500 CEOs of major corporations unite to tackle disability inclusion in business

Brand

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- *Global business collective, The Valuable 500, announces it has reached its milestone of securing commitments from 500 global CEOs and their companies worldwide.*
- Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. joins in to unitedly tackle disability inclusion in business and Dr. Anish Shah is among 13 global CEOs who will be spearheading the programmes and services to be offered under Phase 2 of the campaign.
- *The Valuable 500 movement will be critical as new research revealed today shows that there are no executives or senior managers who have disclosed a disability at any of the FTSE 100 companies.*

Mumbai, May 18, 2021: Global business collective, The Valuable 500, announces it has reached its goal of 500 international organisations committing to put disability inclusion on their board agenda, making it the world's biggest CEO collective for disability inclusion.

Since The Valuable 500 was launched at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting at Davos in 2019, some of the most recognisable businesses from

across the world have joined the campaign for inclusion, including Allianz, Apple, BBC, BP, The Coca-Cola Company, Daimler, Deloitte, EY, Google, Microsoft, Nestle, P&G, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., Prada, Shell, Sky, Sony, Twitter, Unilever, Virgin Media, Verizon and Vodafone. The membership includes 36 of the FTSE 100 companies, 46 of the Fortune 500 and 28 of the Nikkei.

Almost three quarters (70%) of its members, have a turnover of over $1 billion, with half (52%) of those committed to the campaign employing more than 10,000 people. The organisations supporting The Valuable 500 have a combined revenue of over $8 trillion and over 20 million employees across 36 countries, demonstrating the weight of The Valuable 500's reach and influence. Particularly strong sectors pushing for disability inclusion through the campaign include the finance, food & drink, hospitality, big tech computing & telecoms and legal industries.

This comes as new research from The Valuable 500 and Tortoise Media reveals that there are no executives or senior managers who have disclosed a disability in company reporting by the FTSE 100, while only 12% report on the total number of their employees who are disclosed as disabled. Ahead of Global Accessibility Awareness Day on the 20th May, the research reinforces that while disability inclusion is now on the business agenda, it still has a long way to go before true inclusion is achieved. It also shows that India has been central in pushing the agenda on disability inclusion globally, with 19 of the

500 companies headquartered in India (4% of The Valuable 500).

The average representation of people with disabilities amongst employees as reported by FTSE 100 companies currently stands at only 3.2%, compared to the percentage of the wider population with a disability, which sits at 18%.

The research found that only 5% of FTSE 100 companies have issued board level statements on disability as part of their leadership agenda. With digital accessibility more important than ever, almost 1 in 3 companies (29%) are failing to meet website accessibility standards, potentially missing out on a $13 trillion market, made up from the disposable income of persons with disabilities and their friends and familyi.

While the new research shows stark findings on disability inclusion across the FTSE 100, it also indicates that this is set to change, with 16 out of the 100 companies having set credible targets related to representation of people with disabilities, and more set to put these targets in place. This includes 37 companies within the FTSE 100 setting up employee resource groups, or equivalents, to specifically support people with disability.

All members of The Valuable 500 have made a public commitment to advancing disability inclusion within their organisations - whether it be employee, customer or supply chain related, positive change is already in action. Their commitments include the appointment of advisory boards or

specialists, as pledged by Sky, Lenovo and Pladis, setting up a global employee network as initiated by Allianz, increased representation, as championed by the BBC, advertising campaigns featuring people with disabilities, as launched by Kurt Geiger and Tesco, adaptive product ranges promoted by Tommy Hilfiger, PVH Corp and UGG, and employment opportunities, as pioneered by companies including Unilever, IHG and AutoTrader. Major technology and communications companies including Verizon, Adobe, GMSA and Microsoft have already taken steps to improve digital accessibility in their products and wider industries.

Since reaching the goal of 500 organisations in May 2021, The Valuable 500 has launched phase 2 of the campaign, which will see the 500 major organisations work together to make change happen for disability inclusion in business. The Valuable 500 has also received the largest ever investment into disability business inclusion, with The Nippon Foundation investing $5 million to catalyse new Valuable 500 initiatives.

As part of phase 2, 13 Iconic Leaders across The Valuable 500 will co-fund, co-build and co-test the programmes and solutions, using their industry experience to help catalyse progress for the entire community. These leaders are Allianz, BBC, Deloitte, EY, Google, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., LSEG, Omnicom, P&G, Salesforce, Sony, Sky and Verizon. The CEOs of all of these companies are committed to working together to lead by example and transform the business system for disability inclusion.

Joining these 13 iconic leaders and the community today as the 500th company, Apple has become the Iconic partner for Inclusive Design. This will help ensure that The Valuable 500 can drive the highest levels of inclusive design and share that knowledge within the community of members, and beyond.

Leveraging their Self-ID work, **Google** and **Deloitte** will be working together to carry out an internal census playbook that will enable our signatories to understand disability within their workforce and any barriers that currently exist to inclusion within the organisation. **Salesforce** and **Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.** will facilitate a jobs portal made by people with disabilities to ensure greater access to opportunities and more diverse workforces. **P&G** and **Omnicom** will conduct a brand audit, to help our signatories gain insight from disabled consumers, driving innovation opportunities. **EY** and **Sky** will be supporting the build out of a global research panel of 5,000 people with disabilities to give direct insight on the workings of the 500 companies. **Allianz** and **The London Stock Exchange Group** will contribute to The Inclusive Index Programme, to influence the indices to incorporate disability measures into their criteria. **Sony** will be supporting the increased representation for disabled people both on and off camera. **Verizon** will largely be focused on inclusive technology and equipping a pipeline of next-gen talent with accessibility skills, whilst the **BBC** is supporting Valuable Virtual - to enable the community to share their ideas virtually.

Caroline Casey, Founder of The Valuable 500, commented: "Today we have broken the leadership silence on disability inclusion and put this on the business leadership agenda. We have now built this unique community and are launching phase 2. For me, the collective activation and innovation of this community for systemic business change has been a lifetime ambition. With the scale of the Valuable 500, change is possible because now we have the scale, the perfect time and the multiplier effect of this critical mass – it's all about intention."

Paul Polman, Chairman of The Valuable 500 and former CEO of Unilever, commented: "I am delighted to be part of The Valuable 500 as we hit this important goal. Since the launch of #Valuable at One Young World in Bogota in 2017 and the inception of The Valuable 500 at Davos in 2019, the campaign's ambitious goal to fundamentally transform the global business system and fight for an equal and inclusive society has made incredible progress. I am proud to have been part of the journey from the beginning and continue to play a role as the campaign enters phase 2.

Dr. Anish Shah, Managing Director and CEO, Mahindra Group, said, "A strong workplace is the one that welcomes diversity of talent, ideas and opinions, and celebrates the uniqueness of every individual, enabling them to Rise. It is our privilege to be a part of the Valuable 500 as it focuses on putting disability on the boardroom agenda, it will help gather the momentum to unlock the hidden potential of a largely untapped community.

Mahindra Group is committed to disability inclusion and my hope for the future is to imbibe 'ability and disability diversity', building and nurturing capabilities without any bias and becoming truly inclusive."

About The Valuable 500

Valuable was launched by social entrepreneur and activist Caroline Casey at One Young World 2017 in Bogota, Colombia and the inception of The Valuable 500 was announced at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in January 2019. Today The Valuable 500 is the largest community of Global CEOs committed to disability inclusion in business.

Since its creation, The Valuable 500 has achieved its initial goal of persuading 500 multinational organisations to make a public commitment to disability inclusion in their organisation, igniting a historic global movement for a new age of diversity in business. The Valuable 500 and their global impact partner The Nippon Foundation, will be working closely with the World Economic Forum and International Disability Alliance - bringing together a leading philanthropic organisation with the most prestigious global business network and the voice of the global disability community.

By engaging with the world's most influential business leaders and brands, the network now has a combined revenue of over $8 trillion and employs a staggering 20 million people worldwide. Its members include 13 global CEOs and companies who will be spearheading the programmes and services to be offered under Phase 2 of the campaign, which will be activated through

global disability surveys, disability trend reports and an executive disability resource hub.

After reaching this important milestone, the Valuable 500 is determined to create a community that supports and empowers its 500 members to systematically transform their businesses so they include the 1.3 billion people living with disabilities worldwide, thereby unlocking their business, social and economic potential.

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

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Tags :

Valuable 500	Diversity and Inclusion	I'm in	Anish Shah