



## American Airlines Joins the Disability Equality Index as a Founding Partner

*Company Joins Comcast / NBCUniversal, CVS Caremark, and New Editions Consulting, Inc. to support launch of online tool to measure businesses' inclusion of people with disabilities*

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WASHINGTON, DC (August 28, 2014) – Today, the US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) are pleased to announce that American Airlines joined as a Founding Partner of the USBLN and AAPD's new Disability Equality Index<sup>SM</sup> (DEI<sup>SM</sup>), an online tool that offers businesses the opportunity to objectively measure their full inclusion of people with disabilities as employees, suppliers, and customers.

“We are thrilled to have American Airlines join us on this groundbreaking initiative for the business and disability communities,” said **Jill Houghton**, Executive Director of the USBLN. “By joining as a DEI Founding Partner, American Airlines is showcasing its support of disability inclusive practices throughout corporate America,” said **Mark Perriello**, President and CEO of AAPD.

American has a long history of supporting AAPD and its initiatives, including active leadership by Will Ris, American's senior vice president - Government and Regulatory Affairs and a long-time member of AAPD's Board of Directors.

Created by leaders in the business and disability communities, and after the successful completion of the DEI pilot with 48 Fortune 1000 scope companies in March 2014, the first Annual DEI will launch to Fortune 1000 companies in October 2014.

The DEI is a benchmarking tool that offers businesses the opportunity to receive an objective score on their disability inclusion policies and practices, and identify avenues for continued improvement. Companies self-report on a wide-range of criteria within four categories: Culture & Leadership, Enterprise-Wide Access, Employment Practices, and Community Engagement & Support Services.

“At American, diversity and inclusion are instrumental to the way we measure success,” said **Mike Waldron**, managing director – Diversity and Talent Management, American Airlines. “We are proud to partner with USBLN and AAPD to help people with disabilities, including our customers and our employees, realize their possibilities.”

In a recent effort to make travel more accessible, the American Airlines Abilities and Bridges Employee Business Resource Groups created a realistic travel experience without leaving the ground. American's operational teams at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport acclimated 25 children with autism and their

families to the world of airline travel by simulating the ticket counter process, navigating through security checkpoints and experiencing pre-departure inflight announcements and processes. To find out more about American's commitment to people with disabilities, contact American at [AA.Diversity@aa.com](mailto:AA.Diversity@aa.com)

The DEI Founding Partner status is a one-time opportunity exclusive to the first 15 companies that join before December 31, 2015. To date, DEI Founding Partners include American Airlines, Comcast and NBCUniversal, CVS Caremark, and New Editions Consulting, Inc. Companies interested in learning more about becoming a DEI Founding Partner should contact Liz Taub, USBLN Director, Business Relations & Strategic Partnerships, at [liz@usbln.org](mailto:liz@usbln.org).

For more information about the DEI, please visit: <http://www.usbln.org/programs-dei.html>.

#### **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 nearly 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. Additionally, the USBLN Disability Supplier Diversity Program<sup>®</sup> (DSDP) is the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses, including businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. [www.usbln.org](http://www.usbln.org)

#### **About the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)**

The American Association of People with Disabilities is the nation's largest disability rights organization. AAPD promotes equal opportunity, economic power, independent living, and political participation for people with disabilities. AAPD's members, including people with disabilities and family, friends, and supporters, represent a powerful force for change. To learn more, visit the AAPD Web site: [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com).

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