



Designing Experiences with Inclusivity and Accessibility in Mind



The World Bank Group estimates that over 1.3 billion people across the world live with some form of disability. According to the Global Economics of Disability Report this group with their family and friends has a spending power of \$8 trillion. Yet, only 4% of businesses are focused on making offerings inclusive of disability.

Inclusivity and accessibility are not only subjects for the HR team, but increasingly becoming critical when designing customer experiences. Yet there is still much work which needs to be done in this space to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities across society.

Misaligning your offering and customers' actual needs will inevitably put business revenue at risk. Excluding a whole group of customers is even worse. According to the Global Economics of Disability report, the disability market is almost the size of China. Factor in friends and family close enough to have an emotional attachment to the consumer-related needs of persons with disabilities, and you have a further 2.3 billion consumers. Combined, these two groups account for 53% of the global consumer marketplace.

To design with inclusion and accessibility in mind requires your brand to consider the needs beyond your core target audience and stakeholders. It starts with truly listening and responding to customer needs from a variety of consumer groups and delivering great experiences in doing so. Failure to consider a wider diverse audience when delivering these experiences may threaten customer loyalty and limit the appeal to new customers.

There is still much work which needs to be done in this space to ensure that more emphasis is placed on this matter, and to ensure equal opportunities for people with all types of needs across our society.

Creating Meaningful Experiences, For Everyone



Inclusion can be a source of innovation and growth. There is a massive opportunity for leading brands to address the unmet and undermet market. When designing products, services and **experiences, if diversity and inclusion isn't taken into consideration this could account for 20% of your market not being catered for.**

According to the social model of disability - anyone can be "disabled" by the barriers our surrounding environment places on us, hindering us to fulfill our aspirations. These environmental barriers include buildings, transport and other public places as well as services being developed without thought for the needs of people with disabilities. Brands need to design experiences, products and services to overcome these barriers and enable all potential customers to engage with the brand.

When designing with accessibility and inclusivity in mind, companies need to identify these barriers and find solutions to overcome these. This understanding is key

to crafting better and more accessible experiences for your extended target groups.

What is Inclusive Customer Experience?

One thing we all have in common is that we are all different. Customer journeys should reflect how experiences can change and that not everyone has the same experiences. How consumers interact with your brand can vary from person to person as we all perceive and act differently. Having a disability is no different.

When we think of customer experience, we need to consider that the population is so diverse, designing for people with disabilities becomes easier. Specific journeys for each individual don't need to be created, instead a holistic approach is needed. By taking into consideration as many different types of people as possible during the designing process this will ensure consumers aren't being excluded.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to start designing with inclusivity in mind:

STEP 1

Get management buy-in, build a case and set up a designated committee that involves multiple departments to gain a holistic understanding of your organisation.

STEP 5

Listen to your customers, see what's working and what's not to gain a more inclusive perspective on the customer experience.

STEP 2

Get feedback from your disabled employees and consumers. They can drive much needed innovation, creating meaningful experiences for everyone.

STEP 6

Ask specific questions whilst collecting feedback to understand all the touchpoints within the customers journey so you can easily identify the sticking points and find take action to solve any problems or concerns.

STEP 3

Look at the customer journey to see how your customers are interacting with your brand - are all types of people able to enjoy and have the same experiences as others?

STEP 7

Provide different means for your customers to provide feedback, through video, voice or image to make it easier for everyone to communicate with your brand.

STEP 4

Look how people with disabilities interact with your brand, not just in-store but also online and through marketing, are they being represented? How easy is it for them to interact with your brand? And what can be done to improve these experiences.

Inclusive Design is Better Design

Inclusive Design is the design of an environment/product/service so that it can be accessed and used by as many people as possible, regardless of age, gender and disability. Making services, places and products accessible requires thinking differently. Universal design is about serving everyone and it has become standard practice in cutting-edge organisations.

Inclusive insight and design opens products and services to unmet and undermet markets (revenue) and reduces CX failures instead building in a small amount of cost at the design process to save large, unexpected and unpredictable costs down the line.

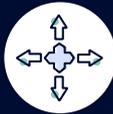
The Principles of Inclusive Design:



Inclusive so everyone can use it safely, easily and with dignity



Responsive taking account of what people say they need and want



Flexible so different people can use it in different ways



Convenient so everyone can use it without too much effort or separation



Accommodating for all people, regardless of their age, gender, mobility, ethnicity or circumstances



Welcoming with no disabling barriers that might exclude some people

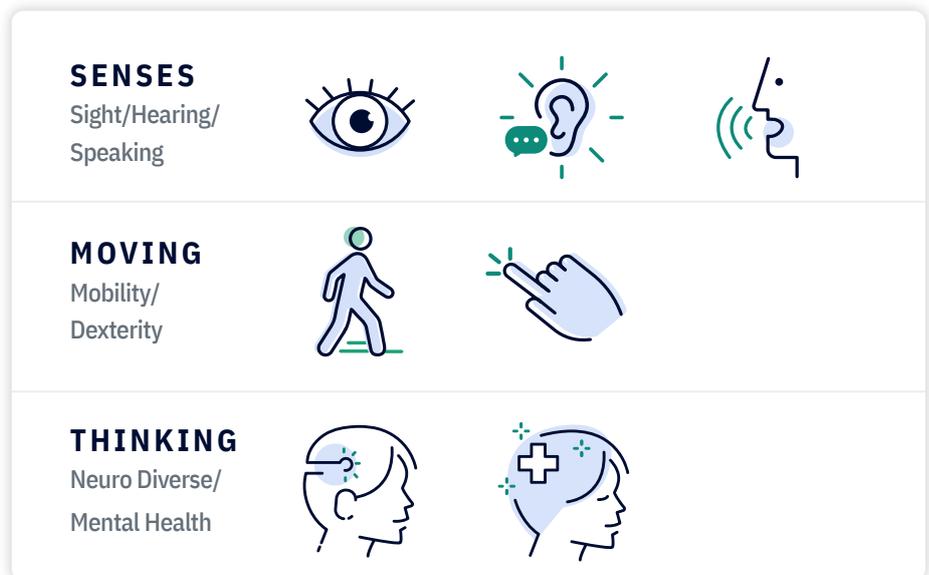


Realistic offering more than one solution to help balance everyone's needs and recognising that one solution may not work for all

Accessibility: Whoever, Wherever, Whenever

Accessibility is focused on ensuring that there are no barriers to serving excellent customer service no matter who you are. True accessibility not only goes beyond serving people who are often commonly referred to as 'disabled' but helps improve access for everyone.

When thinking about your customers and employees, you may think that considering all types of diverse individuals may make things complex, but in reality it can be as simple as thinking about 3 different groups:



A Simple Process to Ensure You Are Not Excluding Customers:

Listen - Listen to your customers and employees to generate greater insight

Design - Take action on what your customers and employees are saying and improve solutions for all

Embed - Ensure you have the processes and tools needed to sustain internal capability

User-Led Design Approach

Businesses must truly understand the disability culture, however, it is difficult to really understand a culture without talking to people who are part of the culture and getting them involved in decision making.

Adapting a user-led design approach allows customer feedback to be at the forefront of decision making. User led

design is based on the understanding of the end user and is driven and refined by user-centric evaluation. This enables the whole user experience to be addressed. The process involves user groups throughout the design and development process and allows for constant feedback and innovation.

Inclusive Experiences for Customers, Employees and your Brand

Whether you have a physical store or are operating digitally, all journeys should be considered when designing the best experiences for all.

Create Inclusive Customer Journeys

Understanding your customer's journey and ensuring everyone has access to the services you offer is not simply a nice to have, but essential in ensuring any business can reach its full potential.

HEAR ALL YOUR CUSTOMER VOICES

Provide the technology that allows clients to collect feedback from individuals whose opinions and feelings otherwise risk being excluded. Consider different feedback collection methods such as voice, video, images.

ADD INCLUSION TO YOUR AGENDA

Add inclusion and diversity to the board meeting agenda with steps for improvements that will be actioned within the next three months following each meeting.

THINK ABOUT TERMINOLOGY AND WORDING

Gain as much insightful feedback as possible by asking the right questions at the right time, be more human and empathetic towards customers and don't just assume they will find everything they want.

Understand and Support Your Employees

Providing employees with the tools and flexibility that they require will enhance productivity, retention and loyalty. Millennials and the younger Generation Z are passionate about equality and inclusion, and they are changing the workplace.

CREATE A DIVERSE TEAM

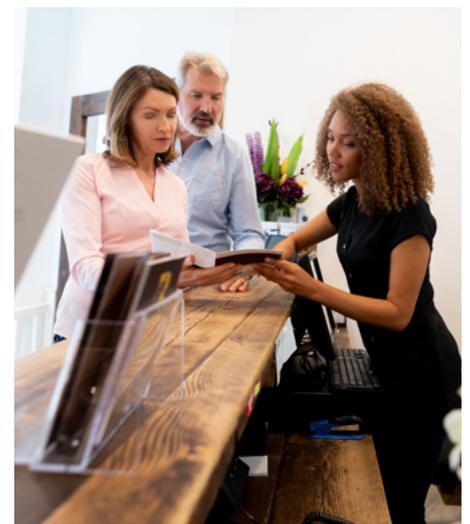
Let employees have their say, like your customers, your employees will also have different needs, having a diverse workforce allows for others to learn from them and also allows them to better understand and engage with your customers.

INVEST AND BUILD AN INCLUSIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Your employees are the backbone of your business. By listening to your employees you can learn and innovate based on the feedback they provide. By making things easier for your employees will in turn make them happier and confident.

RAISE SKILL SETS AND KNOWLEDGE OF EMPLOYEES

Teach employees to understand all forms of ability and support the role they play in creating inclusive environments.



Include, Not Exclude

Add Inclusion to Your Brand Values

As a brand you can have an influence in today's society. In the same way that consumers look to brands to promote environmental concerns, they also now look to brands to do more for humanity, and for inclusion.

Widen Your Target Audience

Don't focus on differences and groups, instead look at the similarities and how you can reach a wide range of people without exclusion.



The Power of Inclusive Design

Understanding your customers' journeys, and ensuring that everyone has access to the services that you offer, is not simply a nice to have, but essential in ensuring any business can reach its full potential.

Designing Inclusively Will Allow You To:

- + Reach an untapped market
- + Increase relevance to your customers
- + Gain broader market research
- + Innovate to provide better services and products
- + Achieve a more consistent customer experience
- + Improve customer experiences using inclusive perspectives
- + Deliver products/services that are more durable to your customers needs

Improving CX using inclusive perspectives will allow you to support your business objectives such as growing sales and reducing costs. Making sure that no one is excluded from sharing their voice is a critical part of this process.

Inclusive design is good design, by taking the time out to assess your customers' needs you will inevitably create better experiences. Inclusive design does what you want and expect for more people more often.

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