



## US Business Leadership Network Commends Leadership of Ernst & Young on its AccessAbilities Resources

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WASHINGTON, DC (March 24, 2008) – The US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) today commended the efforts to promote accessibility and an inclusive workplace being done by its member, Ernst & Young LLP, a leading professional services firm. Resources being offered by Ernst & Young include brochures, briefs, posters and DVDs.

“By promoting inclusion, Ernst & Young is further defining itself on a daily basis as a leader committed to corporate diversity,” stated **Katherine McCary**, Vice-President of SunTrust Bank and Chair of the USBLN® board of directors. “These resources highlight so many important aspects of the workplace – including appropriate language, etiquette and inclusive work habits.”

Ernst & Young's six page *AccessAbilities brochure* highlights the firm's commitment to building an inclusive environment for everyone, or as the firm's AccessAbilities People Resource Network puts it, "unleashing the full abilities of all our people." It features a message from the firm's Americas Managing Partner and from members of the AccessAbilities People Resource Network, describes ongoing initiatives and resources, and includes AccessAbilities education materials and contact information. During National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month, hard copies were sent to key leader and HR audiences and electronic copies were distributed firm-wide.

*AccessAbilities briefs* are one-page tip sheets on general interest topics including disabilities appropriate language, etiquette, and inclusive work habits. These are inserted in the back pocket of the brochure and are also leveraged in training programs and at meetings and events.

Their *invisible disabilities poster* is meant to challenge people's assumptions and raise awareness of hidden disabilities in the workplace. For National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month, posters were hung in Ernst & Young's US offices at elevator banks, reception areas, break rooms, and other high traffic locations.

The *AccessAbilities DVD* features members of AccessAbilities, firm leaders, and managers of people with disabilities sharing their personal perspectives on what it means to work with disabilities and how every person in the firm can be more inclusive. The DVD is shown during large events and in meetings to introduce discussions around disabilities inclusiveness.

“At Ernst & Young, our work culture is centered on helping people achieve their potential,” summarized **Lori Golden**, Ernst & Young's AccessAbilities Leader: “That's what AccessAbilities is all about - ensuring that every person has access to all the tools, information, resources, and opportunities needed to be productive and successful - and that every person feels respected, supported and valued for her or his talents and contributions.”

Golden continued, “We believe that most people want to ‘do the right thing,’ but may not know how. That's why we've created a variety of tools to help teach people the basics so they're more comfortable knowing what's appropriate, and they can talk and act in ways that make people with differing abilities more comfortable too. Training isn't enough. By developing quick, easy-to-read content in a variety of formats, we're able to integrate these materials into many venues at different times. Our people encounter it over and over, each time a little differently, so the learning builds and is more likely to take root and become permanent.”

The USBLN® is the national organization that supports development and expansion of its BLN chapters across the country, serving as their collective voice. It is the only national disability organization led by business for business. The USBLN® recognizes and promotes best practices in hiring, retaining, and marketing to people with disabilities. There are 44 Business Leadership Network chapters in 32 states, including the District of Columbia, representing more than 5,000 employers across the US. The BLN uses a “business to business” approach to educate, promoting the business imperative of including people with disabilities in the workforce. Learn more at [www.usbln.org](http://www.usbln.org).

BLN Chapters are business organizations headed by a Lead Business who exemplifies these practices and shares experiences with other members-employers-within the state or region. These activities include career fairs, disability mentoring and internship programs, and training programs including disability business etiquette, accommodation, and other disability issues deemed significant to employers. Businesses join BLN chapters to learn how to expand their diversity recruiting efforts to include individuals with disabilities- not as a social model but as a business case to recruit talent and better serve their customers. BLN successes serve the workplace, the marketplace, the community and the economy. The USBLN® Vision is that every employer recognizes and benefits from the best practice of including people with disabilities in their workforce and marketplace.

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