What is the third largest market segment in the United States? It’s not a particular race, gender, or age group; it’s people with disabilities. There are 57 million Americans with disabilities or 1-out-of-5 Americans. (EARN, Market Research.com & the U.S. Census)

Americans with disabilities surpass Hispanics, African Americans and Asian Americans, as well as Generation X and teens (U.S. Census).

More than 1 in 3 American households surveyed had at least one member who identified as having a disability (Nielsen 2016).

Globally there are over 1 billion individuals with disabilities, representing 15% of the world’s population (United Nations Enable).

Consumers with disabilities are a major part of the consumer population, yet they are underrepresented in the innovation and marketing strategies designed to reach and retain consumers (Nielsen 2016).

Consumers with disabilities represent a $1 billion market segment in the U.S. (U.S. Census).

When you factor in their families, friends and associates, individuals with disabilities represent a $1 trillion market segment (U.S. Department of Labor).

The total after-tax disposable income for working-age people with disabilities is about $490 billion, which is similar to that of other significant market segments, such as African Americans and Hispanics (American Institutes for Research).

Consumers with disabilities display traits of a loyal customer. Despite lower incomes, shoppers with disabilities spend more per trip and shop more often (Nielsen 2016).

92% of the American public view companies that hire people with disabilities more favorably and 87% of American consumers say they would prefer to give their business to companies that employ individuals with disabilities (Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, Survey of Consumer Attitudes).

To tap into the disability market, individuals with disabilities should be represented in your workforce, especially in leadership roles where they can impact strategy and decision-making. Employees with disabilities can help your business understand and meet the needs of this expanding customer base and provide the innovative thinking required for a 21st century competitive edge.

Companies like Procter & Gamble, Microsoft and Boston Scientific are leveraging the knowledge and experience of employees with disabilities to guide product development, packaging and global markets.

Studies have also shown that employees with disabilities stay at their jobs longer, improve productivity and morale, enhance problem-solving and create a more diverse workplace, representative of the third largest market segment.

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