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# DISABILITY EQUALITY INDEX

A Record Year for Corporate Disability Inclusion and Leadership



# 2017 DISABILITY EQUALITY INDEX HIGHLIGHTS

The Disability Equality Index, originally conceived five years ago, held its first pilot survey in 2013-2014 with 48 corporations taking part. In the following two years, the number of companies

participating nearly doubled, with 80 companies enrolling in 2015 and 83 companies on board in 2016. This year, the 2017 DEI welcomes a historic 110 corporations to our benchmark.

*Note: Please see page 7 for detailed background on the Disability Equality Index*



**OF THE 110 COMPANIES SCORED IN 2017, A RECORD 68 EMPLOYERS EARNED 100 RATINGS** - the highest score possible. This is a substantial increase from 2015 when 19 companies (out of 80) received 100 ratings and also in 2016 when 42 companies (of 83 participating) earned the top mark possible. Additionally, the 2017 DEI saw an increase in the median score, with the average rating achieving a resounding 90, an increase of 10 points from 2015.



**THE COMPANIES REPRESENTED TODAY IN THE 2017 DEI REPRESENT WIDELY DIVERSE BUSINESS SECTORS**, are significantly varying sizes, and have workforces across the world. These Fortune 1000-scope companies are from 21 different sectors of the economy, and 69 of the reporting companies are ranked in the 2017 Fortune 500.



**REMARKABLY, THE CORPORATIONS TAKING PART IN THE 2017 DEI HAVE A TOTAL U.S. WORKFORCE OF ROUGHLY 7.2 MILLION WORKERS** - or ~5% of all of American workers. In addition to the large number of employees, the publicly held corporations in the 2017 DEI today total ~\$6 trillion in market value—showing their significant influence on the American and global economies.



**THE INDUSTRIES WITH THE MOST CORPORATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE 2017 DEI ARE:** Financial Services (15% of reporting companies); Technology (10% of reporting companies); and Healthcare and Insurance (both accounting for 9%, or a total of 18%, of companies reporting).

# 2017 TRENDS AND GAPS

Each year, the Disability Equality Index offers a unique snapshot of the sustainable progress many companies have made to achieve equality and inclusion for workers with disabilities. We see evidence everywhere of excellence, insight and innovation that is helping transform U.S. workplaces to deliver on their potential to people with disabilities.

The 2017 DEI results reflect those areas where companies continue to excel in serving employees with disabilities, as well as areas where companies have shown the most improvement, and significantly, those areas where companies must do more to improve and close the policy and practice gaps.

## AREAS WHERE COMPANIES EXCEL

### EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT

**95%** of all 2017 DEI companies report having external recruitment efforts in place that are specifically geared toward hiring individuals with disabilities. 85% of all businesses report having a company-wide external hiring goal(s) for people with disabilities.

### BENEFITS

**98%** of companies rated in the 2017 DEI have an employee assistance program that is available to full-time and part-time employees.

### PHILANTHROPY

**98%** of 2017 DEI companies provide financial support for external disability related events or organizations. This percentage has risen from 82% in the 2016 DEI.

### PROGRAMMING FOCUSED ON DISABILITY INCLUSION

**90%** of 2017 DEI companies have formal program(s) in place to understand how to address the needs of the disability community. This is up slightly from 87% in the 2016 DEI.

## AREAS WHERE COMPANIES HAVE SHOWN MARKED IMPROVEMENT

### ACCESSIBLE ONLINE CHAT FUNCTION

**76%** of 2017 DEI companies now have an online chat function for people with disabilities to engage externally and within the company. In future DEIs, we hope to see this number increase, as well as the number of chat functions that meet the AA Level of Conformance (or above) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.

### EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS (ERGS)

**88%** of the 2017 DEI companies have a disability focused employee resource group or affinity organization. This is up from 66% of 2015 DEI companies reporting disability specific ERGs. Additionally, 86% of 2017 DEI companies report having a disability focused ERG with a senior executive (Vice President or higher) champion or sponsor. This number has risen 22 points since the inaugural DEI in 2015.

### EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS

**37%** of 2017 DEI companies specifically record engagement information for employees with disabilities; an improvement from 28% in 2015. Overall, 80% of 2017 DEI companies utilize an employee engagement survey, which collects demographic information from employees. This number has risen over the last three years from 64% in 2015.

## AREAS WHERE COMPANIES HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

### SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

**51%** of all 2017 DEI companies report having disability included in their supplier diversity programs—up slightly from 49% in 2016. Overall, 92% of all 2017 DEI companies have a supplier diversity program, with 86% of these companies having this program displayed on their external website.

### RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT POLICY

**Only 29%** of 2017 DEI companies currently have retention and advancement policies that specifically include/mention disability inclusion.

### INTERVIEW ACCOMMODATIONS

**Only 39%** of 2017 DEI companies make all job interview candidates aware of the option to request an accommodation(s) for the interview. Additionally, only 15% of these companies, which use personality profile screening tests/instruments, allow applicants with a disability to opt-out (5% provide an alternative to the personality test).

### INTERNAL WEBSITE AUDITING

Although 57% of 2017 DEI companies audit external (public-facing) website for accessibility, **Only 26%** of companies audit their internal website for accessibility under the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.

### PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES (PAS) COVERAGE

**Only 8%** of 2017 DEI companies reported covering PAS in their benefits package.

# LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The results of the 2017 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 2017 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 2018 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.

## THREE BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ **ONE VISIONARY CORPORATION EMBRACED A HOLISTIC APPROACH BY CREATING A COMPANY-wide accessibility center** that provides resources for design, development, testing and education – all with a focus on building accessibility for people with disabilities into every phase of a program or product’s lifecycle. It starts with content and design to get it right, followed by testing through accessibility audits. The approach is wrapped around universal education that promotes the accommodations engineered by the center’s leadership.
- ✓ **TO ADVANCE DISABILITY INCLUSION ACROSS THEIR WORKPLACE**, one company has fostered a proud team of self-nominated ambassadors to raise disability awareness, deliver presentations and spur conversations. These ambassadors enthusiastically share their stories of being a person with a disability or an ally of someone with a disability. Their sensitivity, passion, and above all, openness make them powerful storytellers, mentors and educators.
- ✓ **ANOTHER LEADING COMPANY ESTABLISHED A CENTER THAT FOCUSES EXCLUSIVELY ON WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYEES.** This innovative approach streamlined the fulfillment of accommodations for employees, job applicants and visitors. In addition, the unified budget enabled the employer to have dedicated specialists – to ensure efficient support through direct phone contact, emails to a dedicated mailbox, a toll-free telephone line, or through efax or Accommodate, an electronic system that swiftly organizes and responds to all requests.

# BACKGROUND ON 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 **US Business Leadership Network** 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 four 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

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.<sup>1</sup>

# 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, 27 years later, the labor force participation rate for people with disabilities is a dismal 20% compared to 68% for people without disabilities<sup>2</sup>, 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 trillion<sup>3</sup>.**

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

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/danielle-sabrina/rising-trend-social-respo\\_b\\_14578380.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/danielle-sabrina/rising-trend-social-respo_b_14578380.html)

<sup>2</sup>“May 2017 Disability Employment Statistics” US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

# DEI ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AAPD and USBLN 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 USBLN their knowledge, expertise, and vision to enhance disability inclusion policies and practices in the workplace.

<b>Kirk Adams</b>	President and CEO, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)
<b>Neil Barnett</b>	Director, Inclusive Hiring and Accessibility, Microsoft
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