



Accessibility + Inclusion for All

Ablr

MEDIA KIT

[Ablr360.com](https://ablr360.com)

About Ablr

Ablr is the leader of accessibility strategy and disability inclusion. Our mission is to equalize the lives of people with disabilities. We do this by providing companies with innovative accessibility and inclusion tools and solutions.

MISSION An equal blend of head and heart.

Heart: It's the Right Thing to Do

“Accessibility and Inclusion for all” is not just our tagline, it's our heartbeat.

Everyone deserves to have the same opportunities. Globally, businesses are realizing accessibility and inclusion are not just boxes to check in order to keep them from a lawsuit. Accessibility and inclusion is a strategic move to fully optimize employees and customers with disabilities. Business Disability Forum and Royal Dutch Shell report that, in a study of 120 global brands, more than 90% of respondents stated that ‘disability inclusion is the right thing to do at a global level. The humanitarian core is undeniable.

MISSION An equal blend of head and heart.

Disability Impacts Everyone

Accessibility and disability inclusion is also relatable. Over 20% of the population lives with a disability. There are several categories of disability:

- Visual - Blindness, low vision, color-blindness
- Auditory- Deafness and hard-of-hearing
- Motor - Inability to use a mouse, slow response time, limited fine motor control
- Cognitive - Learning disabilities, distractibility, inability to remember or focus on large amounts of information

On top of demographic numbers, the nature of disability is wide. Disability can be situational-such as holding a baby in your arms, temporary-such as a broken arm, broken or lost eyeglasses, or permanent. Also, as the population ages, disabilities acquire. Many baby boomers have aging-related issues that make using the web more challenging.

Chances are you know and care about someone who is disabled. What you might not know is the challenges they face with many of the everyday conveniences we take for granted, such as being able to access the web and mobile apps. Ablr is working to remove these barriers.

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Head: It's the Smart Thing to Do.

In the United States, it's estimated the annual discretionary spending of people with disabilities is more than \$200 billion. The global estimate is nearly \$7 trillion. But if people with disabilities can't understand or operate your website, you're missing a lot of potential business.

Ablr helps companies understand the cultural and financial advantages they could be missing out on if they don't allow for full access to their company as customers; and if they don't utilize the strengths and talents of a diverse workforce.

The truth is, disability inequality impacts your business. Want proof?

Companies that hired people with disabilities outperformed their peers and saw a wide variety of improvements. These businesses saw 72% more productivity, 45% better workplace safety, 30% higher profit margins and 200% higher net income.

(Source: Accenture)

E-commerce retailers may be losing up to \$6.9 billion annually to their competitors with more accessible websites.

HOW ABLR DOES IT



Ablr is one of the only firms that employs Americans with disabilities to provide digital accessibility services instead of relying on automated checkers and overlay tools to do the job. We believe the human element truly makes accessibility real for the people who need it. As experts in WCAG standards as well as best practices in inclusive design, our digital accessibility team is uniquely qualified to perform accessibility testing.

We see technology services as a driver of employment for Americans with disabilities. To that end, we combine decades of business experience with our commitment to the blind and low vision community to bring an innovative approach to accessibility.

MEET OUR TEAM

“I often say coming to Ablr was like me coming out of the closet as a blind person. It was the first time I could be open about who I was and be my authentic self.”



Ablr is led by CEO John Samuel. He was diagnosed with a degenerative eye condition while in college, but he did not disclose his eye condition to professors or many other people. “I felt ashamed and didn't want people to know I was going blind,” said Samuel. His career took him all over the world, all the while his vision was diminishing. John thought he could make enough accommodations for himself to accomplish his work. “This ranged from finding a magnifying mouse that would let me enlarge content on my screen, to inverting the color of my display to help me see text better,” said Samuel. John says although he was facing issues navigating the web and using apps on his phone, he didn't know these were accessibility barriers. The word accessibility was not yet in his vocabulary.

MEET OUR TEAM

That changed in 2017 when a friend with the same disease gave Samuel life altering advice: if he wanted to continue his career trajectory, he needed to learn as a blind person. And that's exactly what he did. Samuel began using a screen reader, a form of assisted technology that allows visually impaired users to read the text displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display. He also started disclosing his disability when applying for jobs.

That's when LCI came knocking for John. LCI is one of the largest employers of Americans who are blind or visually impaired, creating meaningful careers and lasting skills that transform lives. LCI creates more than 2,000 products and distributes thousands more through manufacturing, retail, nationwide distribution, and e-commerce channels. In 2017, LCI approached John about launching their new tech division, LCI Tech - now known as Ablr.

MEET OUR TEAM

JOHN SAMUEL
Co-Founder & CEO



John Samuel impacts businesses and people with innovative strategies on digital accessibility. His experience includes stints in domestic and international industries over the last 13 years. While launching and serving as the CEO for Aster Cameroon, a global telecom infrastructure joint venture, he built a \$45 million business bringing internet access across Africa.

Afterward, he became an early member of Homestrings, a USAID backed crowdfunding platform, where he raised capital for startups in emerging markets. John holds his MBA from George Washington University, BS in Accounting from North Carolina State University and Certified Professional in Accessible Core Competencies (CPACC).

At Ablr, John focuses on helping organizations be more inclusive by making digital content accessible for people of all abilities and providing career paths in the knowledge economy for people with disabilities.

MEET OUR TEAM



MIKE IANNELLI
Co-founder & CSO

Mike is a hybrid executive with tenure in firms from both the client and agency side. Mike leads a talented team of thoughtful strategists to deliver a unique blend of strategic, analytical and creative thinking. Under his direction, they are able to simplify even the most complex analysis and formulate meaningful insights for clients.

As a performance marketing wild card, with a lot of unexpected brilliant late night or last minute ideas that are absolutely pivotal in the process, Mike also leads the strategy, execution and optimization of paid media channels for our clients including — search, social, native, programmatic, display, video, affiliate marketing, email marketing and SEO. Having worked with national and global brands like Kate Spade, Hanes Brands, NFL, Dick’s Sporting Goods and Outback Steakhouse, he boasts over 20 years of data-driven experience in performance marketing.

MEET OUR TEAM



JEFFREY HAWTING
Board of Directors

Jeffrey brings both professional experience and personal passion to his role of President at LCI. Before coming to LCI, Jeffrey worked for over two decades in diverse organizations from non-profits to global Fortune 100 companies.

With equally diverse roles in sales management, operations, marketing and more, his enterprise-level perspective allows us to look to the future with confidence. His current focuses are team development, process improvement, and new business development...but his anchor is employment for the blind and visually impaired.

MEET OUR TEAM



DONALD THOMPSON
Board of Directors

With two decades of experience growing and leading firms, Donald Thompson is a thought leader on goal achievement, influencing company culture and driving exponential growth. As an entrepreneur, Donald has led companies which have attained successful exits with strong returns for shareholders and employees.

Donald is an angel investor personally infusing over a million dollars in North Carolina ventures alone. Adept at building teams that accelerate growth, Donald is also a founder of The Diversity Movement and CEO of Walk West, a digital marketing firm led by more than 70% women and/or African Americans, and is recognized by Inc. as the one of the fastest growing companies in the US for 2018, 2019 and 2020.

MEET OUR TEAM



KEVIN ERICKSON
Accessibility Manager

Kevin brings over 10 years of experience specializing in digital accessibility with web and mobile design and build. He comes to the Ablr team from Virginia, where most recently he served as an accessibility consultant at Level Access, providing accessibility guidance, testing, execution, and training.

Prior to his time at Level Access, Kevin worked for the Virginia Department of Education as well as the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services helping solve clients' performance and usability challenges from start to finish. Kevin holds a degree in computer science and multiple certifications including as a Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) and Certified Scrum Master (CSM). When Kevin's not helping clients navigate the world of digital accessibility, you can find him running, bicycling or motorcycling – but only if you can catch him!

MEET OUR TEAM



CARLA SMITH
Technology Services
Representative

Carla conducts usability and accessibility tests on websites and other digital content based on international standards. She joins the Ablr team after a 38-year career with the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Employment Security, where she supported claimants and employers. Carla is currently working towards becoming a CPACC.

When Carla is not knocking down accessibility barriers, she is knocking down pins as a member of the Raleigh Outlaws bowling league!

MEET OUR TEAM



SHANNON GARNER
Technology Services
Representative

As a member of the Ablr tech team, Shannon conducts accessibility tests on websites using a screen reader. Prior to joining the Ablr team, she spent two years working on the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service contract at HP in El Paso, TX.

Shannon also received her certification of completion in hospitality and contact centers from the National Statler Center for Careers in Hospitality Service in Buffalo, NY. Shannon earned her Certification in Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC) in 2019.

Not only is Shannon aiming to eliminate accessibility issues, she is also aiming at the bullseye as a member of the National Blind Dart League!

MEET OUR TEAM



ALYSSA CHEESEMAN
Digital Accessibility
Analyst

Alyssa specializes in identifying accessibility issues using the combination of a screen reader and screen magnification software and makes recommendations based on international standards. She is a recent graduate with a BA in Sociology from the University of Florida in Gainesville. Alyssa received her Certification in Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC) in 2019.

When Alyssa is not weaving ideas into reality, she is weaving yarn into blankets.

MEET OUR TEAM



TRACKER
Official Guide Dog

Tracker (Track Star) is the first guide dog of Ablr. Tracker is an energetic, 60-pound, yellow Labrador Retriever; born in San Rafael, California. Tracker joined Ablr after graduating in 2016 from Guide Dogs for the Blind in Boring, Oregon, as the companion of Shannon Garner.

When Tracker isn't making things more accessible for Shannon by guiding her around physical barriers, you can find him nudging her under the desk with his favorite Nyla bone in his mouth!

MEET OUR TEAM



SHARON DELANEY MCCLOUD
Public Relations & Marketing

Sharon Delaney McCloud is an Emmy Award-winning broadcaster, TEDx Speaker, Certified Diversity Executive CDE®, agency owner, Olympic Torch Bearer, and author who helps leaders & teams improve communication and build resilience to drive business results.

Through her professional development practice at Walk West, a full-service marketing agency, Sharon works with C-Suite executives and emerging leaders at global organizations on developing their message and delivering it with confidence and impact. Prior to launching her company, Sharon spent 20 years as a television journalist covering everything from NASA to politics to the Super Bowl at stations across the country.

STATS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE DISABLED

26% of the population lives with a disability.

There are several categories of disability:

- Visual - Blindness, low vision, color-blindness
- Auditory- Deafness and hard-of-hearing
- Motor - Inability to use a mouse, slow response time, limited fine motor control
- Cognitive - Learning disabilities, distractibility, inability to remember or focus on large amounts of information

Companies who hired people with disabilities outperformed their peers and saw a wide variety of improvements. These businesses saw:

- 72% more productivity
- 45% better workplace safety
- 30% higher profit margins
- 200% higher net income

(Source: Accenture)

People with a disability have double the unemployment rate as those without a disability. Ablr aims to change those statistics by creating new career paths and opportunities in the knowledge economy.

ABLR'S OUTLOOK

Ablr CEO John Samuel is passionate about the accessibility of education.

“When I look at the education statistics for people with disabilities, it makes sense why the employment numbers are low,” said Samuel.

Today, higher education is not limited to a traditional four-year college, but rather community colleges, boot camps, and apprenticeships.

To that end, Ablr plans to launch a new service next year that will provide accessible training and certifications, for people of all abilities. This is just one more step towards removing the barriers that hinder disabled people from entering the workforce. We are hopeful it will pay dividends in the long term.