UNLOCKING DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

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Foreword

As global business grapples with rapid technological change, evolving workplace dynamics, and increasing demands for genuine inclusion, disability-inclusive leadership has never been more essential. The global disability market is now estimated to exceed $18 trillion USD[1], and the shifting global legislative and ESG reporting landscapes call for leaders that are equipped to respond in ways to protect their businesses from risk and seize upon market opportunity[2].

This timely whitepaper provides an in-depth look into the psychology of disability-inclusive leaders, identifying what sets these individuals apart from their peers and how they make decisions to drive inclusion and accessibility within their organisations. By providing an inside look into how disability-inclusive leaders think and act, we begin to pave a road for other leaders seeking to achieve higher performance in disability-inclusive leadership.

I am grateful to the 33 global C-suite executives who shared their insights for this research. Their willingness to share deeply personal reflections on their disability-inclusive leadership journeys - from moments of uncertainty to transformative realisations - stands as a testament to their authentic commitment to this cause. That leaders at this level would engage in such open dialogue about their own growth in disability-inclusive leadership signals a remarkable shift in corporate culture. Their participation in this study and commitment to Valuable 500 demonstrates the highest level of disability-inclusive leadership in action. Their candid reflections showcase the potential for disability-inclusive leadership to foster more agile, resilient, and future-ready businesses.

These interviews represent a critical milestone as we build momentum towards **SYNC25**, the world's first accountability summit on disability inclusion. By spotlighting the power of disability-inclusive leadership, this work contributes to our larger push for systems change through Synchronised Collective Action—creating sustained, global impact for disabled people through business.

At a time of unprecedented disruption and uncertainty, the insights of these leaders powerfully demonstrate that disability-inclusive business is good business. Now more than ever, leaders must double down on their efforts if we are to put an end to disability exclusion in business. I encourage all leaders to heed the call to action within these pages and join the movement towards a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable future.

K. Talikowska

Katy Talikowska,
CEO of Valuable 500

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[1] The Global Economics of Disability Report: 2024.

[2] For more on the evolving legislative landscape in Europe, for example, see European Accessibility Act: Q&A and EU Disability Directives: Understanding the CSRD & CSDDD.

Executive Summary

Disability-inclusive decision-making is emerging as a critical business capability within the C-suite and boardrooms of the world's biggest brands, yet disability-inclusive leaders remain a small minority. Barriers such as generational misconceptions on disability, lack of lived experience of disability within leadership circles, and fear of making the wrong decisions all contribute to many leaders' inability to embrace disability inclusion as a core leadership tenet.

Disability-inclusive leadership is fundamentally about creating an environment where all employees can maximise their potential and deliver their greatest impact. When leaders successfully foster such environments, they drive measurable business value through enhanced innovation, improved talent retention, and deeper market understanding. This mutually beneficial dynamic - where both employee and organisational success are intrinsically linked - emerges as a consistent theme across successful disability-inclusive organisations.

In order to better understand the motivations, decisions, and specific actions which define disability-inclusive leaders, Valuable 500 interviewed 33 global C-suite leaders based in 8 countries and representing 15 industries. Our mission was to create a body of knowledge that would inform global business on the critical success factors and psychological markers of high-performing disability-inclusive leaders, while also beginning to pave a path of learning and progress for leaders aspiring to higher performance in disability-inclusive leadership.

Our study reveals how successful disability-inclusive leaders are transforming their organisations across three key pillars: **Purpose and Strategy, Psychological Safety and Trust**, and **Storytelling and Accountability**. We demonstrate how these pillars catalyse innovation and competitive advantage, while improving outcomes for disabled consumers and employees alike.

Purpose and Strategy drives personal conviction into strategic transformation, embedding disability inclusion into core business values and operations. **Psychological Safety and Trust** creates environments where authentic dialogue flourishes, enabling innovation through openness and belonging. Through **Storytelling and Accountability**, leaders combine powerful narratives with measurable outcomes to drive systemic change.

This whitepaper offers both inspiration and actionable insights for leaders at all stages of their disability-inclusive leadership journey. By emulating these proven approaches, leaders can unlock the potential of all employees to build more innovative, adaptable, and successful businesses.

Introduction

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It has been nearly three years since Valuable 500 achieved its goal of getting 500 CEOs from the world's largest brands to commit to advancing disability inclusion within their businesses – ending the CEO silence on disability. In that time, we have seen several C-level executives emerge as leaders in this space, consistently innovating and prioritising disability inclusion in decision-making, external commitments, corporate brand identity, and business outputs.

These individuals embody the core characteristics of disability-inclusive leadership and, in many ways, provide examples for other leaders to follow. The example of these disability-inclusive leaders is more vital now than ever: despite signs of progress in disability inclusion globally, disability-inclusive leadership is yet to be achieved at scale.

The Problem

Disability inclusion is still largely absent from C-suite and board-level planning. Only 25% of the leaders interviewed in this study had disability inclusion as a board-level priority before joining Valuable 500. Furthermore, a mere 3% of current C-suite leaders disclose their own disability or caregiving responsibilities. This lack of visible leadership and prioritisation at the highest levels serves as a significant obstacle to driving meaningful change.

Beyond these strategic leadership challenges, our research identifies a range of both personal and organisational barriers leaders face in building disability-inclusive businesses:

1. Fear of Stigma and Discrimination (mentioned by 61%):

The most identified barrier is personal fear of negative judgment, perceptions of incompetence, or exclusion from opportunities. This fear of stigma and discrimination discourages many individuals from disclosing their disabilities.

2. Limited Awareness and Understanding of Disabilities (mentioned by 54%):

More than half suggest that there are significant knowledge gaps around disability across organisations, with unconscious biases and a lack of education creating persistent misconceptions.

3. Generational and Cultural Attitudes (mentioned by 45%):

Almost half cite generational attitudes as an organisational barrier, with one Chief Diversity Officer observing: "While younger employees are increasingly open, many senior leaders still carry outdated perspectives that create barriers to progress." Cultural norms also emerged as a contributing factor, particularly in regions where disability remains a sensitive or stigmatised topic.

4. Limited Role Models and Visible Representation (mentioned by 39%):

The scarcity of disabled people in leadership roles was cited as a significant barrier. As one CEO of a Global Banking Organisation notes: "Until we start hiring people with a disability, we've not made any progress." Without disabled and disability-inclusive role models in positions of power, this lack of visible representation undermines efforts to transform both structural and cultural approaches to disability inclusion.

5. Privacy and Personal Boundaries (mentioned by 36%):

Around a third suggested that privacy concerns prevent individuals from disclosing their disabilities. Many people may feel that discussing personal health details could intrude on their professional identity or result in unwanted attention from colleagues.

6. Fear of Getting it Wrong (mentioned by 33%):

Concerns about using incorrect language, unintentionally offending someone, or making mistakes in disability accommodations and inclusivity efforts can prevent leaders from beginning or advancing their disability inclusion journey.

Valuable 500's Disability-Inclusive Leadership Whitepaper

In 2024, Valuable 500 launched a research project to define disability-inclusive leadership and identify common characteristics and decision-making patterns among Valuable 500's most disability-inclusive C-suite leaders.

The objective of the interviews was to better understand the motivations for disability-inclusive leadership – whether through personal lived experience, caregiving for a disabled individual, or other factors - and how these motivators translate to leadership behaviours and decisions. We also investigate the resources, advisors, or influences these leaders use to inform their strategy and decision-making. Lastly, we uncover what strategies these leaders have developed to drive outcomes, scale impact, and sustain progress towards disability inclusion in business.

This research combines quantitative analysis and ethnographic methods, drawing from focus groups and interviews with 33 C-suite leaders across 30 different companies, 21 executive-level leadership positions, and 8 geographic regions. Each interview contributed to recorded conversations and transcripts, which became the primary sources of information for this report. To encourage open and candid discussions, all participants were assured anonymity, and their responses have been anonymised in this report.

This whitepaper aims to spur a global shift among business leaders toward positioning disability inclusion and accessibility as key strategic considerations and leadership priorities. The findings will guide the development of a peer-led movement dedicated to advancing disability-inclusive leadership as a recognised norm and prized – yet attainable - skillset in global business.

The Three Pillars of Disability-Inclusive Leadership

Our research revealed three core pillars of disability-inclusive leadership, paving the way to a practical roadmap to enable businesses to operationalise and advance disability inclusion:

PURPOSE AND STRATEGY:
Personal conviction shaping strategic transformation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND TRUST:
Cultures of trust driving openness and innovation.

STORYTELLING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
Powerful narratives delivering measurable results.

Purpose and Strategy

> **Disability inclusion is central to our mission, as we strive to celebrate acceptance, challenge stigmas, and empower all individuals to thrive.**
>
> **Brendan O'Callaghan, Head of Manufacturing & Supply, Sanofi.**

Understanding Purpose in Leadership

Purpose in leadership represents the intersection of personal values, organisational mission, and societal impact. Research by McKinsey shows that, when leaders authentically embed purpose into their organisations, the business benefits are profound[3] Authentic, purpose-driven leadership sets a tone which cascades through the entire organisation. It creates resilient and values-driven corporate cultures which are essential for long-term sustainability in today's business environment, where stakeholders demand both profit and positive societal impact.

Personal connection to or lived experience of disability is a key driver of purpose among disability-inclusive leaders. 78% of the individuals we interviewed have personal connections to disability through family members, while 12% identify as disabled. Personal connection to disability cultivates a keen, empathetic understanding of what barriers disabled people face in daily life and at work. In this way, lived experience of disability is both a powerful motivator and driver for creative problem-solving in all aspects of leadership.

But personal connection or lived experience are not a requisite for disability-inclusive leadership nor the only determinants in gaining a sense of purpose as it relates to disability. Many successful leaders build their disability-inclusive leadership knowledge and skillsets through dedicated learning and engagement. What unites effective disability-inclusive leaders, regardless of their path to purpose, is how they translate their commitment into organisational transformation.

Converting Purpose to Organisational Transformation

A model that encapsulates this journey from personal purpose to systemic change is The Creative Leadership Framework, developed by Rama Gheerawo, Valuable 500 Board member and Director of the Helen Hamlyn Center of Design at the Royal College of Art in London. In his book, Creative Leadership: Born From Design, Gheerawo identifies three core values: Empathy, Clarity, and Creativity[4] The leaders in our study consistently demonstrate these values in their decision-making.

[3] Help your employees find purpose—or watch them leave.
[4] Creative Leadership: Born From Design

79% consider empathy to be a core trait of disability-confident leadership.

1. Empathy

When asked about the characteristics of disability-inclusive leaders, 79% of our participants emphasised the need for empathy, making it the most commonly mentioned trait. Empathy forms the foundation of disability-inclusive leadership, rooted in either direct lived experience or active engagement with disabled perspectives. One executive's experience as a "sighted guide" at the World Economic Forum fundamentally changed their understanding of disability and led to systematic changes. Another C-level leader's family connection with neurodiversity sparked the creation of their company's Disability Employee Resource Group (ERG) and other platforms for elevating disabled voices throughout the organisation.

These leaders cultivate empathy by regularly examining and challenging their own preconceptions and biases about disability. Most importantly, they create consistent, structured opportunities to learn directly from disabled employees about their experiences and challenges, and ensure these perspectives shape organisational decisions and policies.

2. Clarity

Several of our respondents noted that many organisations lack clear frameworks for assessing the impact of disability inclusion and often struggle to begin. Empathy helps leaders establish clarity about how their choices impact disabled employees and customers. This clarity then leads to better decision-making; disability-inclusive leaders opt to weave disability inclusion and accessibility into their strategies and governance, establishing clear goals and action plans to accomplish them. Recognising the need for disability inclusion to be embedded throughout their organisation, one pharmaceutical executive established executive-sponsored ERGs and a CEO-led DEI council. This clarity of purpose ensured that disabled employees' perspectives directly shaped business strategy at the company, leading to a best-in-class accessibility approach.

3. Creativity

Creativity in disability-inclusive leadership means finding innovative solutions to complex problems. These leaders champion the development of adaptable systems that can flex and respond to a wide spectrum of user needs. Two participants reimagined hiring practices that inadvertently excluded talented disabled candidates by eliminating barriers like mandatory driving licences and traditional educational requirements, focussing instead on core competencies.

Crucially, these leaders understand that disabled talent brings unique, valuable insights that foster innovation. At one leading technology firm, accessibility professionals with lived experience drive advancements through 'principled innovation', creating solutions that not only serve disabled consumers, but enhance the experience for all users.[5]

Our interviews revealed how varying cultural attitudes, employment laws, data protection requirements, and institutional support systems all influence how disability-inclusive leadership manifests in practice across the

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[5] The Principled Innovation Framework.

globe. Disability-inclusive leaders find creative ways to advance their inclusion agendas while respecting local cultural dynamics. Rather than applying one-size-fits-all solutions, they develop adaptable strategies that build trust gradually, engage with local stakeholders, and create sustainable change that resonates with their specific cultural environment. One global advertiser overcame cultural barriers by building networks with over 500 companies, engaging municipal leaders, and collaborating with academics and thought leaders.

Matching Purpose to the Business Case

Disability-inclusive leaders recognise purpose not only as their personal motivator but as an engine that drives systems-level decisions which lead to business transformation and growth. This mindset is reflected at by leaders like Sunita Cherian, Chief Culture Officer at Wipro:

"At Wipro, integrating disability inclusion and accessibility into all aspects of our operations is a deliberate and unified endeavor embraced by our entire organisation. These pillars are integral to our values, and our global leadership is committed to enhancing outcomes for both our associates and stakeholders through continuous improvement and dedication." – Sunita Cherian, Chief Culture Officer, Wipro.

Understanding the $18 trillion business imperative for inclusion and accessibility is essential in sustaining purpose-driven systems change.[6] "Disability inclusion is not a cost; it's an investment," stated one executive, pointing to the long-term value of fostering a culture that encourages diverse perspectives and lived experiences.

Forward-thinking leaders also recognise that creating accessible, inclusive organisations isn't just about serving current stakeholders - it's about future-proofing their business for the changing needs of all employees and customers. However, true transformation only happens when purpose and strategy are co-developed with disabled people. The principle of "Nothing About Us Without Us" is essential - this means ensuring disabled employees drive strategy, inform decisions, and shape workplace culture.

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[6] The Global Economics of Disability Report: 2024.

Psychological Safety and Trust

> **I don't "disclose" information about my disability, I "share" it, and I only share if I trust that you will be respectful of what I share, and use it constructively. So instead of saying your "disclosure" rates are low, ask yourself why people don't trust you enough to share.**
>
> **Sara Weller, Non-Executive Director, BT Plc.**

Understanding Psychological Safety and Trust

Creating a culture where people feel safe to disclose their disability, request accommodations, and bring their authentic selves to work is essential to cultivating inclusive workplaces[7]. Psychologically safe environments shift conversations from limitations to possibilities, from accommodation to innovation, from compliance to competitive advantage. As one technology executive notes: "I'm surrounded by a team that is majority disability [...] their lived experience is essential for us to build technology that works for all".

Building Psychological Safety

Our interviews revealed three key steps to creating cultures of psychological safety and trust:

52% consider vulnerability to be a crucial trait of disability-confident leadership.

4. Create Space for Vulnerability

The power of leadership vulnerability emerged as a consistent theme in our interviews, with more than half of our respondents highlighting vulnerability as a characteristic of disability-inclusive leadership. The world's leading disability-inclusive executives understand that their role isn't to have all the answers, but rather to create environments where solutions can emerge through collaborative dialogue. As one respondent explained, "talking to disabled people,

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[7]Every Employee Should Be Able to Bring their Authentic Self to Work.

listening to them and empowering leaders in the business to think creatively and encourage them to find solutions – whilst understanding we might not all have the answers".

Setting the example by participating in open dialogues on disability demystifies the topic and signals that disabled viewpoints and stories are welcome and valued. As one respondent explained, "I felt seriously uncomfortable using the word disability because I felt that would be insulting to people with disabilities. To label them in a certain way might lead to them being judged in a certain way, or perceived in a certain way. Until I was comforted by people from that community saying, 'No, that's how we like to be defined. We like it, you call it as it is, that's what we are.'"

5. Embed Continuous Learning

The most effective leaders embody a growth mindset - the belief that abilities and understanding can be developed through continuous learning. This mindset drives leaders to actively seek out knowledge and perspectives that challenge their assumptions and ultimately, drive higher performance. This commitment to continuous learning demonstrates how many leaders build their sense of purpose through active engagement with disability inclusion, even without direct personal connection. While mandatory training often serves as a crucial starting point, disability-inclusive leaders demonstrate a growth mindset that propels them beyond basic requirements. As one media executive's journey demonstrates: "My interest in disability and inclusion surged after joining [company], particularly after participating in mandatory disability confidence training early in my tenure." This initial training served as

a catalyst, shifting this leader's perspective and deepening their commitment to disability inclusion.

This growth mindset is particularly evident in how organisations navigate generational differences in discourse and practice around disability inclusion in the workplace. One global HR leader observed: "There's a fundamental shift happening. The younger workforce is much more open about discussing disability and neurodiversity, viewing it through a different lens entirely". Rather than viewing this gap as fixed, the company embraced a growth mindset, developing practical "how-to" guides that address leaders' fears and help create consistent approaches across generations.

Notably, when rating their confidence as disability-inclusive leaders on a 0-5 scale, no participants rated themselves 5/5, and almost all leaders emphasised the need for continuous learning. One leader's "passionate amateur" approach exemplifies this mindset: acknowledging there is always more to learn transforms disability-inclusive leadership from a static goal into an ongoing journey where challenges become opportunities for growth.

6. Bridge the Trust Gap to Unlock Self-ID

A key measure of psychological safety is the rate of disability self-identification (self-ID), which allows companies to better understand employee demographics and anticipate their needs[8]. The absence of this data or low disclosure rates means that companies are not equipped to fully support their employees' needs, which results in negative outcomes in the long-term.

Choosing to disclose a disability is a deeply private matter that has as much to do with

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[8][See Valuable 500's Self-ID Resource Guide for more information](#).

the individual's personal choice as it does the environment in which they are disclosing. Many people choose not to disclose their disability due to concerns about career limitation, pervading social stigma, past negative experiences, or hesitancy around medical documentation requirements, and other fears.

Still, disability-inclusive leaders understand that increasing self-ID rates requires creating an environment where people feel safe and trust that sharing their disability status will lead to meaningful support and positive cultural change. In order for organisations to create environments of psychological safety, leaders must be willing to lead from the front and emulate the very behaviours they are asking their staff to exhibit. One telecommunications executive drew on his personal connection to disability to become a powerful advocate for disability initiatives, driving increased visibility and discussion of disabilities within the organisation and helping raise declaration rates to 15-16%. As another leader advocates, organisations should normalise access requirements similar to dietary requirements, shifting the conversation from "disclosure" to "sharing needs".

Storytelling and Accountability

> **The more leaders talk about disability and take action to make workplaces inclusive, the more people will feel comfortable disclosing and discussing their disability, and leaders should feel they can be open about themselves too– having role models is so important.**
>
> **Carolyn McCall, CEO, ITV.**

Understanding Storytelling and Accountability

Disability-inclusive leaders understand that lasting change requires combining the power of storytelling to transform mindsets with robust accountability to ensure real progress.

While the personal stories from seniormost business leaders bear the potential to create powerful cultural change, reporting on disability and accessibility performance through financial and nonfinancial ESG reporting facilitates storytelling at an organisational level, driving accountability and sustained action. The most successful disability-inclusive leaders do both: combining disability-positive and business narratives to drive cultural change while establishing clear metrics, governance structures, and reporting mechanisms to ensure sustained progress.

Transforming Disability Inclusion through Storytelling

Our research defines three core strategies companies can implement to transform business culture through storytelling and accountability.

1. Harness the Power of Storytelling

How leaders speak publicly about disability - their personal connections, their business vision, their commitment to action - sets the tone for the entire organisation. Our interviews show that storytelling in disability-inclusive businesses operates on multiple levels. Leaders who share their personal experiences with disability help normalize these conversations across their organisations. As one executive noted: "I shared and some of our fellow leaders shared our stories with disability. [...] and that cascade in the organisation created an environment where it created a save zone to talk about it."

On an organisational level, disability-inclusive companies combine human stories with compelling business narratives - showing how disability inclusion drives innovation, opens new markets, and creates competitive advantage. Among our participants' companies, storytelling encompasses innovation and product accessibility successes, customer and employee experience improvements, progress on workplace initiatives and accommodations, and community partnerships and advocacy achievements. One global consulting firm saw their disability ERG flourish from zero to 1,600 members globally in eight years through sharing employee experiences and success stories.

2. Create Accountability Through Data

Disability-inclusive leaders understand that stories alone don't create lasting change – accountability is needed to convert narratives into action and good intentions into impact. Success requires setting clear, measurable targets and transparent reporting mechanisms for disability inclusion. This is why Valuable 500 encourages its partners and companies to focus on five KPIs for disability inclusion: workforce representation, goals, training, ERGs, and digital accessibility.[9] By measuring and reporting on these specific metrics, companies can move beyond storytelling to create measurable impact and hold themselves accountable for real progress in disability inclusion.

Establishing robust governance structures also plays a key role in ensuing accountability. One company established a Disability Advisory Board to guide decision-making and strategy. Others cited joining organisations like Valuable 500 and Business Disability Forum as an important way to benchmark progress in disability inclusion

and hold leaders responsible for delivering on commitments.

Combining compelling narratives and clear accountability metrics reframes inclusion from compliance exercise to strategic driver of growth. Data tells its own compelling story when used strategically - at one national broadcasting organisation, data informs both workforce representation and creative outputs, creating a virtuous cycle where improved representation leads to more authentic storytelling and greater disclosure. When companies use disability data this way, it feeds into an organisational narrative that inclusion is a business priority, not a tick-box exercise.

3. Leverage Storytelling and Accountability through Mentorship and ERGs

Two key mechanisms emerge as particularly effective in combining storytelling with accountability: mentoring and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). "Mentoring, in my view, is the most powerful way of increasing confidence among disability-inclusive leaders," noted one executive. "It is this confidence supported through storytelling that allows executives to recognise the needs of employees with disabilities and leverage institutional growth".

Reverse mentoring, where senior executives learn directly from disabled employees about workplace barriers and opportunities for innovation, is particularly valuable. This approach, exemplified by Valuable 500's Generation Valuable programme, creates powerful learning opportunities for both experienced executives and emerging disabled leaders.[10] For one leader, these opportunities provide "the most powerful

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[9] [ESG and Disability Data: A Call for Inclusive Reporting](#).
[10] [Generation Valuable](#).

recognition of the lack of diversity in our decision making as a leaders".

ERGs compliment mentoring by serving as both storytelling platforms and accountability mechanisms. Among our participants' companies, they range from newly formed networks to mature groups with thousands of members. These networks serve as vital feedback loops between employees and leadership, helping to shape policy, drive change, and measure progress on disability inclusion.

The Global Managing Partner of a Leading Strategy Consulting Firm noted, "I worry [that] people say, 'I'm all about disability, let's go hire more people,' and then you hire them and the organization has no idea what they're doing and how to manage them, creating bad outcomes that reinforce negative stereotypes." ERGs help prevent this by serving as "critical friends" who provide vital feedback, even if they sometimes oppose management initiatives.

Unlocking Disability-Inclusive Leadership

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Disability-inclusive leaders are pioneering a transformative approach to business leadership that extends beyond traditional DEI frameworks. Our research reveals how these leaders combine strategic vision with authentic commitment, creating businesses where disability inclusion becomes a catalyst for innovation and growth.

What sets these leaders apart is their ability to operate simultaneously at both systematic and human levels. While personal commitment provides the foundation, lasting transformation requires robust systems, clear metrics, and sustained action. This dual focus bridges the gap between inspiration and implementation.

The three pillars of disability-inclusive leadership create a comprehensive framework for leadership development. **Purpose and Strategy** drives direction, **Psychological Safety and Trust** enables innovation through authentic dialogue, while **Storytelling and Accountability** ensures that good intentions translate into measurable impact.

Most significantly, these leaders demonstrate that disability-inclusive leadership isn't just about compliance or corporate social responsibility - it's about competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving business landscape. By integrating disability inclusion into core business strategy, they're creating more innovative, adaptable, and successful organisations.

These principles offer a clear pathway forward for other leaders and organisations. As we look to the future of business leadership, the approaches pioneered by current disability-inclusive leaders become the precedent for any aspiring executives seeking to lead their businesses in a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable way. Creating this body of knowledge and setting an example to follow makes it possible for future leaders to create cultures where disability is "not only demystified, but accepted and celebrated." This whitepaper is the first line drawn on a roadmap that will guide all future leaders to an understanding that disability-inclusive leadership is not just about doing good - it's about doing better business.

A Call to Action

The global business landscape is at a turning point. As organisations face increasing pressure to innovate and adapt, disability inclusion has emerged as a key driver of competitive advantage, enhanced resilience, and sustainable growth. But this is not about competing against one another. Disability inclusion stands as a powerful unifier in the global business world – a rare common ground where competitors can come together in pushing for collective progress. This vision calls for leaders to engage with one another on the topics of disability and accessibility, and to do so bravely and intentionally: reach out, create solutions together, and view disability inclusion as a strategic advantage that elevates everyone.

As we approach **SYNC25,** we will be engaging all Valuable 500 leaders to sustain critical momentum and lead the way in this area. The world will be watching in December 2025 as we showcase the power of disability-inclusive leadership.

The time for action is now. Companies that fail to act risk being left behind and leaving both disabled jobseekers and consumers behind as well. But those who step forward will help create a business world where disability inclusion drives excellence and where every leader is disability-inclusive by default.

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- Zalando

By sharing their experiences and strategies openly, these executives are helping create a blueprint for business transformation.

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About the Researcher

These discussions were designed and facilitated by Jonathan Kaufman, who brings expertise in disability advocacy, organisational leadership, and inclusive business practices. As a psychotherapist and business strategist living with Cerebral Palsy, Kaufman combines lived experience with professional insight gained through roles as a White House Policy Advisor on Disability and Lead Disability Strategist for major corporations. His work in diversity and inclusion has earned recognition among Thinkers 360's Top 50 Global Thought Leaders. We are grateful for his expertise in shaping this important research.

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