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DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVE MONTH SPOTLIGHT: HUMANWARE, LEADER IN REVOLUTIONARY ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Diversity & Inclusion month is an opportunity to find out more about HumanWare Inc.

[HumanWare Inc](#) is the global leader in assistive technology for the blind and visually impaired, and part of the Essilor Group since 2013. Its mission, which is to empower those with vision loss to fully participate with their sighted peers is a natural extension to Essilor's mission and a champion of inclusion.

Essilor acquired a majority interest in HumanWare Inc in 2013 and accelerated its partnership with HumanWare in 2014 to boost investment in research and development to offer new and innovative high-quality products for the 3% of the

world population suffering from blindness and low vision. This enables the Group to cover the full spectrum of vision care and promote access for a larger number of people with visual impairment.

Who is HumanWare?

For more than 30 years, HumanWare has been developing a wide range of advanced, connected and intelligent devices that help people with vision loss to overcome the digital divide that most of the visually impaired community experience and allow them to participate in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) activities, achieve higher education and access to jobs in the new economy. Some examples include the BrailleNote Touch Plus, first Google-certified braille tablet, the iOS compatible Brailiant braille displays, Victor Reader[®], the world's leading family of digital audiobook players, the ultra-portable explore line of electronic handheld magnifiers, the ultra-smart and always connected Connect 12 and the Reveal 16 line of transportable, foldable magnifiers, including Reveal 16i, the smart, intuitive, all-in-one device, designed to help users stay productive in their daily life.

To date, HumanWare markets its products in 50 countries throughout North America, Europe, Australia, Africa, the Middle East and in certain parts of Asia.



Inclusion: a 'raison d'être'

In line with its business which is oriented towards empowering the autonomy of the visually impaired, HumanWare's efforts to tackle high unemployment rates¹ within the BVI community include:

- Its target to have 10-15% of visually impaired employees.
- The company has also launched a successful internship program to provide training and work experience to visually impaired students.

By leveraging innovation, the company aims to bring the latest advanced technology for disability inclusion:

- HumanWare has its R&D hub based in Montréal, a world leading center of excellence for cutting-edge research in areas such as Augmented Reality and Artificial Intelligence.
- Thanks to a partnership with MILA (Quebec's Institute for Artificial Intelligence), HumanWare is leading research into new ways and products which will improve the lives of people with visual impairment in the future.

Last October, the Quebec Technology Association named HumanWare SME of the year 2019 for its innovation in the tech industry.

A growing and underserved market

Low vision concerns people whose visual acuity, after correction, is less than 3/10, meaning that the person's autonomy is limited. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 285 million people in the world have vision impairment with 39 million of those being blind and 246 million described as having "low vision". However due to a lack of awareness that solutions exist, only around 5 percent of those with low vision own low-vision equipment.

According to the WHO, numbers of people with vision impairment will triple by 2050. This growing vision problem combined with the lack of awareness and underdeveloped low vision distribution channels opens a very large opportunity to independent ECPs (Eye Care Professionals). When patients with low vision or their caretakers were asked where they think they should be provided with low vision solutions, an overwhelming amount identified their optometrist as the logical choice.²

For more information about the solutions available for low vision, visit <https://www.essilor.com/en/brands-and-solutions/for-low-vision/>.

Click [here](#) to find out more about HumanWare.

¹ Figures in North America are as high as 70% unemployment for the blind and people suffering from low vision.

² Source: a marketing survey conducted for HumanWare.

SEE ALSO

2019.08.28

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DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE: ESSILOR SPONSORS SIXTH EDITION OF EVE ASIA-PACIFIC



Diversity is a key value for the Essilor group. This is why Essilor has a number of initiatives dedicated to gender diversity and empowering women to contribute at the highest levels. In support of this, Essilor sponsored the sixth edition of EVE Asia-Pacific in Singapore to inspire women and enlighten men to drive change in their organizations.

2019.11.22

CORPORATE

ESSILOR AND VISION IMPACT INSTITUTE SUPPORT #GLASSES4WOMEN



Essilor and the Vision Impact Institute firmly support #glasses4women, a movement to highlight the critical role good vision plays in creating a more balanced world for women.
