



Leading Business Executives Come Together to Promote Investments in Hiring That Can Really Make a Difference

Focus is on preparing youth with disabilities for the workforce at annual US Business Leadership Network Conference

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WASHINGTON, DC (October 1, 2013) – **Mr. Richard Marriott**, Chairman of the Board of Host Hotels and Resorts and President and Trustee of the Marriott Foundation, and **Mr. Mike Corbo**, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Mitsubishi Electric US Elevator/Escalator Division, headlined a lively lunch discussion on preparing young people with disabilities for the workforce. The symposium addressed an audience of over 500 business leaders at the annual USBLN® conference in Los Angeles today.

Mr. Marriott described the efforts of the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities to place these young people in competitive jobs through the Foundation's *Bridges from School to Work* program. Mr. Marriott stated, "The key is to find the right people for the right jobs based on their abilities." Nothing any hiring manager wouldn't agree is the requisite path to any successful hire. So what makes this process any different or better? Perhaps it takes a bit more time and effort, more training, more mentoring, but the investment can be well worth the outcome. "And it demonstrates a real commitment to be strong corporate citizens – something Marriott looks for in companies we do business with," added Marriott.

Recognizing this as well, Mike Corbo spoke about how, through the work of the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, Mitsubishi Electric created an intern program to offer jobs to young workers with disabilities right out of college. Corbo had the opportunity to hire a marketing intern out of Cal State Long Beach. "Josh taught me a lot about life and work and how a disability is only that if you make it that. I learned as much from him as he did from us. Companies gain not only outstanding employees and new insights into the human spirit, but also create a 'competitive advantage' by developing an inclusive workforce. Like-minded companies gravitate to like-minded companies." Just ask Mr. Marriott.

Also during the luncheon presentation, **Kevin R. Webb**, director of Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, facilitated a discussion on model mentoring and internship programs featuring: **Katy Jo Meyer**, Sr. Global Diversity and Inclusion Manager of Microsoft; **Ari Ne'eman**, President and Co-Founder of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network; **Stephanie Sherlock Roemer**, Diversity Recruiting and Learning Manager of Freddie Mac; and **Marcus Tuck**, a USBLN® Career Link Program Mentee.

Mr. Webb added: "Mitsubishi Electric is very pleased to partner with such outstanding companies like Marriott and Microsoft to support innovative programs like USBLN®'s Career Link Mentoring program. What a great way to empower young people with disabilities so they can lead productive lives."

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

About The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation

The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation was established in 1965 with the purpose of giving back to the community. Under the current direction of J.W. Marriott, Jr. and Richard E. Marriott, the Marriott Foundation is dedicated to helping youth secure a promising future, especially through education on the secondary and higher education levels, mentoring and youth leadership programs. Equally important are organizations that help provide relief from hunger and disasters; support people with disabilities; and create gainful employment opportunities for vulnerable youth and adults.

About the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation was established in 1991 by Mitsubishi Electric Corporation of Japan and the Mitsubishi Electric US group companies, which manufacture, market and distribute a wide range of consumer, industrial, commercial and professional electrical and electronic products. Based in the Washington D.C. area, the Foundation has contributed more than \$11 million to organizations that are empowering young people with disabilities to lead productive lives. Additional information is available at www.MEAF.org.

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