



2013 USBLN® 16th Annual Conference & Expo Success in Los Angeles, California

For Immediate Release
October 4, 2013

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WASHINGTON, DC (October 4, 2013) – The 16th Annual US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) Annual Conference & Expo held in Los Angeles, CA on September 30-October 3 was a resounding success. The event attracted over 500 corporate, government, disability-owned businesses and BLN affiliates attending the conference at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott hotel. The organization is pleased to announce that over 250 registrants were first time conference attendees, and the event featured keynote addresses by the Chairmen of the Board, Marriott Foundation, **Richard E. Marriott** and **Preetly Kumar**, CEO of Deque Systems.

“The USBLN® is a trusted advisor and the leading voice of business to business, government and the media regarding disability inclusion across the enterprise. We were happy to provide our valued attendees with unique opportunities to connect, network, share and learn,” stated **Jill Houghton**, Executive Director of the USBLN®. “This conference is vital to our mission to ensure that people with disabilities are fully included and play an integral role in the workplace, supply chain and marketplace. Participants learned innovative disability employment practices; key information on including certified disability-owned businesses in their supply chains; as well as dynamic disability marketing strategies from leaders in business and disability employment practice.”

The 2013 USBLN® 16th Annual Conference & Expo, “**Lights, Camera, Access: Spotlight on Disability Inclusive Diversity**” is the preeminent national business to business event that focuses on disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. An amazing line-up of conference partners, stakeholders, exhibitors and supporters contributed to the success of the conference. The program was directed by the 2013 Annual Conference Educational Track Chairs: Workplace Co-Chairs - **Michael Johnson**, Director, Diversity & Inclusion, McKesson Corporation; and **Robert (Bob) J. Vetere**, Senior Workplace Accommodation Specialist, Global Corporate Responsibility, Northrop Grumman Corporation; Supply Chain Co-Chairs - **Anthony (Tony) Billinger**, Director, Supplier Diversity, OfficeMax; and **Darlene Fuller**, Senior Director, Supplier Diversity, Sodexo; and Marketplace Co-Chairs - **Jenny Lay-Flurrie**, Senior Director, Accessibility, Customer Partner Advocacy (CPA), Microsoft; and **Rhea C. Norwood**, MHCS, MarketPlace Director of Diversity Inclusion, Lowe’s Companies Inc.. Their dedication to the event directly supports the best practices in the employment, advancement and retention of people with disabilities.

The 2013 USBLN® 16th Annual Conference & Expo highlights included:

- Over 35 interactive educational sessions were led by private sector business experts including CEOs at Fortune 500 companies, employers on *DiversityInc's* 2013 Top 50 List, and representatives from disability employment programs such as EARN, JAN, Ticket to Work, and Vocational Rehabilitation;
- The Opening Session keynote address by **Jorge Pérez Izquierdo**, Senior Vice President, Manpower North America, along with an announcement of the Strategic Alliance between the USBLN® and the National Industry Liaison Group (NILG);
- Attendees enjoyed enhanced networking, industry sector roundtables, and interactive programming plus opportunities to meet USBLN® certified Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE®s);
- Federal contractors and subcontractors learned practical strategies to satisfy Section 503 Regulations compliance requirements inspired through replicable, model practices from the nation's leading disability expert along with colleagues in the business community;

- Highly-successful industry leaders in the Information Technology, Communications Technology, Health Care, Entertainment, and Hospitality sectors shared the business case for developing and marketing products and services to the disability community through innovation, advertising and dynamic strategies;
- A Veterans Community Service Project where attendees packaged personal care products for returning and homeless veterans at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, West LA Healthcare Center
- The “Power of Partnerships” Expo where exhibitors dedicated to disability inclusion showcased their products, services, and technology to assist in the development of strategies for success across workplaces, supply chains and marketplaces;
- The 2013 USBLN[®] Annual Leadership Awards Dinner celebrating the Leadership Award recipients that embody the highest ethical standards and disability inclusion values led by Master of Ceremonies, **Keith Wiedenkeller**, SPHR, Senior Vice President & Chief People Officer, AMC Entertainment, Inc. and USBLN[®] Chair with guest speaker, **Tobias Forrest**, Actor, Comedian and Musician; and
- A powerful Closing Session featuring the vivacious **Stephani Victor**, Paralympic Gold Medalist, Motivational Speaker and World Champion, followed by the announcement of the USBLN[®] certified Disability-Owned Business Enterprise "2013 Entrepreneurial Idol" winner **Cindy Ulven**, President/CEO, Accelerated Engraving & Signage, LLC.

Save the Date for the 2014 USBLN[®] Annual Conference & Expo

Mark your calendar now for the 17th Annual USBLN[®] Conference & Expo to be held in Orlando, Florida on **September 29– October 2, 2014** at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld hotel. This event will kick-off National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and event details will be made available at: www.usblnannualconference.org.

About the US Business Leadership Network[®] (USBLN[®])

The US Business Leadership Network[®] (USBLN[®]) is a national non-profit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. 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 businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. www.usbln.org

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