions (or “Champions”). They make up 32 percent of the 140 U.S. companies that are part of this study. (See “About the Research” for more details.)

Our analysis focused on two important measures of financial performance among respondents: profitability (revenues and net income) and value creation (economic profit margin).

Across all the dimensions of the DEI that we analyzed, Champions are, compared with other companies in the sample, performing above-average financially. Champions achieved – on average – 28 percent higher revenue, double the net income and 30 percent higher economic profit margins³ over the four-year period we analyzed.

Figure 2: A Deep Dive into the DEI

A new independent scoring system developed by Accenture Research identifies Disability Inclusion Champions for their unique leadership in disability inclusion.



Source: Getting to Equal 2018: The Disability Inclusion Advantage, Accenture

N=140 (unique respondents to DEI survey 2015-2018)

The Disability Equality Index

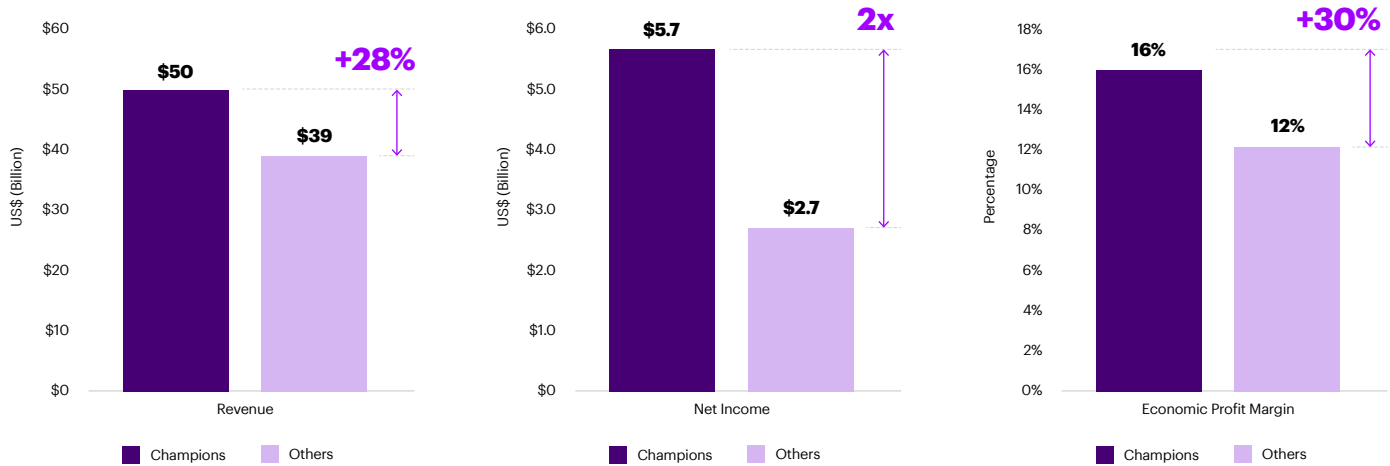
Disability:IN, in partnership with the American Association for People with Disabilities, produces the [Disability Equality Index \(DEI\)](#)—an annual transparent benchmarking tool that gives U.S. businesses an objective score on their disability inclusion policies and practices. It measures and weighs a wide range of criteria across

key best practice categories: culture and leadership; community engagement and support service; employment practices; enterprise-wide access and supplier diversity (not included in this analysis). Companies participating in the DEI are typically large, with annual revenues of the total sample averaging \$43 billion.

³Economic profit margin (or economic value add margin) is a measure of profitability that compares net operating profit to total cost of capital.

Figure 3: Champions Outperform on Profitability and Value Creation

Overall scores show a significant difference.



All results are significant at 1 percent. Test was based on panel data regression model to account for temporal and industry variation; see Appendix for more detail on methodology. Source: Getting to Equal 2018: The Disability Inclusion Advantage, Accenture

Moreover, Disability Inclusion Champions were, on average, two times more likely to outperform their peers in terms of total shareholder returns compared with the rest of the sample.

Whether or not a company qualifies as a Champion, strengthening its commitment to persons with disabilities makes a difference:

Accenture research shows that companies that have improved their DEI score over time (“Improvers⁴”) were four times more likely to have total shareholder returns that outperform their peers, compared to non-improvers. On average, Improvers’ total shareholders returns outperform industry peers⁵ by 53 percent, while other companies outperform their peers by only 4 percent.

2x

Champions were **twice as likely** as others to have higher total shareholder returns than those of their peer group

4x

Companies that have improved their inclusion of persons with disabilities over time were **four times more likely** than others to have total shareholder returns that outperform those of their peer group

⁴ Improvers were identified as the top 25 percent of DEI study participants based on the ratio between their annual DEI score change and the maximum number of points they could gain to reach 100.

⁵ In our TSR models, we compared survey respondents with the top 10 company peers. The peer group is defined by S&P Capital IQ’s proprietary algorithm, which is based on five main components: (1) Revenue within similar ranges; (2) Industry (based on S&P Capital IQ classification derived from SIC code); and (3) Amount of common equity analysts’ coverage; (4) Available information on recent financial data; and (5) Company location based on macro-regions (e.g. Europe) and country GDP.

What's Holding Companies Back?

Some companies are not taking advantage of the benefits of disability initiatives. While many are concerned about the costs of accommodating persons with disabilities, these are actually minimal and fruitful investments.

According to employers participating in a recent study by Job Accommodation Network, a service from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, a high percentage (59 percent) of accommodations cost absolutely nothing to make, while the rest typically cost only \$500 per employee with a disability.⁶

CEOs and investors need to know the strong qualitative and quantitative business case for robust disability inclusion programs. If we make companies aware of the potential gains, share success stories and demonstrate how to build these programs, we can quickly get more persons with disabilities into the workforce, where they can thrive.

“Deafness is just a way of life, a lifestyle. I tell my colleagues all the time, just because someone has a disability, it doesn't prevent them from delivering great work.”

– Joaquin Ortiz, Consultant, Accenture

⁶ <https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm>



“Being honest about where you stand can be a hard—yet crucial—first step toward becoming a more inclusive company. Accountability and creating an environment of trust where employees feel comfortable self-identifying as having a disability are true measures of inclusion.”

– Chad Jerdee,
General Counsel & Chief Compliance Officer and
Persons with Disabilities Sponsor,
Accenture

How can companies build an inclusive workplace and reap the benefits?

The Four Key Actions

Accenture's in-depth interviews with leaders from DEI-participating companies reveal four key actions for attracting, hiring, retaining and advancing diverse talent.

1

Employ

Organizations must ensure that persons with disabilities are represented in their workplace. Beyond hiring, employers should implement practices that encourage and progress persons with disabilities.

Recruiting in Fresh Ways

"In the case of people with autism, the knowledge base and technical aptitude of individuals can be very high, so we had to figure out why we weren't placing them. We discovered the problem—the interview process. We changed our approach to what the process should look like. Now we work with a local group to bring candidates in for a week-long academy. We offer team work and technical exercises, and a lot of training. At the end of the week, we have an idea of those who will receive a job offer."

– Jenny Lay-Flurrie,
Chief Accessibility Officer,
Microsoft

2

Enable

Leaders must provide employees with disabilities with accessible tools and technology and/or a formal accommodations program. Consider cultivating greater awareness through formal training programs for those without disabilities to learn about the tools and accommodations available for better integration across teams.

Making it Work

"We have a support services team that is made up of 300 people with intellectual disabilities. They work in four different locations in the U.S., and do fulfillment services and external client engagement. That helps the individual, the community, and us. They service all customers – those with and without disabilities; both internal and external."

– Wil Lewis,
SVP of Diversity and Inclusion,
Bank of America

3

Engage

To foster an inclusive culture throughout the organization, companies must generate awareness-building through recruitment efforts, disability education programs and grass-roots-led efforts (for example, an employee resource group) and events.

Building the Pipeline

“Four years ago, we started sponsoring the National Wheelchair Basketball Association. Their youth tournaments are a blast! But we are there for more than the fun. The events allow us to talk to youth about what it means to work at T-Mobile. These conversations are pivotal because many of these kids have never considered that they have an option for an independent life. My favorite part is seeing their self-confidence improve, and the inspiration that comes from these events.”

– Bri Sambo,
Senior Program Manager,
Military & Diversity Sourcing, T-Mobile

4

Empower

Companies must offer mentoring and coaching initiatives, as well as skilling/re-skilling programs, to ensure that persons with disabilities continue to grow and succeed. Persons with disabilities should occupy roles at all levels, including top leadership positions.

Getting the Best

“People with disabilities tend to be some of the most creative, innovative and, quite frankly, most loyal employees. A person with a disability wakes up every day thinking about being innovative – that is a skill set. That ability to problem solve is innate to them. Our training programs quickly went from philanthropy to skill search.”

– David Casey,
VP, Workforce Strategies &
Chief Diversity Officer
CVS Health

Beyond Revenue: Countless Benefits of Inclusion

A large body of previous research shows that disability inclusion efforts are a boon to employers, specifically across six key areas of “inclusion incentives.”



Increased Innovation

Persons with disabilities have to be creative to adapt to the world around them. As such, they develop strengths such as problem-solving skills, agility, persistence, forethought and a willingness to experiment—all of which are essential for innovation.⁷

Having employees with disabilities across departments helps ensure that the products and services that go to market are truly inclusive. And making things more accessible for persons with disabilities can translate into products and services from which everyone benefits—for instance, home devices using natural voice recognition, driving sales and growth.⁸



Improved Shareholder Value

Businesses that hire persons with disabilities and foster inclusive cultures report bottom-line benefits that show proven ROI.⁹

Regulators and the investor community increasingly monitor company culture and diversity. Disability inclusion is a key component of these metrics, and mandatory reporting on them will be enforced for some federal contractors starting in 2019.¹⁰

⁷ Millennials with Disabilities: A Large, Invisible Talent Cohort with Innovative Potential, Inc. Magazine, November 2017, <https://www.inc.com/sylvia-ann-hewlett/millennials-with-disabilities-a-large-invisible-talent-cohort-with-innovative-potential.html>.

⁸ Break down disability barriers to spur growth and innovation, Financial Times, September 2017

⁹ <http://workplaceinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/01-Disability-Employment-Inclusion-Guide-Business-Case.pdf>

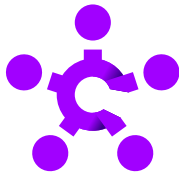
¹⁰ <https://www.governmentcontractorcomplianceupdate.com/2018/08/14/breaking-news-ofccp-issues-new-directive-ordering-focused-compliance-evaluations/>



Improved Productivity

All workers benefit from a more diverse workplace. Studies show that working alongside employees with disabilities makes non-disabled individuals more aware of how to make the workplace more inclusive and better for everyone. Staff turnover is also lower—by up to 30 percent—when a well-run disability community outreach program is in place.¹¹

Work environments that are more inclusive of persons with disabilities often see improved productivity levels. For example, Microsoft has built a successful disability hiring program specific to people on the Autism spectrum. More organizations are discovering that employing persons with disabilities is not as expensive or challenging as is often assumed. A DuPont employee survey found that when employees with disabilities are graded on the same scale as other employees, 90 percent of them receive performance ratings of “average” or above average.”¹²



Access to the Supplier Ecosystem

Business leaders have discovered that a diverse supply base is a competitive advantage.¹³ Hackett’s 2016 Supplier Diversity Study, for instance, found that companies allocating 20 percent or more of their spend to diverse suppliers attributed 10 to 15 percent of their annual sales to supplier diversity programs. According to the WeConnect report on global supplier diversity and inclusion, the advantages of inclusive sourcing are:

- Access to new suppliers, innovative solutions and cost savings through increased competition;
- Awareness of diverse customer needs, increased market share and shareholder value; and
- Brand enhancement and recruitment/retention of employers who want meaningful work.

Government incentives to contract diverse suppliers also benefit businesses. In addition to the “set-asides” in federal contracts, disability-owned businesses are eligible for preferred purchase programs run by various state governments.^{14 15}

¹¹ Disability Employment and Inclusion: Your Guide to Success — Business Case, Workplace Initiative, 2017,

¹² An Untapped talent Pool: The Opportunity in Employing People with Disabilities, National Governors Association, November 2017, <https://medium.com/nga-economic-opportunity/an-untapped-talent-pool-the-opportunity-in-employing-people-with-disabilities-77be9f76339c>

¹³ Supplier Diversity and Competitive Advantage: New Opportunities in Emerging Domestic Markets, Graziadio Business Review, <https://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/supplier-diversity-and-competitive-advantage-new-opportunities-in-emerging-domestic-markets/>

¹⁴ Advancing Economic Opportunities for Business Owners and Jobseekers with Disabilities, Employee Assistance and Resource Network, <http://www.askearn.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/stateprocurement.pdf>

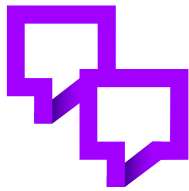
¹⁵ Set-asides are a procurement preference that may be total or in part where the contract is “set aside” for bidding only by a designated and identified group of firms (e.g., small business, small minority-owned business, environmentally “green” firms, etc.).



Improved Market Share

Persons with disabilities represent a significant portion of the consumer market. The U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy categorizes persons with disabilities as the third-largest market segment in the U.S., after Hispanics and African-Americans. This market expands when family members, caregivers and others who prioritize goods and services that are inclusive of persons with disabilities are counted.

A study by the American Institutes for Research (April 2018) reveals that the total after-tax disposable income for working-age persons with disabilities is about \$490 billion (compared with \$582 billion for Hispanics and \$501 billion for African Americans.) According to the Workplace Initiative 2017 report, companies that set up specific disability-related programs and complete targeted marketing efforts can expect an increase in patronage from persons with disabilities.



Enhanced Reputation

Companies that adopt inclusive marketing and advertising efforts tend to stand out from the competition. A survey undertaken by the National Business and Disability Council in 2017 found that 66 percent of consumers will purchase goods and services from a business that features persons with disabilities in their advertising, while 78 percent will purchase goods and services from a business that takes steps to ensure easy access for individuals with disabilities at their physical locations.¹⁶

A Nielsen study in 2016 found that persons with disabilities tend to be more brand loyal and also make more shopping trips and spend more per trip than the average consumer.¹⁷

¹⁶ A hidden market: The purchasing power of working-age adults with disabilities, American Institutes for Research, April 2018,

¹⁷ Reaching Prevalent, Diverse Consumers with Disabilities, Nielsen, 2016, <http://sites.nielsen.com/newscenter/measuring-impact-consumers-disabilities/>

The Next Frontier of Corporate Social Responsibility

Encouragingly, we estimate that the number of DEI companies empowering their employees with disabilities has increased 40-fold over the past four years. But there is still much work to be done.

To unleash the trapped value within the persons-with-disabilities community, organizations must assess where they are by leveraging benchmarking tools such as the DEI, self-identification of their current employee base, and employee engagement and awareness surveys. Then, they should share the compelling business case for disability inclusion and implement the holistic actions that are associated with increased innovation and profits, a better reputation and other benefits—for all employees and customers.

Empowered companies are not merely compliant or acting out of perceived obligation. They are excitedly embracing the advantages that come with employing more creative, industrious and well-rounded people.



“As a single mom with a physical disability, I struggled to find work. Now I have a job I love and can support my family. It has changed my life completely.”

– Ntombifuthi Dhlamini, employed through Leonard Cheshire Disability’s “Access to Livelihoods” program, supported by Accenture

About the Research

This research is based on approximately 140 unique respondents of the Disability Equality Index (DEI) between 2015 and 2018. In partnership with Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities, we analyzed two measures of financial performance: profitability (revenues and net income) and value creation (economic profit margin). Our sample includes companies from all the major industries but is limited to the U.S. market.

We applied econometric models to public and proprietary data to identify:

1. The link between disability inclusion policies and business performance in terms of profitability, value creation and total shareholder return.
2. The relationship between disability workforce participation and GDP.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. The ADA was amended in 2008 and became effective January 1, 2009. The ADAAA requires a broader interpretation of disability by schools, testing agencies and employers than the original law.

<https://www.ada.gov>

CHAMPIONS

Accenture Research assessed 140 leading disability-inclusive companies with select data from a four-year sample of the DEI. The assessment revealed key differentiating factors, activities and best practices in 45 of the 140 companies (32 percent). All companies that participate in the DEI are already advancing disability inclusion. However, the 45 “Disability Inclusion Champions” are those assessed as providing leading-edge disability programs and initiatives that can be potentially implemented by others.

IMPROVERS

Since 2014, there has been an overall improvement in the DEI scores achieved by participating companies. To quantify the effort in improving the disability-related policies, we introduce an “improvement score metric” calculated as the ratio between the annual score change and the maximum number of points they could have gained to reach 100. We define top improvers as those companies that ranked in the top 25 percent of our own improvement score metric.

PEER GROUP

In our TSR models, we compared survey respondents to the top 10 company peers as recommended and reviewed by Vanguard. The peer group is defined by S&P Capital IQ’s proprietary algorithm, which is based on five main components: (1) Revenue within similar ranges; (2) Industry (based on S&P Capital IQ classification derived from SIC code); (3) Amount of common equity analysts’ coverage; (4) Available information on recent financial data; and (5) Company location based on macro-regions (e.g. Europe) and country GDP.

About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With 459,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at www.accenture.com. And for more on Accenture and inclusion, visit www.accenture.com/pwd

Accenture Research

Accenture Research shapes trends and creates data-driven insights about the most pressing issues global organizations face. Combining the power of innovative research techniques with a deep understanding of our clients’ industries, our team of 250 researchers and analysts spans 23 countries and publishes hundreds of reports, articles and points of view every year.

Our thought-provoking research—supported by proprietary data and partnerships with leading organizations such as MIT and Singularity—guides our innovations and allows us to transform theories and fresh ideas into real-world solutions for our clients.

www.accenture.com/research

About Our Partners

Disability:IN, formerly known as the US Business Leadership Network, is the leading nonprofit resource for business disability inclusion worldwide. Partnering with more than 160 corporations, Disability:IN expands opportunities for people with disabilities across enterprises. The organization and 50 affiliates raise a collective voice of positive change for people with disabilities in business. Through its programs and services, Disability:IN empowers businesses to achieve disability inclusion and equality, with the goal of advancing inclusion to the point when the organization is no longer necessary.

<https://disabilityin.org/>

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is a convener, connector and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities.