The Disability Inclusion Gold Standard℠: A Roadmap to Full Inclusion Across the Enterprise
The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) is pleased to provide this exclusive document, “The Disability Inclusion Gold StandardSM: A Roadmap to Full Inclusion Across the Enterprise,” to its members. It is a guide developed by business for business to assist a company to reach full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace, marketplace and supply chain.

In October 2011, the USBLN® Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) made a recommendation to the USBLN® Board of Directors (BOD) that a gold standard of disability inclusion was needed and proposed to lead the development of that standard. The CAB noted that while USBLN® companies are frequently recognized for many of their successful disability inclusion initiatives, no one had developed the “gold standard” of what a fully disability inclusive company should look like.

The USBLN® acknowledges that even the most disability inclusive companies can still challenge themselves to do better. Progressive companies strive to incorporate disability inclusion practices across the entire business enterprise—understanding that doing so positively impacts their bottom line. Corporate leaders understand that it is cost effective to recruit and retain the best talent regardless of disability. Senior purchasing managers recognize the economic and innovative benefits of broadening their supplier bases to include diverse supplier groups, such as USBLN® certified disability owned businesses, including service-disabled veteran owned businesses, and savvy marketing directors eagerly embrace opportunities to increase their companies’ share of established and emerging markets.

The USBLN® is a national non-profit, non-partisan business to business network promoting workplaces, marketplaces, and supply chains where people with disabilities are included. The USBLN® serves as the collective voice of over 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. Additionally, the USBLN® Disability Supplier Diversity Program® (DSDP) is the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses, including those owned by service-disabled veterans.

We trust that this document will assist your company in its disability inclusion efforts. We appreciate comments and suggestions for future revisions to the publication.

The USBLN® team would also like to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation for all those who participated in, and made possible, the development of the Gold Standard, including USBLN® Board of Directors members, the over 15 company representatives that comprise the CAB and twenty-four DSDP Founding Partners and Members.

Sincerely,

Jill Houghton
Executive Director, USBLN®
The members of the USBLN® Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) understand that even the most disability inclusive company still can do better. Companies know which organizations are the ‘go-to’ sources for the information needed for Human Resources issues and compliance with EEO and affirmative action obligations. As private sector businesses, we look to the USBLN® as the ‘go-to’ source for including disability in workforce, product marketing and supply chain policies and practices.

Many of the USBLN® companies are listed as top companies as it relates to disability inclusive policies and practices. To be ranked as a top performing company, their efforts to hire, retain and advance the careers of employees with disabilities must surpass the normal practices. These competitions measure disability inclusion on a curve and do not provide aspirational goals and targets for further advancement. The business members of the USBLN® developed this ‘Disability Inclusion Gold StandardSM’ to identify goals and provide road maps for a company to use as it strives to reach the Gold Standard.

This document also includes guidance on measurements. It is imperative that there are measurements put in place for each of the ‘Gold Standard’ areas. Measurements and reported outcomes will effectively inform a company’s leadership on its progress toward reaching the Gold Standard.

This document has been designed as an internal tool to help your company make progress toward an ultimate goal. It is neither a compliance tool nor a step-by-step cookbook, but a business-to-business manual to help guide your progress toward full inclusion of people with disabilities across the enterprise.

John Wagner
Senior Director, Medicare Solutions
Florida Blue, Florida’s BlueCross and BlueShield Plan
Chair - USBLN® Corporate Advisory Board
Executive Summary

The USBLN® Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) serves as a combination brain trust and focus group to the USBLN® Board of Directors. During its 2011 annual in-person meeting held in consort with the USBLN® Annual Conference, the CAB agreed that to achieve full disability inclusion across the business enterprise a gold standard was needed. While there are many organizations that recognize effective practices based on the organization’s published criteria, no one had established an ultimate goal or a roadmap on the steps to reach that goal. Since the USBLN® is the only non-profit business-to-business membership organization with the sole mission of full inclusion of people with disabilities across the enterprise; the USBLN® Board of Directors endorsed the development of the USBLN® Gold Standard for disability inclusion across the enterprise.

In early 2012, the CAB developed a template for the contents and a format that would both synch with accepted business practices and provide goals in basic business areas for which member companies could strive to reach. During the remaining months of 2012, the CAB selected several business areas for which gold standards would be developed. The selected business areas were grouped and seven chapters were developed. They are Accessibility, Recruiting and On-boarding, Retention and Advancement, Supply Chain, Community Engagement, Marketing, and Measuring and Reporting. Throughout this process, draft documents were shared with the members of the Board of Directors for review and comments. After each review, the comments and edits were incorporated into each chapter.

Chapter 1: Enterprise-wide Inclusive Access. When looking at accessibility, it was decided that the true measure of inclusion begins with the company’s website. Therefore, this chapter leads with the key elements and resources for accessible information and communication technology. Other key features include facility access, real estate, and life safety.

Chapter 2: Recruiting and On-boarding. To reach for the gold standard in this arena, the first step is to create partnerships with educational institutions and local disability agencies. Building the pipeline is essential and this includes mentoring and internship activities. Recruiter and hiring manager disability training and creating disability welcoming recruiting and on-boarding materials are important components. Finally, an excellent internal resource strategy is involving the company’s Business Resource Groups (BRG), Affinity Groups, or Employee Resource Groups (ERG) throughout the process.

Chapter 3: Retention and Advancement. Employee loyalty, including employees with disabilities, is attained in an environment where employees are valued and supported in developing their career paths. Connecting new employees with disabilities with Affinity/BRG/ERG groups and mentors in addition to benefits and accessible training programs and information systems contributes to a work environment where employees with disabilities know they are valued for their abilities.
Chapter 4: Supply Chain. The gold standard for full inclusion manifests itself as strategies and actions that ensure corporate processes are truly inclusive of disability-owned firms and service-disabled veteran-owned firms. This is accomplished through awareness and education programs, accessible and inclusive systems, setting goals and standards, marketing, partnerships and collaborative strategies that include working with key external organizations (e.g. Women’s Business Enterprise National Council, the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families.)

Chapter 5: Community Engagement. Targeted outreach efforts to diverse communities are best accomplished under the direction of a person who has experience and a keen interest in the disability community. Strategies include actively supporting and creating interactive partnerships with the USBLN®, regional Business Leadership Networks (BLNs) and other business and disability support organizations including contacts with college disability services offices.

Chapter 6: Marketing. Marketing plays a vital role in branding a company as one that values all its customers and the diversity of the community. The goal should be advertisements that include positive disability images and messages that brand the business as disability inclusive.

Chapter 7: Metrics and Reporting. A business in pursuit of the gold standard of disability inclusion recognizes that disability friendly policies and innovative disability programs and practices must lead to positive results that advance the company’s mission. Setting goals, measuring progress and sharing results are an important part of sustainability of inclusive efforts. Utilizing employee engagement surveys, reviewing existing employee data and processes, partnering with BRG/ERG/Affinity groups, and engaging employees with disabilities facilitate the measurement process. Reporting results demonstrates to the company’s commitment to full inclusion and encourages accountability.
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# Chapter Highlights

## 1. Enterprise-Wide Inclusive Access
- Company website is 100% accessible
- Doors are accessible / easy to pass through for all
- Inclusive design is utilized for all physical spaces
- Internal designers undergo accessibility training
- Directional signage is easily understood by all
- Disability friendly evacuation procedures are in place

## 2. Recruiting & Onboarding
- Known for disability friendly culture
- Partnerships with schools and disability agencies
- Electronic application accessible by all
- Applicants are comfortable self-identifying disability
- Interviewers undergo disability etiquette training
- New hire training includes disability training
- Accommodations provided first day of employment

## 3. Retention & Advancement
- Full-inclusion is a Company core value
- Employees are comfortable self-identifying disability
- Mentoring programs are utilized for development
- All performance reviews include inclusion
- General diversity training includes disability training
- All training is delivered in an accessible format

## 4. Supply Chain
- Goals and metrics are in place to measure spend and engagement
- Disability-owned firms are included in corporate marketing and supplier events
- Partnerships with disability-focused non-profits
- Departments / buyers are required to include disability-owned firms on contract bids and support local disability organizations
**Community Engagement**

- Outreach equitability includes disability community
- Relationships with disability organizations are fostered
- Advisory boards include people with disabilities
- Investments are made that lead to economic empowerment outcomes for people with disabilities

**Marketing**

- All marketing materials are inclusive of disability
- All marketing materials are readily available in alternate/accessible formats
- People with disabilities are represented positively
- Multi-cultural and disability inclusive review process is in place to ensure appropriate representation

**Metrics & Reporting**

- Employee engagement surveys include built-in areas for self-identification to capture demographic data
- Employees know the process for requesting accommodations and feel comfortable doing so
- A centralized accommodation budget exists
- Accommodation experts are on staff
Roadmap - Recommended Steps for Getting Started

**Conduct a Disability Inclusion Gap Analysis**
- Use USBLN® Gold Standard as a gauge
- Identify disability inclusion practices already in place
- Identify areas for improvement

**Build a Business Case**
- Define project vision and goals
- Align project with Company’s strategic goals
- Define project value

**Secure Leadership Sponsorship & Support**
- Know your audience
- Share findings from gap-analysis
- Share value-add that will be gained from project

**Establish a Project Team**
- Identify areas of expertise needed
- Ensure key departments are represented
- Establish project team expectations

**Develop a Strategic Action Plan**
- Determine and prioritize action items necessary to achieve end goal
- Establish key milestones
- Establish timeline

**Implement Action Plan**
- Periodically assess accomplishments toward objectives
- Periodically review USBLN® Gold Standard to refine goals & objectives
- Share success internally & externally

**Other Key Items to Consider:**
- Utilize USBLN® offerings to build knowledge around disability inclusion best practices: USBLN® Annual Conference, ERG Roundtable Meetings, Thought Leadership Group, Monthly Newsletters, DSDP, Career Link Mentoring Program, etc.
- Participate in local BLN affiliate activities
- Establish a disability focused employee resource / affinity group or, if a group is already in place, leverage the partnership throughout project implementation process
Chapter 1: Enterprise-wide Inclusive Access

Introduction

USBLN® companies recognize that the ‘gold standard’ of full inclusion starts with a welcoming front door whether it is a virtual front door or a physical one. Inclusive design means that everyone enters through the same “door” and entering is easy and seamless. In short, any individual with a disability can access and navigate through the applicant page on the company’s website independently. It also means that an applicant can easily find the front or visitor entrance and go through it without meeting barriers or assistance from someone else.

Once an applicant is hired, USBLN® companies recognize that inclusive physical and electronic access is a key factor for the new employee to succeed. Inclusive access goes beyond the baseline requirements of federal and state standards. Inclusive access draws upon the principles of Universal Design and focuses on what is needed to enable all job applicants, clients, contractors, customers and visitors to feel welcomed and comfortable. Inclusive access allows all employees to do their jobs and enjoy the full benefits of employment. This includes physical space, equipment, information, technology applications, and company benefits.

Information and Communication Technology Usable by All

- Business practices have followed a strategic action plan to assure that all can access ICT [http://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/BusinessStrategiesThatWork.pdf]
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (W3C) [http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php] and the federal 508 guidelines [http://www.section508.gov/] provide the starting point
- It is recognized that incorporating accessibility during the development process will be less expensive that retrofitting and redesigning after a system has been built
- Attention to color, contrast and fonts is made
- The Information Technology & Communications (ITC) team is provided with the information that products currently used by all had their origins as products for people with disabilities (e.g. Dragon Naturally Speaking) [http://www.nuance.com/talk/]
- Look at products that are designed to be usable by all (e.g. Apple products including the iPad, iPhone and iPod have accessibility features for individuals with visual, hearing and physical disabilities built in and there is nothing extra to purchase or install [http://www.apple.com/accessibility/])
- The principle of Essential Accessibility, designing customer websites that all potential customers can easily and independently use, is followed
- In addition to a totally accessible customer website, the company’s internal website is designed to be totally usable by all and includes information on the building’s accessible features
- Inclusive Design and Accessibility training or education is required for internal designers, developers of systems, and everyone who is responsible for purchasing and internal training. The Regional ADA National Network Centers provide training on inclusive design [http://adata.org/]
Elements to consider when developing policies and processes for ‘Gold Standard’ Inclusive Facility Accessibility

- Federal and state standards provide a baseline
- Signage and way finding is planned from the perspective of new users, e.g. a job applicant
- Directional signage is easily understood by all
- Benchmarking against cutting edge facilities utilizing Universal or Inclusive Design principles (e.g. Ed Roberts Campus [http://www.edrobertscampus.org/]; Chicago’s Access Living building [http://www.accessliving.org/index.php?tray=content&tid=top628&cid=57])
- Universal Design principles and case studies are highlighted on the website for the Institute for Human Centered Design [http://www.universaldesigncasestudies.org/]
- Meeting rooms are equipped with assistive listening systems that are built-in and wireless
- Interior doors, including designer glass doors, automatically open without touching
- All means of ingress and egress from buildings are accessible
- Very Large meeting rooms have at least two means of egress
- There are single user restrooms available proportionate to the size and use of the building
- Gyms have accessible equipment (e.g. Upper Body Exercisers [http://www.allterrainmedical.com/cart/product.php?productid=16433])
- Gyms have clear access to all equipment
- All furniture is adjustable and ergonomic (e.g. desks and chairs)
- Office equipment is usable by all (e.g. copy machines [http://www.abledata.com/abledata.cfm?pageid=19327&top=15234&deep=2&trail=22,14051])
- Individual office ergonomic assessments and access to tools and resources are readily available to all
- There is easy and independent access to food services, service ware, tables, menus etc. in cafeterias

Real Estate

- There is an established contact, hotline number or email in the real estate/facilities group to address just-in-time or one-off accessibility concerns from employees with disabilities
- Regular meetings are held between the real estate/facilities group and ERG
- The Real Estate group works with the Disability ERG when planning new facilities
- The Real Estate group keeps informed on new innovations through interaction with organizations such as the Institute for Human Centered Design [http://www.humancentereddesign.org/]
Life Safety

- Security badges and security procedures are easily and independently usable by all
- Well defined emergency evacuation procedures for employees with disabilities are in place and include the following:
  - A secure self-identification process that defines individual needs in emergency evacuation situations
  - Training for employees with disabilities and their workgroups regarding evacuation procedures and the proper use of, if needed, evacuation chairs
    http://www.evacusafe.net/?gclid=CLmRgMa76rACFUIN4AodZjd7tQ

USBLN® 15th Annual Conference & Expo attendees
Introduction

USBLN® companies recognize that the ‘gold standard’ of full-inclusion hiring starts with actively seeking and building partnerships with schools of all education levels and local disability agencies. It means creating teaching and learning opportunities for employees on both ends of a partnership through events such as volunteer activities and tours. It also means having a systematic process in place so that people with disabilities from partner organizations are made aware of new position openings and so that disability training is provided to all new hire employees. Additionally, it means having a company brand image that is known for its disability friendly culture, one where applicants with disabilities are comfortable ‘self-identifying’ that they are people with disabilities.

Preparing the Pipeline

- More robust academics are made available for students with disabilities that help them to prepare for and be competitive in the labor market
- Math and English skills are achieved at the university level
- Students with disabilities are included at a higher rate in STEM studies
- USBLN® Companies:
  - work with elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools to develop and participate in programs that stimulate interest in the STEM field [link]
  - host events in collaboration with school districts, for their students with disabilities, and invite other companies to participate in an interactive panel of people with disabilities who are in a wide range of positions (i.e. administrative, customer service, warehouse, professional services, etc.) [link]
  - encourage colleges to coordinate communications between their career services, academic department, and disability services offices to ensure robust collaboration so that students with disabilities are included in internship and recruiting opportunities and also to ensure that there is a single office point of contact for employers [link]
  - impress upon academic and career development agencies that a generic resume is inadequate; employers are looking for specific skills and experiences in a resume; and,
  - support community programs that reach back to younger students (recommend starting at grades 5-7)
- Companies include all of their types of positions when looking for opportunities for career development for youth (i.e. mentoring, shadowing, summer jobs, internships, company tours)
- Companies advocate for innovative programs and initiatives such as a national internship program, diversity internship programs which include students with disabilities, and programs that stimulate interest in the STEM fields such as the DO-IT program http://www.washington.edu/doit/ and MESA http://mesa.ucop.edu/

**Recruitment**

- Recruitment that yields long term success is built on relationships and relationship building should start with a company’s engagement in mentoring programs as a way to build relationships, recruit interns and feed the pipeline http://www.usbln.org/pdf-docs/USBLN_Guide_to_Business_Branded_Mentoring.pdf; http://www.aapd.com/what-we-do/employment/disability-mentoring-day/
- Internship programs pro-actively include interns with disabilities
- Recruiters develop resources for sourcing job candidates with disabilities in all age groups and with all skills levels; they do not confine their efforts in the disability space to college and university students
- Diversity / disability recruiting is completely integrated in all recruiting practices http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/20100727.pdf
- Internal and external recruiting training has a strong disability component
- Recruitment materials include people with disabilities
- All recruiters are encouraged to participate in disability employment events and initiatives; recruiters of all disciplines are confident and capable in recruitment of people with disabilities
- Recruiters and hiring managers undergo training that reinforces the messaging around the business case for disability employment
- Disability inclusion is integrated as a priority in every department
- The company has recruiters with disabilities
- The company’s website includes a seamless, accessible employment application http://askearn.org/?overlay=/refdesk/Inclusive_Workplaces/Web_Accessibility
- Hiring managers who want to hire from specific colleges and universities for specific degrees are presented with a diverse slate of candidates which includes at least one (1) qualified job candidate with a disability from those institutions http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/rypwd.htm#.UMk2hoOun74
- Recruiters keep managers informed about sourcing opportunities to recruit job candidates with disabilities
- There is an integrated recruiting process that uses all tools including social media to network in the disability space
Hiring

- Interview training for all hiring managers includes disability training.
- Hiring managers have access to just-in-time disability training.
- Managers work closely with Employee Resource Groups and utilize resource materials.

Onboarding

- The “welcome” starts with the onboarding process; all new employees receive a welcome letter from the Chief Diversity Officer or the Disability Employee Resource Group (ERG) leader with information about resources, including ERG information.
- Everything is in place before the new employee arrives so the employee with a disability starts the job in the same way as employees without disabilities.
  [http://askearn.org/?overlay=/refdesk/Inclusive_Workplaces/Work_Accessibility](http://askearn.org/?overlay=/refdesk/Inclusive_Workplaces/Work_Accessibility)
- Newly hired employees engage with all relative departments prior to their first day on the job so that any needed items/products can be obtained and are ready for the first day.
  - Example: PepsiCo Case Study: [http://www.askearn.org/success-PepsiCo.cfm](http://www.askearn.org/success-PepsiCo.cfm)
- Funding for what all employees with and without disabilities need to do the job is accessible and is acquired and paid for according to a centralized process.
  - Example: Purchases for any employee up to X dollars are paid from the department budget and purchases over X dollars are paid for from the company budget.
- New employee orientation includes education on valuing and demonstrating mutual respect with all demographic groups in the company as a non-negotiable aspect of employment.
  - Examples provided should include people for a variety of backgrounds (i.e. people with disabilities, LGBT, Muslim).
- Budgets include a standard line item for funding for interpreters, captioning, audio description, ramps, and other accessibility related accommodations.

Benefits

- Just-in-time information and resources on family-life related issues (i.e. care giving) are made available to all employees.
  [http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/health-plans/cobra.htm#.UMk8g4Oun74](http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/health-plans/cobra.htm#.UMk8g4Oun74)

Supply Chain

- Every new item (i.e. technology, etc.) that is purchased must be usable by all.
- Easy to activate Open Captioning (i.e. with Skype and Video Conferencing) is a required component of all RFPs and procurement contracts.
Chapter 3: Retention & Advancement

Introduction

USBLN® companies recognize that the ‘gold standard’ of full-inclusion retention practices is not simply policy driven but rather a multi-dimensional part of a company’s every day culture that is embedded in their entire value chain. It means full-inclusion is a core value of the company and is embraced by all leadership. It also means the company as a whole is known for its disability friendly culture, one where people with disabilities are comfortable ‘self-identifying’ their disability. General diversity training includes disability training and is available to and accessible by all employees at all levels in a just-in-time format. Overall, the embracement of full-inclusion is shared through every day actions and behaviors, including internal and external marketing and communication measures.

Retention

- The culture of the company is opening and welcoming http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/20100727.pdf
- Employee Resource Groups are utilized for awareness, engagement, and retention strategies http://askearn.org/?overlay=/refdesk/Diversity_Goals/Retention
- Employee Resource Groups are utilized to create shared value partnerships in the community, which are mutually beneficial to the community group and the company
- Internal marketing enables employees to understand what the company’s mission and values are, why it is a great place to work, and that inclusion is a “shared responsibility” of all associates http://askearn.org/refdesk/Diversity_Goals/Engagement
- The early days of an individual's employment are leveraged to connect the employee with potential mentors and a peer group
- Benefits reflect the company’s value of their employees and enable them to develop as high-performers (i.e. performance-based compensation, flexible working environment including option to work remotely with appropriate tools provided, etc.)
- Performance appraisals are managed and utilized as a yearlong process that is accessible and reinforces diversity and inclusion

Career Advancement

- All job openings are posted so they are accessible to all and reach all employees
- Mentoring programs are in place that not only are structured to provide employees with disabilities with business-related mentoring but provide employees without disabilities mentoring on disability by employees with disabilities http://askearn.org/refdesk/Supervision_Management/Mentoring
- Leaders and potential leaders are identified through a corporate-wide talent management process
Staff Training

- Engagement is recognized as a key component to staff diversity training; engagement opportunities are provided and staff is allotted the time necessary to embrace such opportunities.

- Training modules which include diverse presentation styles (such as audio, visual, interactive, etc.) are utilized for trainings to recognize the differences in peoples’ learning styles. [http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/](http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/)

- Accessibility is a fundamental component for all trainings in order to ensure that all participants feel included, respected, and valued.

- Positive company stories showcasing company and personal benefits from engagement activities are highlighted as the company recognizes that these real experience-based stories enable people to internalize the lessons taught.

- Relevant and accessible training is provided to help improve skill sets and is recognized as critical to keeping employees engaged.

- Management recognizes that stagnation leads to dissatisfaction with the job and both in-house and external trainings.


- Tip sheets on disability are posted on the Company Intranet and are included in management diversity / disability related trainings [http://askearn.org/?overlay=/refdesk/Inclusive_Workplaces/Etiquette/People_First_Language](http://askearn.org/?overlay=/refdesk/Inclusive_Workplaces/Etiquette/People_First_Language).

- Management is provided the flexibility to decide which disability training modules to focus on [http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ChangingAttitudes.htm#.UMlBVYOun74](http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ChangingAttitudes.htm#.UMlBVYOun74).

- Employees are encouraged to volunteer in the community with disability organizations and act as community ambassadors facilitating further dialogue with the company as appropriate.
Chapter 4: Supply Chain

Introduction

In the Supply Chain, the gold standard for full inclusion manifests itself as strategies and actions that ensure corporate processes are inclusive and provide access to all suppliers who can provide value to the company’s procurement functions regardless of the owner’s disability and are truly inclusive of disability-owned firms and service-disabled veteran-owned firms. Additionally, companies collaborate with internal groups such as Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). The business case for supplier inclusion should specifically reference disability and service-disabled veteran owned firms as contributing to stronger, more flexible supply chains and more vibrant and economically viable suppliers and communities. Additionally, D&I organizations should play a major role in the inclusion of disability-owned firms as another critical building block that strengthens corporate Supply Chains and are reflective of the communities in which its employees reside.

Awareness & Education

- Supplier Diversity includes disability as one of the identified diverse groups for inclusion efforts http://www.usbln.org/programs.html
- Champion commitment to include disability-owned businesses and service disabled veteran owned businesses in supplier diversity programs with clients, prime suppliers and peers
- A business case that leverages the power of supplier diversity, supply chain, diversity & inclusion to support disability and disability business inclusion
- The business case focuses on the importance of including ‘ALL’ suppliers who can provide value-add to the Supply Chain with the procurement process. The true issue is about overcoming ‘Exclusion!”
- Policy statements and other key documents reference disability and service-disabled veteran supports
- Firms are required or encouraged to become certified suppliers
- Process to provide information and education to disability business community
- Process to provide information to internal users and internal groups regarding disability suppliers including employee on-boarding programs
- Disability business inclusion is addressed within supplier diversity programs as both first and second tier components

Accessible and Inclusive Systems

- Web content reflects corporate commitment to disability suppliers
- USBLN® and its Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE®) certification as required for disability-owned firms is referenced
- Supplier registration and sourcing systems include disability-owned classification and enable buyers to source DOBE®’s for bidding purposes
- Other corporate, customer and supplier systems and websites are encouraged to reference disability-owned firms: http://us.smetoolkit.org/us/en
Metrics & Accountability

- Accountability is established by setting performance goals at all employee levels, qualitative and quantitative, that measure progress in awareness, understanding and efforts to achieve definitive results where appropriate.
- Buyers are required to include disability-owned firms and support local support organizations (i.e. BLNs).
- Corporate goals are set regarding disability-owned firms utilization.
- Corporate spend goals and other metrics are set to track progress in the disability supplier space that are similar to those for other diverse groups.

Marketing & Engagement

- Marketing materials and advertising reference disability-owned firms.
- Participation in in-reach and outreach events where disability and service disabled veteran owned firms can be profiled and relationships built.
- Mechanism in place that allows DOBE®’s to communicate with Supplier Diversity professionals regarding bid opportunities or feedback with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the DOBE® to solicit both bid opportunities and request feedback.
- Inclusion of disability-owned firms in corporate events, training or other relationship building venues where appropriate.
- Data is captured and shared to support internal branding and marketing initiatives directed at this important community.
- Alliances are promoted between supplier diversity, supply chain, D&I and HR internal groups in regard to the disability community.
- Linkages are provided between supplier diversity and company’s disability network group utilizing the network group members to identify, mentor and engage with disability owned businesses.
- Success stories of disability suppliers based on their value/benefit to the corporation/agency are illustrated.

Disability Supplier Diversity Program® (DSDP)
Business Exchange Matchmakers meeting at the USBLN® 15th Annual Conference
Partnerships and Collaboration

- Key organizations are identified that can assist in achieving access and development of disability-owned firms (i.e. USBLN®)
- Participation on non-profit boards and committees focused on access and development for disability entrepreneurs and service-disabled veteran-owned firms
- Company joins local BLN and becomes involved in its efforts to build stronger disability communities
- Financial support is provided to enable these support organizations to achieve and sustain goals
- Other internal groups or key funders (Foundations/Marketing) are identified who may be willing to support projects and infrastructure needs of partner organizations
Introduction

USBLN® companies recognize that the ‘gold standard’ of a fully-inclusive community engagement and public image starts with the acknowledgement that people with disabilities and their families and friends are a large part of the communities in which they live and work. There is respect for the presence of people with disabilities, as well as their families and friends, and the way in which they are represented in company communications, and activities can influence the way in which consumers with disabilities and their families pay attention to and perceive a company. Fostering partnerships with the disability community internally and externally offers valuable insights to integrating the business case and are a necessary precursor to building and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships, affecting changing attitudes around stigma and marginalization, and improving sales and service metrics.

Community & Public Relations

- Community outreach equitably includes the disability community. Not only does the company go out into the community, but the community is brought into the company. This promotes a greater understanding of the company’s mission, business practices and employment needs while providing the opportunity to gain advice on strategies, communications, products and services that effectively reach the disability community. [http://www.walgreens.com/marketing/about/community/default.jsp](http://www.walgreens.com/marketing/about/community/default.jsp)
- A designated person with disability community expertise is all or partially responsible for outreach activities and serves as an internal resource and source of information and referrals to external subject matter experts and providers
- Community relations and public relations associates foster mutually beneficial relationships with national and local disability organizations such as actively participating in the USBLN® and local BLNs, supporting AAPD’s Internship Program and their Disability Mentoring Day activities, and linking with local Centers for Independent Living [http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html](http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html)
- Outreach efforts include targeting college and university career and disabled student service centers to ensure that students with disabilities are invited to campus recruiting events and are included in interviews for internships and full-time openings
- In addition to traditional philanthropic giving such as sponsored tables at events, investments of both time and money are made that lead to measurable economic empowerment outcomes for individuals with disabilities
- Community advisory boards, when formed by the company, include members of the disability community
- Standards of conduct and expectations are clearly communicated to external partners such as service providers
In general, "not about us without us" construct is embraced, and people with disabilities are visible in public/customer facing roles. The company does not rely solely on able-bodied individuals for knowledge about inclusion of people with disabilities any more than they would people of color, women, or the LGBT communities.
Introduction

USBLN® companies recognize that the ‘gold standard’ of a marketing plan that captures every aspect of a diverse community, including the disability community, starts with the acknowledgement that consumers with disabilities represent a strong market segment. There is understanding and respect for the people with disabilities, as well as their families and friends, and the way in which they are represented in company communications, marketing, promotions and customer service. The way in which consumers with disabilities are portrayed in all marketing initiatives captures the attention of people with disabilities and their personal and professional circles. Fostering partnerships with the disability community internally and externally offers valuable insights to integrating positive disability images and messages in all company communications resulting in increased sales and service metrics.

Marketing

- The company leadership communicates that all external marketing materials are to be inclusive of disability
  
  http://www.disability-marketing.com/profiles/nordstrom.php4

- All marketing materials can be readily made available in alternate/accessible formats upon request in a reasonable timeframe

- Appropriate semantics, themes and images are used to represent people with disabilities in a positive light

- Balanced visuals and content are used to ensure that both individuals with apparent and non-apparent disabilities are represented

- A multi-culturally and disability inclusive review process is in place to ensure that marketing is appropriately representative http://disability-marketing.com/profiles/

- Input and collaboration is encouraged from consumers with disabilities, disability focused organization and/or the company’s disability-focused employee resource/affinity group (ERG) when developing targeted marketing strategies and product development. These actions help ensure that people with disabilities are depicted in a positive light. A great example is Pepsi’s Super Bowl commercial “Bob’s House” which was pitched by Pepsi’s disability ERG
  
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffrq6cUoE5A
Customer Service

- Training is recognized as key to ensuring excellent customer-facing interactions, including customers with disabilities [http://www.ada.gov/reachingout/intro1.htm](http://www.ada.gov/reachingout/intro1.htm)
  - It is developed to ensure a consistent experience across all customer service interface points
  - It is mandatory and integrated into standard training content, and repeated on a periodic basis for all those who interact with the public [http://www.wiawebcourse.org/](http://www.wiawebcourse.org/)
  - It includes content such as people first language training, disability etiquette, universal/inclusive design, assistive technologies and architectural/facilities accessibility, as appropriate
  - It incorporates multiple communication methods to accommodate different learning styles
  - Training documents and videos show various scenarios and case studies
  - A process is in place to address customer service complaints and accolades in a timely manner and the information is utilized to inform case studies and changes in practice

Product/Service Development

- The company develops its products and services to appeal to and to be used by a broad audience, including individuals with disabilities
- Accessibility and universal design are integral components in the design phase [http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/projserv_ps/projects/pscsud.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/projserv_ps/projects/pscsud.htm)
- Employees with disabilities are involved in the design and development of products and services
- Feedback on product and service offerings is sought on an ongoing basis from internal employee resources groups and from external national/local community organizations and advocacy groups
- The company advocates for and champions widespread accessibility and universal design considerations within their industry
Introduction

USBLN® companies recognize that the ‘gold standard’ of measuring and reporting progress on full inclusion not only confirms the existence of programs, structures and processes but measures their effectiveness in building an inclusive workplace. It utilizes a comprehensive review of employee engagement through the deployment of internal and external survey instruments, an assessment of existing and readily available company data and processes, and the polling of internal, disability-focused employee resource/affinity groups (ERGs). Reporting practices are undertaken to reinforce the importance of the results and advance the strategies for ongoing improvement in areas of investment.

Measurements

- Utilize existing employee engagement surveys with built-in areas for self-identification to capture demographic data. Examples are:
  1. Mercer
     a. A user friendly, desk-top tool with 100+ questions
        http://www.mercer.com/pages/1418255
  2. Gallup
     a. A macro-level indicator with 13 questions
        http://www.gallup.com/strategicconsulting/employeeengagement.aspx?ref=1
  3. Great Places to Work Survey
     http://www.greatplacetowork.com/our-services/assess-your-organization
     a. 54 dimensions reviewed
     b. 360 pages of comments
     c. Common themes can be used for conversations with leaders
     d. Validates things that might already been known that needs to be modified

- Review of existing and readily available company data and processes such as:
  1. On-boarding Process
     a. There is an orientation plan to ensure employees with disabilities are prepared for their new job and work group
     b. The employee’s work group and leadership team are prepared with adequate disability related education
  2. Use of HR Services
     a. Employees with disabilities feel comfortable in approaching HR and/or their manager with questions and do so as needed without reservation
     b. HR measures the attrition and retention rate of employees with disabilities
3. Employee Training & Development
   a. Employees are given opportunities to schedule time away to develop and/or improve their skills in order to remain competitive with contemporary and emerging job requirements in their field of interest
   b. Employees with disabilities attend training at the same rate as other employees
   c. The Training & Development Department is educated on disability accommodations and has set procedures in place for employees to request and efficiently receive accommodations on a timely basis

4. Employee Volunteerism Opportunities
   a. The extent to which employees volunteer with disability focused organizations is recognized and appreciated similar to other demographic groups
   b. Employees with disabilities are encouraged to volunteer and this information is tracked

5. Accommodation Trends
   a. Employees readily know the process for making accommodation requests and are comfortable in asking for accommodations
   b. If the disability is acquired while employed, employees are comfortable asking for an accommodation and are comfortable updating their personal profile to self-identify as a person with a disability. The process is well communicated and integrated into how requests are made for other benefits, not as something wholly separate and unusual.
   c. Accommodation requests are tracked and consistent with expected norms
   d. There is a centralized accommodations budget
   e. There are knowledgeable staff members who are accommodation experts. They regularly engage in educating leadership and are readily available as needed.

- Partner with an internal disability-focused ERG to appropriately engage membership in providing feedback on company practices and their effectiveness in fostering an inclusive workplace
- Results are assessed in accordance with baseline levels of inclusion and objectives:
  - Level 1 – Getting Started (Compliance)
  - Level 2 – Advanced Inclusion (Company Actions in Line with Values and Standards)
  - Level 3 – Gold Standard – (Fully Inclusive - People with Disabilities Valued in the Marketplace and Labor Market)

Engagement

- Employees with disabilities feel comfortable in self-identifying when responding to engagement surveys and providing their feedback on their experiences in the workplace. They experience that their responses are valued by all levels within the organization and that their suggestions and needs will be addressed. They receive ongoing communications that reinforce that actions are being taken.
Reporting

- Reports are disseminated as appropriate with efforts for ongoing process improvements clearly defined with established timelines consistent with other demographic groups and dimensions of diversity practices, outcome measurement and accountability.

Attendees at the USBLN® 15th Annual Conference
Appendices

Appendix I

Resources

Benefits
Health Plans & Benefits

Career Advancement
Mentoring

Community Relations
Walgreens Example of Including Disability on Community Affairs Web-Page
Directory of Community Centers for Independent Living

Customer Service
Reaching Out to Customers with Disabilities Training Package
At Your Service: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities Web-Based Training

Facility Access
Ed Roberts Campus – the Ultimate in Accessible Design
Access Living – Award Winning Universal Design Building
Universal Design Case Study
Accessible Equipment for Your Company Gym
Accessible Office Copy Machine

Hiring
Disability Training
Leveraging Disability Resource Groups

Information & Communication Technology
Business Strategies That Work
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
Federal EIT Requirements
Dragon Voice Dictation Products
Apple Accessibility Information
ADA National Network
Life Safety
Emergency Evacuation Equipment

Marketing
Nordstrom Example of Including Disability in Customer Marketing
Profiles in Company Marketing Inclusive of People with Disabilities
Pepsi’s Super Bowl Commercial “Bob’s House”

Measuring Success
Mercer’s Survey Tool
Gallup Employee Engagement Tool
Great Places to Work Research

On-Boarding
Ensuring Workplace Accessibility
Successful on-boarding Case Study

Preparing the Pipeline
Guideposts for Successfully Preparing Youth for Careers
Fact Sheet on Work Experiences
University of Washington’s STEM Program
California Colleges & Universities STEM Program
Disability Mentoring Day
Business Branded Internships
Business Branded Mentoring

Product/Service Development
Case Studies on Universally Designed Consumer Products

Real Estate
Information for a Company’s Real Estate Group

Recruiting
Recruiting College Students and Recent Graduates
Building an Inclusive Workforce
Guide and Resources for an Accessible Website
Hiring Strategy for Recruiting Young People with Disabilities
Retention
Retaining and Advancing Employees
Retention: Advantages & Strategies
Employee Engagement

Sourcing Resources
Ability Links
Arc
Bender Consulting Services, Inc.
Career Gateway
Career One-Stops
Disaboom Jobs
EARN
Goodwill
Job Access
National Business & Disability Council
NTID Center on Employment (NCE)
RecruitABILITY
Recruiting Job Candidates who are Deaf
The Net
TransCen
Veterans Job Bank

Staff Training
Disability Awareness Resources
Disability Etiquette
Language Tips
Changing Attitudes

Supply Chain
Purchasing Products Designed for Everyone
Information on Open Captioning

Supplier Diversity
Resources Website for Small & Minority Owned Businesses
Disability Supplier Diversity Program
Corporate Consortium for Sharing Practices
Technology
Microsoft Accessibility Products
Database of Accessible Technology
Apple’s Accessible Technology
Accessible Technology on Blindness
Accessible Technology on Deafness
Appendix 2

2012 Board of Directors Membership List

Voting Members

Ann Andreosatos
Human Resources
New Chapter, Inc

Martha C. Artiles
Partner
C5 Consulting LLC

Beth Butler
Manager, Employee Relations Central Services Team
Lowe’s Companies, Inc

Deborah Dagit, Vice-Chair
President
Deb Dagit Diversity LLC

Kevin Foster
Director, Human Resources
Motorola Solutions Inc.

Marthalee Galeota
Program Manager, Accessibility
Starbucks

Lori Golden
Associate Director, Inclusiveness;
AccessAbilities Leader | Americas People Team
Ernst & Young, LLP

Michelle Maybaum
Sr. Director, Employee Relations &
Lead Accommodation Specialist
QUALCOMM, Inc

Susan Palmer Mazrui
Director, Global Public Policy
AT&T Services Inc.

Debra Ruh, Secretary/Treasurer
CEO and Founder
Ruh Global
Deb Russell, Chair
Diversity and Inclusion
Walgreens

Frances West
Worldwide Director, IBM Human Ability and Accessibility Center
IBM

Keith P. Wiedenkeller, SPHR
SVP & Chief People Officer
AMC Entertainment Inc.

Non-Voting Officio Members

John Wagner
Senior Director of Product Management
BlueCross and BlueShield of Florida
Corporate Advisory Board Representative

Christopher Oakley
President of the First Coast Business Leadership Network (FCBLN)
Vice President & Regional Executive, Jacksonville Branch, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
Affiliate Representative

Daman Wandke
Program Analyst (508)
Federal Housing Finance Agency
Student Advisory Council Representative
Appendix 3

Corporate Advisory Board Membership List

Appointed Members

Mr. James E. Carter  
Quality Manager  
3M Company

Ms. Crosby Cromwell  
Senior Manager  
Walmart Foundation

Ms. Colleen Fukui-Sketchley  
Corporate Center Diversity Affairs Director  
Nordstrom, Inc.

Mr. James ‘Jim’ Hammond  
Director  
Deloitte

Mr. Gary Harrison-Ducros, MBA, JD  
Vice President, Labor Relations  
FRITO-LAY, NORTH

Ms. Janice Little  
Senior Director, Diversity & Inclusion  
McKesson Corporation

Ms. Lee Ann Macerelli, PMP  
Senior Program Manager, Technical Operations Business Services  
Lead of APLAWD, AOL People Living and Working with Disabilities  
AOL

Ms. Joan M. McGovern  
Vice President  
JPMorgan Chase

Ms. Tammie McNaughton  
Senior HR Consultant  
HR Success Strategies

Ms. Katy Jo Meyer  
Senior Global Diversity & Inclusion Manager  
Microsoft Corporation

Ms. Felicia M. Nurmsen  
National Project Ability Leader  
Manpower
Ms. Rita Taylor-Nash, SPHR  
Vice President, Enterprise Diversity & Inclusion Services  
Health Care Service Corporation

Ms. Marie A. Trottier  
Consultant

Ms. Kimberly Vanderland  
President  
Space Matters Consulting, LLC

Mr. Bob Vetere  
Operation IMPACT Champion, Electronics Systems Sector  
Human Resources, Diversity/EEO  
Northrop Grumman

Mr. John Wagner (CAB Chair)  
Segment Director, Senior Markets  
BlueCross and BlueShield of Florida

Mr. Michael E. Wagner  
Consultant

Richard Brian Weitzman, M.D.  
Drug Safety & Epidemiology  
Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation

Corporate Alternates & Ex-Officio Members

Mr. Nate Finch  
Senior  
Barney School of Business  
University of Hartford  
Student Advisory Council Representative

Mr. Adrian Hawkins  
CapABLE ERG Co-Chair  
Novartis

Mr. Josh Isgur  
Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager  
Microsoft Corporation

Ms. R. Virginia “Ronnette” Smith  
Senior Manager, Corporate Affairs  
Issue Management & Strategic Outreach  
Walmart

Ms. Alicia M. Wallace, MBA  
Director, EEO/Disability Outreach  
Human Resources  
WellPoint
Appendix 4

Photo Credits

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Cover photo of two gentlemen talking and photo of two certified Disability-owned Business Enterprises (DOBE®s) on page 20 by Bruce Powell Photography.

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