



Diverse abilities

Leveraging all abilities to build high-performing organizations

EY

Building a better working world



Cover page: Three EY people working together, one uses a wheelchair
Inside cover: Detail of a wheelchair

From disabilities to diverse abilities

Including people of differing abilities is part of the DNA of our organization. One of our founders, Arthur Young, was deaf and had low vision. Although he was originally trained as a lawyer, his disabilities made it difficult to practice in the courtroom. In response, he turned to the new field of accounting where he could leverage his skills and training in alternate ways. He became an entrepreneur and innovator, not despite his disabilities, but because of them. Inspired by this, we at EY have been working to create an environment where talented people of all abilities can feel comfortable and do their best work.

We believe people are “effectively” disabled by two things: the environment and people’s perceptions. Here at EY, we work hard to build an enabling environment and a respectful, inclusive culture so no person is effectively disabled. For that reason, we like to say that we don’t employ a single person with disabilities. Instead, around the world we have 200,000 people, each of whom has diverse abilities.

People with disabilities are the fastest-growing minority group in America today; there is a one-in-five chance that any one of us could develop a disability before we retire. This is an issue for all companies, and there is so much more we can collectively do to create work environments where everyone can leverage their full talents.

Our first EY Diverse Abilities Leadership Summit, held in New York in December 2014 on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, was a milestone event for us. It gave us the opportunity to convene leading companies and their leaders to discuss new thinking and practices that will help us leverage diverse abilities to create high-performing organizations.

In the pages that follow, we’ve captured some of the key ideas and themes that emerged from the summit. You’ll find that we use the term “disabilities” in these pages, as that is the most widely recognized term globally, though here at EY, we typically refer to “diverse abilities.” We hope that sharing these insights broadly will help other organizations to create opportunities for people of all abilities. By doing so, we will truly deliver on our EY mission of helping to build a better, and more inclusive, working world.



Steve Howe
Americas Managing Partner



Karyn Twaronite
Partner, Global Diversity & Inclusiveness Officer

10% of people in the world have a disability:
650 million worldwide

Source: Disabled World

Equal to the population of the United States, Brazil and Japan combined.



71% of disabilities are

NON-VISIBLE

Source: Deb Dagit, The Untapped Power of a Diverse Workplace



There are approximately **470 million** people of working age with a disability.

Source: International Labour Organization



In industrialized countries, between **50% and 70% of persons** with disabilities of working age are unemployed.

Source: United Nations Enable, Disability and Employment



Among persons with disabilities, **men are almost twice as** likely to have jobs as women.

Source: International Labour Organization



\$3 trillion worldwide—the income controlled by people with disabilities. That's equivalent to the GDP of Brazil.

Source: Deb Dagit, The Untapped Power of a Diverse Workplace



In the US, **people with disabilities have \$175 billion in discretionary spending power**, which is four times the spending power of tweens (8- to 14-year-olds).

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division

Advancing inclusion: a market-driven issue

Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy, US Department of Labor, is the creator of regulations and policy to promote employment of those with disabilities in the US. Her mission: improve the number and quality of job opportunities for those with disabilities in the US labor force.

We want inclusiveness to be baked in—not layered on.

— Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor (US)

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy Kathy Martinez

As someone born blind, Kathy knows firsthand that disability is a natural part of life and is a natural part of the diversity of the workforce. Inclusion should be part of the internal culture. “What we’re saying is, we want inclusiveness to be baked in—not layered on.”

The US workforce will increasingly consist of the post-ADA generation, a generation of people with disabilities who are accustomed to interacting with their peers and who have grown up being mainstreamed in school. “They’re expecting to work [when they become adults],” she says. “And the interesting thing is their peers are expecting them to work—and all of this feeds nicely into the work reality of today.”

A diverse talent pool, lower turnover, more openness about disclosing disability and an atmosphere that encourages bringing your “full self” to work are all good business practices. It couldn’t come at a better time for corporate America. “We are at a tipping point,” she says.

“Our aging Baby Boomers are wrestling with getting older. Companies will have to make accommodations, like more ergonomic desks and chairs,

vision-friendly computer screens and lighting for [people with] low-vision, as well as easier access for getting in and out of buildings.” Plus, Millennials are seen as being innately more inclusive and accepting than the Baby Boomers, who grew up in a time when people with disabilities were often viewed as outliers.

“So what’s started out as a policy-driven issue has now become a market-driven issue, or really a market-driven imperative,” says Kathy. “People with disabilities represent a huge market and, with any customer segment, one of the best ways to tap into it is to ensure that it’s represented in our workforce—in our policies and, practices, in our advertising, everywhere.”

Disabilities inclusion has become a matter of culture. That’s why Kathy feels it’s important to look to those who have been leading in this space long before ADA updates went into effect. “We need to create an environment in which people feel safe to self-identify as a person with a disability,” she says. “We all need to create an environment in which we can succeed.”

Creating a productive and comfortable work environment

There are ways in which we can all create a productive and comfortable work environment for people of differing abilities. Below are some tips, including those learned on the job by Karyn Twaronite, EY's Global Diversity & Inclusiveness Officer, who became more sensitized after someone who is hard of hearing joined her team. "Minor adjustments make for a huge benefit," she finds.

Holding inclusive meetings:

- ▶ Speak clearly, face forward and avoid covering your mouth.
- ▶ Avoid acronyms and colloquialisms.
- ▶ Identify yourself each time you speak.
- ▶ When addressing someone specifically, it's nice to use his/her name so you know you'll have full attention.
- ▶ Indicate when you are finished speaking.
- ▶ If there's an interpreter present, look at the meeting participant, not the interpreter.
- ▶ Any narration should always be captioned.
- ▶ In a larger room, wait for the microphone when addressing the group or asking a question.

Interacting with colleagues:

- ▶ Don't leave long voicemails. It's not considerate for staffers who are hard of hearing.
- ▶ Make more eye contact and try to keep face-forward in conversation.
- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings when using the speaker phone so background noise is kept at a minimum.
- ▶ Show vulnerability. There are such sharp elbows in any office setting. Encourage the concept of vulnerability in your leaders—it's a great trait. There's something liberating about feeling safe enough in the office to show your human side.
- ▶ For more tips about creating an abilities-inclusive workplace, visit ey.com/abilities and select the Resources tab.
- ▶ Print your business cards in Braille.



Minor adjustments make for a huge benefit.

— Karyn Twaronite, EY Global Diversity & Inclusiveness Officer

Getting disability right

Luke Visconti, CEO, DiversityInc, has a unique vantage point. As the head of *DiversityInc* magazine, a leading diversity publication, and the force behind the prestigious “Top 50 Companies for Diversity” rankings, Luke recently experienced a stroke which left him paralyzed on his left side. While the prognosis for his recovery is good, Luke, a long-standing champion for abilities inclusiveness, is now an even more committed advocate.

Luke believes that if companies aren't approaching disability issues with the same rigor as they are with other dimensions of diversity, they are missing the mark with their overall diversity and inclusiveness efforts.

- ▶ **Showing that the company cares builds loyalty with employees.** “If companies can build the culture and the awareness that this is a welcoming place for people with disabilities, they can go a long way to making people happy who don't have any disabilities but who have loved ones or people in their lives who do. It's a good policy for overall workforce productivity, whether or not you're directly working with a person with a disability.”
- ▶ **Commitment from the top is key.** “It starts with a commitment from the top ... If you have commitment at the top, you can get into accountability and metrics. And we all have to understand our metrics, because if we don't, it's like driving in a car with a speedometer that has no numbers.”
- ▶ **Performance trumps all.** “You have to strip away those preconceptions and prejudices that you have in your mind and start looking at performance. You should look at performance as the sole measurement of value of a person.”
- ▶ **Don't overlook learning disabilities.** “If you can help employees understand their learning disability and they can fulfill their intelligence, what they were born with, their potential, you may find that you have somebody who can rise to the vice president level who you never thought was going to get out of the loading dock.”

Companies need to realize that if they don't get disability right, they are not going to get diversity and inclusiveness right, either.

– Luke Visconti, CEO, DiversityInc

The vision thing: embedding abilities inclusiveness into corporate strategy

Helen Keller was asked if there was anything worse than being blind. "Yes," she answered. "Having sight but no vision." Having a vision is critical in embedding abilities inclusiveness in organizations. Jill Houghton, Executive Director of the US Business Leadership Network, asked several prominent C-suite leaders about how their organizations approach it.

Their message was consistent, loud and clear: people of all talents and abilities are needed to drive high performance, growth and market share. Disabilities need to be part of the overall future workplace strategy, and disabilities need to be built into infrastructure through office design, equipment and technology.

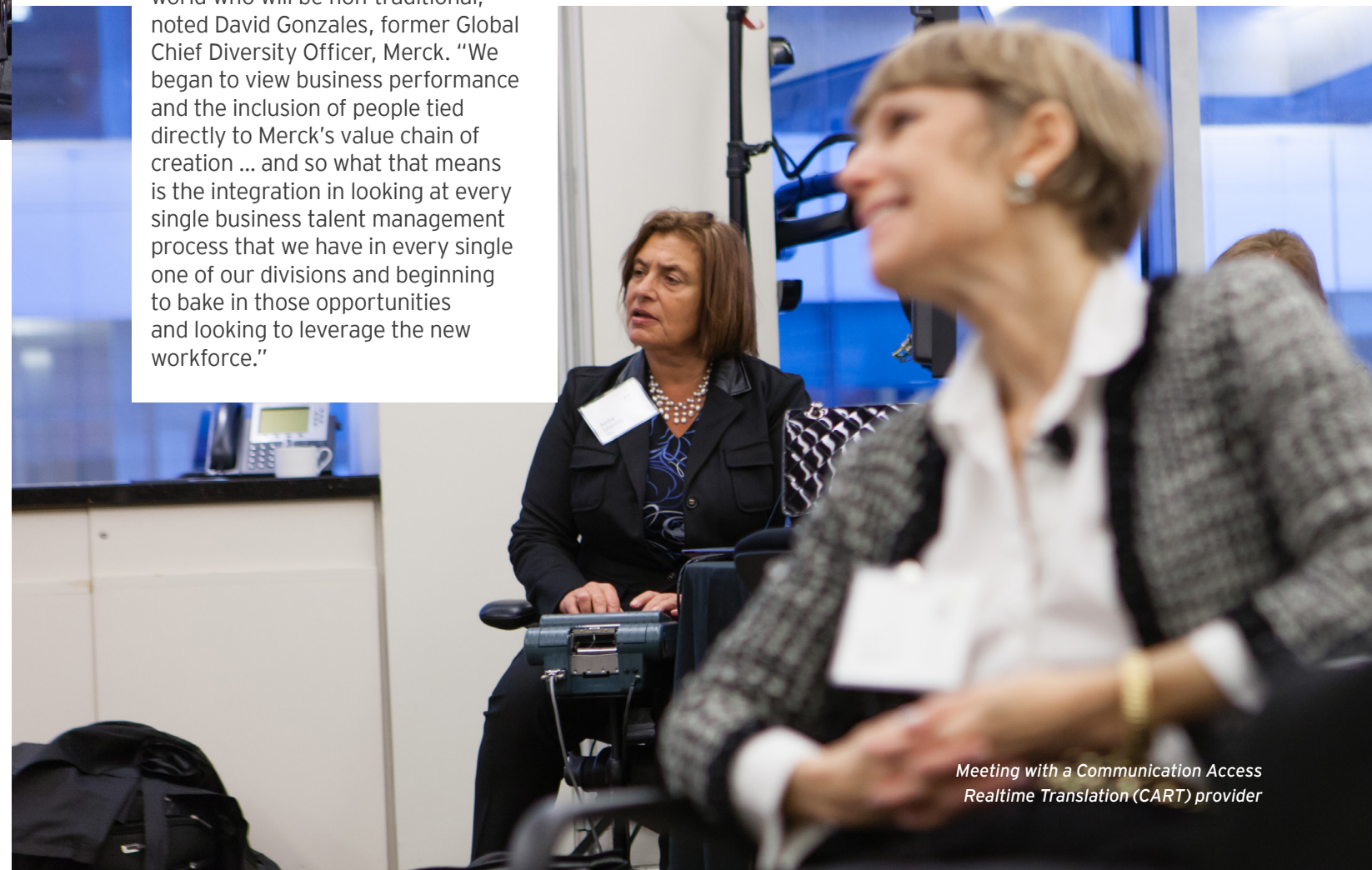
Here are some insights around how to embed abilities inclusiveness into corporate strategy and workplace cultures:

- ▶ **Instead of just talking about inclusion, use the knowledge.** "If you view [inclusion] from a business perspective, if you harvest that internally and leverage that out, it can become a business differentiator and then [allow you to] reuse that knowledge for the customers," commented Frances West, Chief Accessibility Officer, IBM.



USBLN Executive Director Jill Houghton, former Merck & Co. Global Chief Diversity Officer David Gonzales, and EY Americas Administration Leader Megan Hobson

- ▶ **Success and awareness within the organization allow inclusion to become self-sustaining.** "Our mission is to change the way the world works, lives, plays and learns, not just driving good profitable business," said Patrick Romzek, VP, Worldwide Market Development, Collaborative Solutions, Cisco. "We have transformational technologies that allow people with disabilities to work in ways they never could before ... [allowing people with all kinds of different challenges] to work in the same way as anyone else, leveling the playing field and desensitizing the workforce."
- ▶ **Create an environment where everybody is welcome, no matter what their ability is, because at the end of the day, culture is all about the people.** "When we look at our 21st century workforce, we see 40 million college-educated kids around the world who will be non-traditional," noted David Gonzales, former Global Chief Diversity Officer, Merck. "We began to view business performance and the inclusion of people tied directly to Merck's value chain of creation ... and so what that means is the integration in looking at every single business talent management process that we have in every single one of our divisions and beginning to bake in those opportunities and looking to leverage the new workforce."
- ▶ **Think about the workplace of the future, and what that truly means with regard to how people do work, what tools they need and how to accommodate them.** "The younger generation wants a more open environment, they want a more collaborative environment, and we need to transform our workplace and our work environment to meet their needs," said Megan Hobson, EY Americas Administration Leader. "As part of our policy as we redesign or open up a new office, accessibility and ergonomics are right there with what the actual furniture looks like and what the actual space is. At the end of the day, we want people to be the most productive they can because, as a business, that makes us the most profitable that we can be."



Meeting with a Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) provider

Making it real: the role of the employee resource group (ERG)

Organizations can accelerate their inclusion efforts through their employee resource groups (ERGs). But ERGs themselves can face challenges when trying to embed inclusiveness into their organizations. Here are three strategies for success that emerged from a candid dialogue among our summit attendees:

- ▶ **Use ERGs to help create allies and raise awareness.** "ERGs are important in getting our message of inclusiveness out there. We need allies. Spread the word and get as many people involved as you can. Critical mass counts in getting to mainstream."
- ▶ **ERGs can be an important brain trust for the company on disability issues, both internally and in the marketplace.** "One thing I see across the board that's really important is the disability ERG not become a support group, which has kind of become the stereotype of disability ERGs. At the end of the day, you're from a business and you want that group to help increase that bottom line ..."
- ▶ **Creating an open environment promotes authenticity.** "Make sure that you're creating an environment where people can talk about their disabilities. It makes people more comfortable to share stories and to feel that it's okay and for others to see role models that have succeeded."



We need allies. Spread the word and get as many people involved as you can. Critical mass counts in getting to mainstream.



Five EY people in a meeting; one uses a hearing aid and one uses a wheelchair

At the end of the day, we want people to be the most productive they can be because, as a business, that makes us the most profitable that we can be.

– Megan Hobson, EY Americas Administration Leader

Two EY women working together; one uses an enlarged computer screen



To learn more about how EY creates a culture that leverages people of diverse abilities, visit ey.com/abilities.

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About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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SCORE No. KK1178

1603-1853131_NE

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