

My name is Caroline Casey and I am the founder of The Valuable 500. The Valuable 500 was launched on the main stage of the World Economic Forum, Davos in 2019. It was created to find the missing piece around disability business inclusion. Business leadership. It was created because we fundamentally believe, that the disability inequality crisis cannot be resolved by governments and charities and conventions alone. It needs business.

We believe that inclusive business creates inclusive societies. What business includes, and what business values, society will include and value. How do we create inclusive business? Well, we need inclusive leaders.

We have seen the power of inclusive leadership before in business. We have seen how the business social muscle has effected change. It may not have resolved all the social problems, but it has created waves of change and certainly when it's partnering with governments and charities.

For inclusive business to become a reality, we need to create an energy behind it, and certainly for people with disabilities, and that global community, which represents 1.3 billion people, a conservative estimate. 1.3 billion people in the world that experience a disability, when you include their mother and father represents 73% of our global population.

We all know the scale of the disability inequality crisis, we know that 90 percent of children who have a disability do not get into a classroom. We know that you're 50% more likely to experience poverty and not get a job if you have a disability. We know that.

And we haven't seen the accelerated change, positive change for people with disabilities in the world. Why?

Well, The Valuable 500, like many others, we believe it's because we haven't had business meaningfully at the table and we haven't had business leadership. Traditionally, disability has always been on the sidelines of business and certainly on the sidelines of the inclusion and diversity agendas of business.

Actually, the inclusion agenda in business, carves up our humanity into different categories, gender or race, LGBTQ and age - either way, we're carved up and we have to compete against each other for attention and resources. And in that competition, disability has always lost out.

And how can that be when we know the huge scale of us in the world who have a disability and whose children have. How is it that disability has remained on the sidelines?

We know that every single one of us will touch disability at some point in our lives, we know 80% of disability is acquired between the ages of 18 and 64. We know that disability does not discriminate. It has no boundaries. It doesn't care about skin color or our sexual orientation. It can touch all of us and any of us at any time.

So why is disability been on the sidelines of business? Well, for us in The Valuable 500, we believe there are three key reasons. One is this competing agenda – the way that we've been carved up, our humanity into these competing agendas where disability always loses out. It loses out because people don't understand the genuine value of this community to business.

The second piece is that actually people like to eradicate problems, you know, they like to fix things, change things. Change things is one thing, but fix things is another. We cannot eradicate disability. It's part of the human fabric. A lot of business success is about eradicating a problem or creating an innovation. Having a disability is part of being human.

The third reason that disability has remained on the sidelines of business is that we haven't had that leadership.

Let me give you two stats. 54% of our global companies have never had a conversation about disability business inclusion. 90% of our companies claim to be passionate about diversity and inclusion, and only 4% consider disability. I don't know about you, but that to me is an inclusion delusion.

We call disability one of the greatest minority groups in the world. I don't think there's anything minority, about 15 percent of our global population.

So the key is really, first of all, we have to get the reality of the value this community offers business, and we need to put that reality into the hands of business leaders. We need business leader's attention and intention.

We need disability to be integrated and interwoven and infused into business strategy along the supply chain.

We're not asking for disability to be more than anything else. Not at all. We're asking for it to be part of everything. It should be everyone for everyone. And we know that.

With The Valuable 500, we also recognize the importance of community. It's where we will all find a place, a safe place to learn and to change, to share best practice.

So when the The Valuable 500 was originally launched, it was a campaign to get the leaders that were missing, the missing piece to accelerate and amplify the change for people with disabilities in business and therefore society. We picked a number. We said 500 - The Fortune 500, The Valuable 500.

Today we stand at just under 360 of the world's most intentional organizations, we represent 12 million employees, 4.5 trillion in revenue. 31 countries and 55 sectors. Against all the odds, and they thought we were crazy when we started. It's hard to imagine, but we are the second biggest growing business leadership community in the world for any issue aside from U.N. Global Compact. This feels like a good place to be, second place because it has 11000 CEOs. But even U.N. Global Compact shows the power of leadership and CEO intention and commitment.

Because of the unprecedented success of this, in early 2021 we will be announcing phase two of The Valuable 500 and this is where it gets exciting. This historic community, which we will be closing at the end of January, will be activated.

All of those 500 companies and their CEOs will work against six key pillars, three internally in their organizations and three externally and together we can co-create and

co-shake up this business system to look at how disability is valued within business. It is possible, the only thing that we need to know and understand is will and intention.

There are two key things I want to answer quickly in this brief is what are the obstacles and what are the examples of change?

The obstacles for change have been the lack of leadership. That is one of the greatest obstacles for change and for creating an environment where we're competing humanity against each other and for the lack of understanding of truly the value that people with disabilities bring to business. It's a market worth \$8 trillion conservatively. It's an opportunity for insight, innovation, brand differentiation and talent.

We don't need to make the business case for people with disabilities in business anymore, actually, particularly since Covid-19, we know that companies and their leaders want to know how to be fully inclusive.

They are looking at intersectionality in a way they've never done before. The days of making the case for disability business inclusion are over because this is about future proofing the business - an opportunity to differentiate and to respond instead of react - what we've seen business do before.

I also want to mention what's been done well and what's being done right.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge the 360 companies whose leadership have signed to The Valuable 500.

They are committing to a long term journey, a journey of change, of sharing best practice, of innovating or failing. These companies are not admitting to know everything, but they're willing to do something and more than something.

But there's some great examples of where companies are getting it right, and by the way, no company needs to be an expert to start.

Whether a company is beginning or scaling or leading, it doesn't matter, it's where you're at and where the action is that has the impact.

I'm going to point to three companies in this particular one.

Microsoft a few weeks ago just announced the results of a survey around their work on disclosure – 6.1 % of the Microsoft employees identify as having a disability. This is historic because Microsoft did this globally. What gets measured, gets done, and to use the words of Paul Polman, what gets measured is treasured. We need to start seeing the data in the stats and Microsoft's iconic move is one to be followed.

We know in many of our countries that we don't need to legally disclose whether we have a disability or not, as I do. But there are ways and means to find that, that really look after people's anonymity.

We estimate that most of our employee base, anything between 10 to 12 % of our employees, have a lived experience of disability. Many of us are hiding it because 80% of disability is invisible.

A second iconic move in business was Salesforce. Salesforce decided by joining The Valuable 500 that they wanted to do something that would be for the long term play for disability inclusion. They appointed a Chief Accessibility Officer, a role that reports to the board, cross-functional and global. It's a big deal, and that's showing the importance of it. Such a move like that mirrors the appointment of Jenny Lay-Flurrie to Microsoft, and this is where we can share best practice.

The third one that I would like to talk to is on a smaller level is M&S retailers based in the U.K. Now, this site seemed like a really small example, but it's not because it's linking employment to the value of the market. What they were aware of is that many people who come into their shops may have invisible disabilities and they would not be able to help the consumer. So they came up with an idea of a sunflower lanyard that those of us who may not look like we have a disability like me, can put that on when we go into their shop. The sunflower means that they can approach and ask how we need help. The key is about having the leadership in the business know what the business is doing. There are superb examples of great innovations and best practice within business, but we can't scale that unless the leadership knows. The leadership knows,

then it can make sure the resources and the time and the attention is there, to integrate the great innovations that already exist.

As I close, people keep asking us, what does success look like?

Well, success looks like for me at the end of the day, that right at the heart of business, we see human centered design, universal design.

Another success point for me is that, you know what, accessibility or inclusive communication does not need to be justified. It is becoming part of the norm.

Another success point for me is, though, that seventy three percent of our global population is touched in some way by disability, and only 11 % of our businesses use people with disabilities and their families and marketing - that that changes.

The most important thing for me is that we stop categorizing our humanity.

And lastly, I guess the greatest success of all is. That we don't exist.

That The Valuable 500 in three to four years' time, does not exist. Because disability business inclusion goes from niche to normal. It's the way we do business.