

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

LVMH to double specially-abled employee headcount by 2025

December 12, 2022



The Disability Inclusion Office of LVMH has worked to create a more diverse workspace. Image credit: LVMH

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Since its founding in 2008, the Disability Inclusion Office of LVMH has worked to create a more diverse workspace that is mindful of workers with disabilities.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Now, the office is aiding the company in reaching its goal of doubling its hiring of those who are specially-abled by 2025, raising its numbers from 1 percent to 2 percent. Last year, LVMH reached 1.2 percent.

"One of Disability Inclusion's key roles is to ensure that disability issues are addressed by teams at all levels and in all countries," said Olivier Thophile, Paris-based corporate social responsibility director of LVMH, in a statement.

The office was started 14 years ago by Chantal Gaemperle, group executive vice president of human resources and synergies at LVMH.

LVMH's **Disability Inclusion Office** is hoping its efforts will not only improve the lives of people with disabilities but will normalize their experiences.

Ending the stigma

Collecting feedback from specially-abled directors and those who have hired them, LVMH is working to widen the range of positions held by its employees who have disabilities. To do this, it is working internationally.

Despite the fact that 15 percent of the entire world are people with disabilities, including them in workspaces and even having conversations about the topic, are avoided in many societies. Baseless and harmful stereotypes that fuel these issues represent a huge impediment to specially-abled job seekers something that LVMH is working to change.

"It's important to note that a disability doesn't limit you to a specific area," Mr. Thophile said.

"At LVMH, an employee with a disability could work in a store, a workshop or an office, just as they might hold a management position or be at the very start of their career," he said.

The office partnered with LVMH's maisons to lobby for positive legislation for people with disabilities, organizing

initiatives within local spaces around the world to further conversation.

"To improve understanding of the situation in each geography, identify local challenges for people with disabilities and facilitate communication among our HR teams worldwide, the Disability Inclusion Office has produced a document that contains all the important legal information relating to this topic precise definition, existence of quotas, penalties for non-compliance, government incentives and more," said Jean-Rmy Touze, head of LVMH's Disability Inclusion Office, in a statement.

"Some great initiatives have been introduced in several countries on an experimental basis," he said.

"The aim now is to expand the scope, so we're trying to provide the maisons with a methodology for replicating these initiatives elsewhere."

One of the group's recent successes includes the equitable hiring practices at Sephora, the LVMH-owned leading specialty retailer of beauty products. In the United States, the brand increased its number of specially-abled employees to 10 percent at distribution centers.

Schooling in inclusivity

The LVMH Institut des Mtiers d'Excellence also offers training for workers with disabilities, addressing the obstacles that they face when working towards a college degree by offering Work Study.

Started in France eight years ago, it is now an implementation around the world, including in Japan, Spain, United States and Italy.

"In developed countries, individuals with disabilities have 50 percent less chance, on average, of obtaining a degree," Mr. Touze said.

"Work Study programs can help close that gap and create attractive career opportunities," he said.

The French program serves hundreds with the help of LVMH's Arpejeh nonprofit. In Chartres at perfumer Guerlain, Vivre et Travailler Autrement also works towards the inclusion of those who are at level three on the autism spectrum.

The four who have been at Guerlain have grown their verbal communication skills, driving Parfums Christian Dior to implement the program as well. In the future, 10 people will work within the two LVMH brands, given access to this program.

"People with disabilities make up 15 percent of the global population," Mr. Touze said in the statement. "Disability is therefore an ordinary part of life of our lives.

"Now and then, a colleague with a disability might need some support," he said. "It's up to us to make it clear that this is completely natural.

"That's the key to making people in this case, people with disabilities feel genuinely included."