

VISIT MESA

CITY LIMITLESS®

P R E S E N T S

The Accessibility Playbook

2022 EDITION

DESTINATIONS • HOTELS • ATTRACTIONS • DINING

PRODUCED IN
CONJUNCTION WITH

TRAVELABILITY
FOUNDATION

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We have partnered with TravelAbility an organization whose purpose is to make travel for people with disabilities easier by educating the travel industry on how to become more accessible for all travelers. Our partnership includes access to The Accessibility Playbook, through which we can educate our destination partners on how they can be more inclusive for visitors (as well as residents) with disabilities. By becoming accessible for people who are disabled today, we are actually preparing for the surge of baby boomers, 40% of whom self-identify as having a disability after

they turn 65; control 58% of all discretionary spending; have an average net worth of \$1.1 mn and have the time to travel. This Playbook includes business cases, best practices, instructional videos, and innovations that you can share with your team to help make Arizona more welcoming to everyone. All Means All!

THE TRAVELABILITY ECO-SYSTEM INCLUDES:

- > 3rd Annual TravelAbility [EMERGING MARKETS SUMMIT](#), a boutique conference covering the growing niches of accessibility, sustainability and DE&I
- > [TRAVELABILITY INSIDER](#), a monthly b2b newsletter designed to raise accessibility awareness for our 2800 readers
- > THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAYBOOK, 38-page resource containing videos, slide decks, technology, products, tips and use case scenarios designed to help any travel organization/company advance their accessibility to next level;
- > [TRAVELABILITY YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#) A video library of our past conference sessions. With nearly 100 videos, this channel is a must see for destinations, partners and stakeholders embarking on their accessibility journey.

The TRAVELABILITY FOUNDATION was formed to further the mission of making travel accessible to all. In the future, we will apply grant funding and donations to subsidize further accessibility initiatives by destinations. Funded by the Destination Ally program and corporate and individual donations, the Foundation strives to make All Means All a reality for travelers with a disability. The Foundation projects include:

- > THE DESTINATION A11Y PROGRAM, A program designed to help destinations accelerate their accessibility initiatives, educate their stakeholders, collaborate on best practices with other destinations and identify their destination as welcoming to ALL travelers
- > [DESTINATIONS WITH ACCESSIBILITY](#), an online portal that makes it easier for travelers with a disability to find information that is helpful in making travel plans. It features over 140 destination landing pages with information about accessibility plus articles from disability travel bloggers highlighting their experiences and often providing itineraries for the showcased destination.
- > [LAUNCHPAD](#), the only pitch fest showcasing technology, services and products that make travel accessible for people with disabilities. TravelAbility has researched and vetted a database of 150+ companies whose products, technologies and services can be introduced by destinations to their stakeholders.

COLLABORATIONS:

- > [PODCAST: EXPLORABLE](#), a podcast featuring interviews with 21 leaders and influencers in the accessible travel space.
- > [ACCESSIBLE JOURNEYS](#), a quarterly on-line travel magazine for consumers with a disability. This is a collaboration with Melange Publishing.

Welcome to the Accessibility Playbook

Welcome to the first edition of The Accessibility Playbook developed by [Travelability](#) in partnership with Visit Mesa. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 26% of adults in the United States are living with some form of disability. The 61 million Americans living with a disability represent the largest underserved minority in the country. The size of this market represents an incredible opportunity for the tourism industry to welcome new visitors to our destination.



Visit Mesa believes that all visitors should explore our city with confidence knowing they are welcomed by a community that prioritizes compassion, kindness, awareness and understanding. As the first Autism Certified City in the country, according to International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), Mesa is now nationally recognized for its efforts to welcome travelers of all abilities. Through [technologies and programs](#) such as Aira, the Hidden Disability Sunflower Program, Able Eyes and Threshold 360 virtual tours - with more in the development stages - we are on our way to becoming the most accessible city in the United States.

We now call upon you to help further these endeavors and elevate the visitor experience through your own personal and organizational education and training. Please utilize the wealth of continually updated information from a variety of experts in this playbook, to better understand and support travelers with disabilities. These pages are a guide to help get you started, providing you with resources, contacts, technology innovations and educational videos.

We look forward to your feedback, insights, and suggestions as we continue on this journey together.

Marc J. Garcia
President and CEO
Visit Mesa

For additional information and guidance on how to use this playbook, contact: info@travelability.net.

WHO BENEFITS FROM ACCESSIBILITY?

- People with disabilities, including permanent, temporary, visible or invisible
- Families with young children
- Elderly people
- Travelers with luggage
- Shoppers with heavy bags
- Delivery people
- Very small or very large people
- Pregnant women

Source: Destination British Columbia

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH AND TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Part of what makes communicating about disabilities ambiguous is that people with disabilities are not a homogenous group. A good practice is to ask how someone prefers to describe themselves and, if you inadvertently offend someone with your language, apologize and ask them to share with you their preferred language. There are generally two ways to approach this: person-first or identity-first. Neither is right or wrong; we should simply honor an individual's preference.

Person-first language: Person-first language emphasizes the person first – their individuality, their complexity, their humanness and their equality.

Example: Use “a person with epilepsy” instead of “an epileptic” and “people with disabilities” instead of “the disabled”.

Identity-first language: Identity-first language emphasizes that the disability plays a role in who the person is and reinforces disability as a positive cultural identifier.

Example: Use “disabled person” instead of “person with disabilities” and “autistic person” instead of “a person with autism.”

Note: Some believe that person-first language is based around the idea that disabilities are somehow insulting or problematic, and that separating those characteristics from themselves compounds those negative connotations, whereas identity-first language celebrates their disabled identity. [See the CDC factsheet.](#)

TIPS TO COMMUNICATE TO AND ABOUT INDIVIDUALS WITH A DISABILITY

TIPS	USE	DO NOT USE
Emphasize abilities, not limitations	Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
	Person who uses a device to speak	Can't talk, mute
Do not use language that suggests the lack of something	Person with a disability	Disabled, handicapped
	Person of short stature	Midget
	Person with cerebral palsy	Cerebral palsy victim
	Person with epilepsy or seizure disorder	Epileptic
	Person with multiple sclerosis	Afflicted by multiple sclerosis
Emphasize the need for accessibility, not the disability	Accessible parking or bathroom	Handicapped parking or bathroom
Do not use offensive language	Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, spastic
	Person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability	Slow, simple, moronic, defective, afflicted, special person
	Person with an emotional or behavioral disability, a mental health impairment, or a psychiatric disability	Insane, crazy, psycho, maniac, nuts
Avoid language that implies negative stereotypes	Person without a disability	Normal person, healthy person
Do not portray people with disabilities as inspirational only because of their disability	Person who is successful, productive	

Source: Center for Disease Control (CDC)

ADA REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAVEL ORGANIZATIONS

For Hotels and Lodging Facilities

Below is a link to an overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that addresses hotels and lodging. Wheelchairtravel.org has taken difficult to decipher government descriptions for ADA regulations and re-packaged them in this easy-to-read document [here](#).

A Beginner's Guide to ADA Compliant Websites. Search Engine Journal provides an overview of what you need to know about website compliance, which you can find by clicking [this link](#).

W.A.V.E. is developed and made available as a free community service by WebAIM at Utah State University. Originally launched in 2001, WAVE has been used to evaluate the accessibility of millions of web pages.

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY 101

Making your website accessible so people with disabilities can use the features is essential for any business. The CDC estimates 15 percent of the population has some form of disability and, under the eyes of the law, the website is now considered the physical locations.

A. Design: Website Compliance Checklist

1. Screen-reader Compatible Web Pages. Web pages must be readable by electronic “screen readers” – which are devices commonly used by the visually impaired to surf the internet.
2. Alt-tagged Images. Images must have “alt tags” (a type of metadata) which will help visually-impaired users to identify the image via text or via a screen reader. Search engine optimizers will know of alt-tags as a way to optimize images for ranking high in ‘Google Images’.
3. Alt-tagged Tables. If you're using tables on any web pages, they must also have alt-tags – similar to those used with images – to help explain each column via text. The user's screen-reader will then read that text aloud, describing the contents of the table.
4. Automatic Scripting. Any scripted display usage of image mapping should be accompanied by textual alternatives.
5. Style Sheet Independence. Your web pages shouldn't need a stylesheet to display in a way that is understandable. They should be readable to screen readers, most of which cannot load style sheets.
6. Accessible Forms. Web forms should be usable even without a mouse, and each field should be labeled.
7. Text Links to Plugins. If your website requires a specific plugin to work correctly, you should present the link to that plugin in text form.
8. Inclusive Color Schemes. Your website should not contain any colors or color combinations that are either integral to the correct usage of your website, or which may confuse those with color blindness in any way pertaining to your website, products or services.
9. Keyboard-friendly Browsing. Your website shouldn't be reliant on the usage of a mouse or touchpad. Users who wish to navigate using only keyboard keys should be able to do so.

10. Harmless Website Design. Your website should not serve images or videos that can cause seizures.

Take the Accessibility Etiquette Quiz

Western University in Canada published a short disability etiquette quiz to help nondisabled people learn to “respectfully interact with people with disabilities.” The quiz is a great conversation starter and an opportunity for teams to learn more about the disability community. [Take the quiz.](#)

BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE



MARKET SIZE AND POTENTIAL

Overview of the Disability Travel Market in America.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 26% of adults living in America are living with some type of disability. (See infographic below). The 61 million Americans living with a disability represent the largest underserved minority in America.



Research:

Open Doors Organization: 2020 Market Study: Travel and Spending Patterns of American Adults with a Disability. Open Doors Organization released their 4th annual nationwide study on the travel patterns and spending of American adults with disabilities. Conducted by The Harris Poll in June/July 2020, it focuses on 2018-19 when travel was still booming. During that 2-year period, 27 million travelers with a disability took a total of 81 million trips and spent \$58.7 billion on just their own travel, up from \$34.6 billion in the prior 2015 Study. Spending on air travel also increased to \$11 billion, up from \$9 billion in 2015. As in prior years, the 2020 Market Study provides details on Internet and mobile technology use and includes sections on travel destinations, air travel, cruise travel accommodations. New this year are questions on preferred activities at the destination and travel plans post-pandemic.

See instructions on how to order the 2020 ODO Market Study as well as purchase the 2015, 2005 and 2002 Reports. [Click here](#).

10 key findings from the 2020 ODO Market Study that can help build a business case for accessible travel

1. 70% of have taken at least at least one trip – (37% outside US-28% in 2015)
2. 84% Stayed in paid accommodations (hotels/home rentals (76% in 2015)
3. 55%: took at least one trip by air. (43% in 2015)
4. Travel spend: \$57 billion on their own travel (\$34bn in 2015)
5. Travel with companion: 69% Average party size: 2.9
6. Travel with organized group 5% (2% in 2015)
7. Rented a car or van: 40% (26% in 2015)
8. Post Covid: 91% plan to travel once restrictions are lifted; 10% will travel
9. Requests for wheelchair assistance at U.S. airports has increased 17% YoY since 2015
10. U.S. Regions traveled in past 5 years: West: 45%, Midwest: 20%, East: 32%, South: 57%.

Our Takeaways:

- The center of the disabled traveler audience is a senior citizen who is 62 years old (47% are retired and 57% have aged into a mild or moderately severe disability.)
- Compared to the 2015 report, disabled travelers traveled more frequently and spent 68% more than the earlier study and 2017 was a breakthrough year for air travel as request for wheelchair assistance skyrocketed 30% from 2016-2017
- The most popular region for travel has been the South, where 57% of survey respondents traveled during the past five years.

The complete 78-page report may be purchased from [Open Doors Organization](#) for \$560.

Key Facts about Baby Boomers:

1. Baby Boomers 75 million
2. 49% are 65 and older
3. By 2030 60 million
4. Wealthiest : control 64.7 trillion—57% of US wealth. 40% of GDP from baby boomers
5. Control 75% of US companies.
6. 38.6% of Baby Boomers take vacations with their grandchildren
7. Ten Tips for [Communicating with Baby Boomers](#)

State of the American Traveler with Disabilities: Commissioned specifically for the TravelAbility Summit, this is the very latest research on the attitudes and needs of US travelers with disabilities. This custom research was conducted in early August 2021 by Destination Analysts and Miles Partnership as part of Destination Analysts' ongoing COVID-19 travel insights research. The research shares the latest insights on the U.S. travel market, the impact of the new Delta variant of COVID-19 and the opportunities for destinations and tourism businesses to engage with, support and convert travelers with disabilities.

- [View the presentation slides](#) (with our research partners, [Miles Partnership](#) and [Destination Analysts](#). August 2021.)

Conducted during August 2021. Available at www.milespartnership.com/travelability

Signs that Accessibility is a trend that has Gone Mainstream

At Travelability we find that accessibility is often a “nice to have” but not a “must have.” But in between “nice to have” and “must have” is “cool to have.” When prominent consumer brands announce their entry into the world of accessibility, it generates a great deal of positive P.R. and internal pride among employees and management. Here are 10 examples.

1. Nike is leading the sneaker marathon with [Fly Ease](#), a hands-free adaptive shoe
2. Unilever comes up smelling roses with [Degree Inclusive](#)-world’s first adaptive deodorant
3. Tommy Hilfiger snaps to attention with [Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive](#)
4. Ugg’s warms our footsies with [Ugg’s Universal](#) inclusive booties
5. Target hits the mark with [sensory friendly clothing](#)
6. Walmart introduces the [Adaptive Clothing Showroom](#)
7. Starbucks uses Aira to assist blind [customers with their morning coffee habit](#)
8. Abilities Adaptivewear features an [insulin pump belt](#) in hot pink
9. SlickChicksOnline shocks the uptight with [adaptive intimate wear](#)
10. Amazon Prime included “Movies and TV about People with Disabilities” as one of their filters during December 2021.

Academy Nominates Two Disability-themed for Awards in 2021

For the first time ever, two disability themed full length motion pictures--“[Crip Camp](#)” and “[Sound of Metal](#)” were among the 10 Oscar nominees this year. And Crip Camp- is now being produced as Broadway musical.

A Google search for disability modeling/talent agencies turns up [these seven results](#)

Determine Economic Impact of Today’s Disabled Travelers

DO THE MATH: HYPOTHETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- a. Target Population market in surrounding states: 14 mn
- b. Adult population in target market: 10 mn
- c. Percentage of population who identify as having a disability: 26%* (CDC 2019 report)
- d. Percentage of people with disabilities who have made at least one trip: 70% (Open Doors/Harris Market Study 2020)
- e. Per traveler in-destination spend: \$353.00 (Open Doors Market Study)

1. Determine Target Population: 10 mn (target audience) X 26% (identify as having a disability)=2.6million (total target audience)
2. Determine potential disabled base : 2.6 million X .70% =1.82 mn
3. Economic impact: 1.82 mn X \$353 = \$640,000,000

(Source: 2020 American Adults with Disabilities: Travel and Hospitality. Open Doors/Harris Poll Survey)

Economic Impact of Tomorrow's Disabled Travelers: Baby Boomer 65+

FACTS:

Baby Boomers: 71 million

They control 56% of all discretionary spending

40% self-identify as having a disability after they turn 65

90% travel at least once a year

80% retired

63% travel during shoulder of off-season

Today: 12.5mn disabled travelers

Tomorrow: (over the next 8 years): 30.9 million travelers with a disability

Source: AARP Travel Study 2020, *Health Today*

TRAVELABILITY

TODAY'S DISABILITY TRAVELER: 2020

- 15.2% of disabled Americans travel : 12.8 mn
- Average age: 63
- Average party size: 2.9 people



Source: Open Doors Harris Poll Study 2020

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TRAVELABILITY

TOMORROW'S DISABLED TRAVELER



\$1.1 million
(average US net worth)



\$13 trillion
inheritance *(globally)*

80% are retired
63% travel during shoulder or offseason



77 MILLION
BABY BOOMERS

Source: AARP

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- IF YOU'RE INCLUSIVE FOR TODAY'S **12.7 MN** DISABLED TRAVELERS YOU'LL BE INCLUSIVE FOR THE 77 MN BABY BOOMERS, **30.9 MN** OF WHICH WILL AGE INTO A DISABILITY ONCE THEY HAVE TURNED 65



PROVIDING INFORMATION



While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides a baseline of physical infrastructure, there is no ADA for information. This section includes tips and examples of accessible landing pages with information that will result in more accurate expectations and fewer complaints from guests while serving as a reference resource that will help internal team members answer questions

WHERE TO START

Why have an accessible landing page?

If travel companies are accessible for people who are disabled today, they will be prepared for tomorrow’s baby boomers, 40% of whom, according to *Health Today*, will be aging into a disability after they turn 65. “My baby boomer and senior clients won’t even consider any destination or supplier that doesn’t have accessibility information on their website.” Kristy Durso, CEO Incredible Memories Travel

Important baby boomer stats:

- They control 58% of discretionary spending in the U.S.
- Average net worth: \$1.1 million
- They stand to inherit \$13 trillion from their parents worldwide
- 78% are retired
- 90% plan to take at least one trip per year.
- 63% vacation during shoulder/lower season
- Explosive Growth: due to baby boomers adults w/disabilities will grow from 12.5mn to 36million over the next 8 years.
- Explosive growth of accessibility due to aging demographics as well as media and consumer products

LANDING PAGES

ACCESSIBLE LANDING PAGE vs ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE:

What’s the Difference?

Accessible Landing Page	Accessible Website
Purpose: Aggregates links to accessible content for more accurate expectations	Renders website technically for people w/ disabilities
Purpose: Visitors and residents can find all accessible DMO, Hotel or attraction features on DMO’s, in one place.	Make your website useable for people w/ disabilities.
Provided by: Gathering all links one place.	Technology providers

How to Get Started Making an Accessible Landing Page

Where to find accessible experiences and information to include (benchmarking and research):

- Google “accessible things to do in _____” for articles about accessibility
 - Survey your stakeholders (see sample questionnaire below)
 - Partner with local disability organizations
 - Museums and major attractions frequented by locals (most zoos and local cultural organizations have an ADA coordinator)
 - City managers for accessible hiking trails
 - Major attraction chains (i.e. iFLY indoor skydiving, Madame Tussaud’s, etc.)
 - Accessible transportation from airport/train stations
 - Wheelchair and medical equipment rentals
5. Links: Link directly to the accessibility page url of accessible landing page attraction, hotel, restaurant, museum
 6. Research: Employ local college students to help research accessible features
 7. Transportation: Include accessible transportation links (i.e. airport transportation, buses, trains, local taxi companies, car rental companies)
 8. Special Equipment Rental: Include links to medical device /wheelchair rentals
 9. ADD HOTELS with POOL LIFTS as a way to differentiate them from other properties

Survey Your Industry

The 20 Questions Accessibility Report Form

General:

1. Do you have a dedicated and detailed accessibility page on your website?
2. Are people with disabilities included in your marketing materials?
3. Does your website meet web accessibility standards?

For attractions and tour experiences:

4. Do you have quieter times that people with disabilities may visit?
5. Do you have multiple ways to purchase tickets?
6. Do you fast-track visitors who are unable to stand in a queue for long periods of time?
7. Do you have relief areas for service animals?

For Hotels:

8. Do your accessible bathroom offer roll in showers?
9. Does your accessible room offer handheld shower heads lever taps?
10. Does your accessible bathroom have toilet and shower grab bars?
11. Do you offer multiple options for booking (i.e. web, text, phone)?

12. Are staff on hand to help with luggage if needed?
13. Are your staff aware of transportation companies that are disability friendly?
14. Are your light switches, electrical outlets accessible for people in wheelchairs using one hand?
15. Do you have a list of local accessible restaurants?
16. Are your staff trained on guest evacuation requirements in case of emergency?
17. Do you offer vibrating alarm clocks w/ flashing lights on loan?

Dining:

18. Are your food menus available in large print versions?
19. Does your restaurant offer “quiet spaces” for guests who are hearing impaired or have cognitive disabilities?
20. Do you offer reading glasses, flashlight or magnifying glass if needed?

Add This Link to Your Website to Promote More Accurate Expectations

LINK: [Contact us about this page](#)

DIALOGUE BOX

Help Us Improve this Page

Something's not right.

If you find something that should be included or something that is please let us know.

Something needs fixing

Something needs to be added

Please describe it here (300 characters max):

Type here...

SUBMIT

Thank you for helping us improve!

EXAMPLES OF LANDING PAGE EXCELLENCE





STATE: New York: NY Surveyed their DMO's, hired a consultant who spot checked accessibility features and developed a formula for economic impact based on targeted tourism markets and local. [Visit the site.](#)



CITY: Indianapolis CVB-indy It was developed with local disability organizations that not only suggested content, but promoted the site through to their local membership base. [Visit the site.](#)



PROVINCE: Destination British Columbia. Converted their accessible itineraries that became tourism product that can be packaged for groups or individuals. [Visit the site.](#)



COUNTY: The Palm Beaches: Curated the best accessible features from the county's 39 cities Palm Beach County <https://www.thepalmbeaches.com/accessibility-guide-palm-beaches>



HOTEL: Holiday Inn Santa Maria Included images taken with iPhone and 20 Accessible FAQ's to give guests more accurate expectations <https://www.hisantamariahotel.com/rooms/accessibility>



ATTRACTION: The Ringling Museum: Includes an abundance of accessibility features all organized beautifully. <https://www.ringling.org/accessibility>

Other resources to include on your landing pages:

- Accessible transportation.
- Medical device/wheelchair/scooter rentals
- Converting accessibility assets into tourism product.
- Build an accessible itinerary with multiple things to do
- Build itinerary for blind guests
- Autism family itineraries.

Creating Content and Promoting Your Landing Page

- Convene a Disability 101 workshop for your staff utilizing experts from various local disability groups (mobility, blindness, neurodiversity etc)
- Subscribe to www.travelabilityinsider.com for updates on products, services and research
- Promote the existence of your accessibility offerings to locals and prospective visitors.
- News releases to local media outlets
- Partner with local/county disability organizations
- Targeted campaigns via social media platforms
- Reach out to disability travel bloggers
- List your Accessible Landing Page on TravelAbility.net

TOP TIPS FOR BECOMMING ACCESSIBILITY- FRIENDLY



MAKE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO GET INFORMATION

- Let people know about the different ways your business is accessible
- Ensure your website meets web accessibility standards
- Create a dedicated and detailed accessibility page on your website
- Include people with disabilities in your marketing materials
- Use large print, easy-to-read fonts, short sentences and, where possible, icons in online or printed information
- Share accessibility-related testimonials from your customers on your website, social media and other sites, such as Tripadvisor

Source: Destination British Columbia



Customer Service

- Train staff on disability awareness and ensure they are familiar with the accessible features of your business
- Focus on the person, not their disability
- Speak directly to the customer, not their personal assistants

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We would like to thank Kathleen Harvey, Manager, Visitor Services, Destination British Columbia for sharing this series of accessibility tips below as well as the Tips for Hotels and Attractions.

- Use respectful and appropriate language
- Reduce background noise
- Don't make assumptions—everyone is different
- Welcome service animals. Never attempt to pat or distract a service animal, but feel free to offer a water bowl

In and Around Public Spaces

- Make sure all external and internal routes are free from obstacles. Routes should have firm, well maintained surfaces
- Use bright, contrasting colors to create visual contrast between key facility spaces, such as entrances
- Create clear sight lines between the entryway and service counter
- Make your entrance level, or use a portable ramp
- Ensure the floor or ground is non-slip and free from tripping hazards
- Add safety markings to glass doors

Assistance

- Ask the customer if they want help before providing assistance
- Ensure chairs are available for those who need them
- Offer alternative formats and communication supports, such as pen and paper, hearing loops or magnifying glasses

IN GENERAL -- TIPS FOR ATTRACTIONS

A quality experience is one of the most important things you can offer your customers. Accessibility removes barriers so everyone feels welcome when they visit your business. North Americans with disabilities spend an estimated \$19 billion per year on travel—and that doesn't include the friends and family they travel with. Here's how you can attract new and returning business from this important sector:

Marketing

- Tell people about your accessibility features in the same places you promote your attraction, including Google, Visitor Centers, Tripadvisor, HelloBC.com, and social media
- Include images of people with disabilities in your marketing materials
- Suggest quieter times to visit, and describe where queuing is required
- Create an Accessibility Site Guide that identifies rest areas, shade, water, weather shelters, and quiet areas,

Wayfinding and interpretation

- Starting outside the parking area, ensure that clear arrival, exit and directional signs can be read in all light conditions and from a distance



- Place high contrast signs at an appropriate level for someone in a wheelchair
- Consider tactile signage and pictograms
- Ensure paths of travel are wide, even, slip resistant and free of barriers or obstacles
- Consider offering multiple formats for interpretative materials, such as print, audio and subtitled video

Customer Service and Amenities

- Offer multiple methods to purchase tickets
- Have dedicated staff to support visitors with accessibility needs
- Fast-track visitors who are unable to stand in a queue for long periods of time
- Consider providing outlets for people with power wheelchairs, scooters, and other electronic mobility devices and medical equipment
- Clearly identify a relief area for service animals
- Host disability-specific days and times, and consider concessions for personal attendants and caregivers

Dining



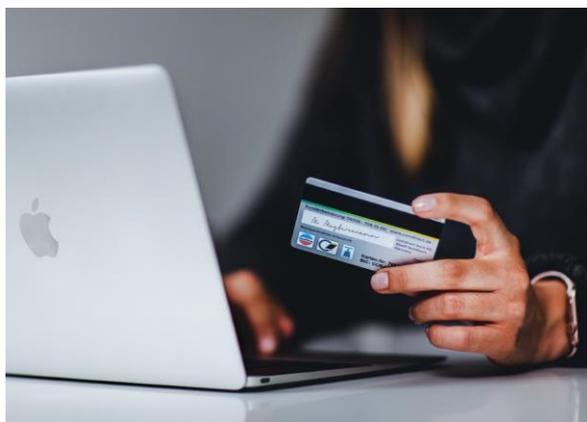
- Design food areas in ways that mobility device users can easily navigate
- Provide written menus and other information in large print versions, using easy-to-read

fonts like 18-point Arial. Encourage staff to read menus aloud when required

- Place utensils within reach of wheelchair users
- Offer bendable straws and cup with handles

TIPS FOR HOTELS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Booking



- Offer multiple options for booking, including web, email, text and phone
- Include images on your website of accessible features like entrances, reception, rooms, bathrooms and on-site amenities, as well as detailed accessibility information
- Ask every visitor whether they have specific needs or requirements
- Offer a range of contact methods for questions, feedback and complaints
- Avoid soft or thick pile carpeting, or loose mats
- Make sure staff are on-hand to assist with luggage when requested
- Have at least one low counter
- Install a hearing loop at reception and in conference facilities
- Provide information in large print
- Offer seating
- Ensure staff are aware of transportation companies that are disability-friendly

Guest Service Tips and Practices



- Ensure guestrooms provide clear spaces to walk or roll without bumping into furniture
- Make sure light switches, thermostats and electrical outlets are accessible for people in wheelchairs to reach using one hand
- Install telephones with large buttons that are compatible with hearing aids
- Wash bed linens and towels with non-perfumed and eco-friendly detergent
- Offer rooms with a roll-in shower
- Install non-slip bathroom floors (wet and dry)
- Install handheld shower heads and lever taps
- Install toilet and shower grab bars
- Offer bath mats, shower stools, toilet seat height raisers and commode chairs

Dining

- Use plain English and large fonts on signage and menus
- Take room service orders via text to assist deaf guests
- Provide adequate space in restaurants or cafés for wheelchairs to move between areas



- Provide a separate quiet space in the restaurant for guests who are hard of hearing or have cognitive disabilities
- Provide a selection of seats with and without arms
- Offer reading glasses or a flashlight, if needed
- Have a list, or ensure staff are aware of local and accessible restaurants

Checkout

- Offer flexible arrangements for checkout
- Ask customers for feedback
- If you've implemented changes as a result of feedback, follow up with the visitor who suggested the changes so he or she is aware

Extras

- Create a Welcome Kit, in large print, with accessibility information about your business, nearby attractions, transportation and sites of interest
- Have vibrating alarm clocks with flashing lights available for loan
- Use visual and vibrating alerts for emergencies
- Ensure your staff understand and have recorded guests' evacuation requirements in case of emergency

TIPS FOR GUESTS WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

- Flexibility: Does your check-in or ticketing processes offer modifications or flexible options you can provide to expedite the process or avoid waiting in lines, etc.
- Provide Visual Images: Do you have videos or 360-degree tours can be helpful as well to prepare visitors for what to expect?
- Provide Information on your website: Do you have details about available accommodations, safety guidelines, or any special programs that you offer on your website?
- Train your staff: Are your staff trained with tools they need in order to assist guests with cognitive disabilities?
- Processes. Do you have concrete processes in place for individuals who may become overwhelmed or need additional assistance and that these are shared with all staff?
- Remember that sometimes, it can take time to implement accessibility options and that's ok - progress still helps you move toward your goals.

Tips for hotels/attraction/restaurant suppliers

- Room Preference: Ask guest for their preference of room location. Some guest may prefer to as far from the elevator as possible, others may not. booking request hotel to locate autistic family clients as far from the elevator as possible
- Alarms: Does hotel have a door/window alarm to discourage elopements?
- Restaurants: Do they have private or secluded dining areas?
- Attractions: Do they have sensory zones or offer specific times/programs for autistic families during the year?

Cognitive tips courtesy of International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Services (IBCCES.com).

E-LEARNING TRAINING VIDEOS FOR HOTEL EMPLOYEES



We are pleased to share the following e-learning videos as part of this playbook. Training videos around accessibility are difficult to find. e-learning videos that were produced by the accessibility director of Scandic Hotels, a chain of 235 hotels throughout Scandinavia and Germany.

Understanding guest needs by disability:

- REDUCED MOBILITY: How to welcome a Guest with reduced mobility. [▶ Watch video.](#)
- BLINDNESS: Welcoming a Guest who is Blind: [▶ Watch video.](#)
- DEAFNESS: Welcoming a Guest who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. [▶ Watch video.](#)
- WHEELCHAIR USER: Serving a Guest in a wheelchair: [▶ Watch video.](#)
- DISABILITY SENSITIVITY: Training video: [▶ Watch video.](#)

Understanding guests needs by hotel team assignment:

- RECEPTION DESK: How to work the reception desk when checking in someone with a disability. [▶ Watch video.](#)
- RESTAURANT: When working in the Restaurant. [▶ Watch video.](#)
- HOUSEKEEPING: When Working in Housekeeping for an accessible room. [▶ Watch video.](#)

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ACCESSIBLE HOTELS



EASY LOW COST/NO COST FIXES FOR COMMON ACCESSIBILITY PROBLEMS

For Guest Who Use Wheelchairs:

- Hand dryers in accessible public bathrooms too high for wheelchair users: Should be positioned lower or offer paper towel dispenser within reach.
- Accessible bathroom and hotel room doors are too heavy. Using an Allen wrench, reduce pressure to 5 lbs.
- Hotel bank elevator buttons are often blocked by waste receptacle, ashtray or plants. Move obstacles. Remove one of the obstacles.
- Restaurant table spacing too tight to maneuver wheelchair around without inconveniencing other customers. Reposition tables/chairs to create an access lane wide enough for wheelchairs, which will also help servers.
- The angle of portable ramps is sometimes too steep for wheelchair access. Purchase an adjustable Roll A Ramp. Cost: \$329+
- Accessible room temperature thermostat room that is often blocked by an armchair. Move armchair to less obtrusive location.
- Disabled guest in wheelchair are not able to use bathroom mirrors. Purchase a portable beauty mirror available for \$17.99 on Amazon
- Electrical outlets in accessible rooms often located behind side tables for bedside lamps. Install easy-to-reach outlet above bedside table.
- Chords to open drapes in hotel rooms are often blocked by a chair. Move the chair.
- Deep carpeting in accessible room impedes wheelchair movement. Heavy duty plastic mats can be purchased for \$59.95 on Amazon
- All hotel check-in counters too high for wheelchair users to reach. Train reception staff to meet guest in front of check in counter.
- Hotel website lacks images of accessible sleeping room, bathroom and hotel entranceway. Have someone use a smart phone to snap images of entranceway, accessible sleeping room and bathroom and post them to website.
- Accessible pathways on grounds are unmarked. Make accessible routes visible without making signs by using colors to mark the path.
- Accessible parking space unable to accommodate vehicles with side door ramps
- Towel racks too high and unreachable. Reposition towel racks. (Ave. Cost: \$65)
- Shower faucets are unreachable from shower seat. Reposition seat closer to shower.
- No shower seat in accessible bathroom. Shower seat available for \$41 on Amazon.

**CONVINCING
HOTELS TO
INVEST IN
ACCESSIBILITY**

≥ [View the power-point deck](#)

For Blind Guests

- Create “action alley,” a surface (carpeting/mat) used for ingress and egress
- Housekeepers unknowingly move personal contents for blind guests making. Train housekeeping staff not to move personal effects for blind guests.
- Blind guests cannot distinguish shampoo from conditioner. Provide iPad at check-in with www.Aira.io and www.bemyeyes.com uploaded where volunteers come in via smartphone to offer assistance.
- TV remote only accessible through description and memorization. Television channels and programming available only visually. Thermostat available only visually. Provide iPad at check-in with www.bemyeyes.com uploaded where volunteers come in via smartphone.
- No service dog amenities. Provide poop pick up bags, dog bowls and relief areas at check-in.

For Guests with a Hearing Impairment

- No visible way for hearing impaired to know when phone is ringing or someone is at the door. Use visual cues i.e. blinking light at the door or purchase a vibrating pillow. [Available here](#).
- Install hearing loop at check in.

For Guests with Cognitive Disabilities

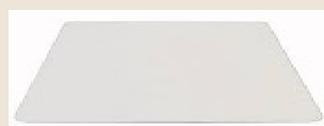
- Autistic families often assigned rooms near elevator when it should be as far away as possible.
- Distribute a “Century Bag” with objects that will reduce sensory issues.

AD HOC ACCESSIBLE HOTEL TOOLKIT/SHOPPING LIST

These are the basic 13 items any hotel manager should have available to accommodate guests with a disability (Keep them in storage until they are put in the rooms before the guests check in). The mobility items came to use courtesy of Tapooz Travel and can be mostly purchased on Amazon.

PRODUCT	PRICE	IMAGE
Bathtub Transfer Chair	\$204	
Shower Chair	\$41.09	
Raised Toilet Seat	\$39.77	
FOLDABLE LIGHTWEIGHT RAMPS		
4' & 6' Suitcase style	\$109.00	
Adjustable Step-Up (4/6/8")	\$33.99	
Door Threshold Ramp (2) and/or step over	\$99	

CONTINUED: AD HOC ACCESSIBLE HOTEL TOOLKIT/SHOPPING LIST

PRODUCT	PRICE	IMAGE
Curtain Pull Rods (with round grab)	\$29.90	
Stand alone Mirror (with and without light)	\$17.99	
Hand-held shower head (to replace regular shower head)	\$26.99	
Quick adapt shower head (goes straight on the spout)	\$9.99	
Bed transfer slide board	\$37.99	
Movable grab bars with lockable suction cups . (short, medium and long)	\$27.99	
Heavy duty plastic mats (36"x48" / set of 6) For high-pile carpeting to create a solid path-of-travel for manual chair users	\$59.95	

CONTINUED: AD HOC ACCESSIBLE HOTEL TOOLKIT/SHOPPING LIST

PRODUCT	PRICE	IMAGE
AUTISM		
GE Window/Door Personal Alert Security System to prevent elopement	\$12.86 (for two) Amazon	
Fly for ALL . Flight simulations App produced by Alaska Airlines.	Free	
Mini Sensory Travel Kit	\$65-\$109, Fun and Function	
IBCCES Autism Card Helps identify special accommodations for user.	Free	
AUTISM KITS		
WsdCAM Door Alarm	\$39.95 Amazon prevent elopement	

ASSISTIVE INNOVATIONS FROM THE LAUNCHPAD PITCHFEST



LAUNCHPAD PRODUCTS THAT CAN BE USED BY DESTINATIONS AND SUPPLIERS

The following products were the finalists at TravelAbility’s “LAUNCHPAD” the worlds only pitch event for adaptive innovations, technologies and services that help make travel easier for people with disabilities.

- [Revolve Air](#): What happens when an engineer with a background i designing Formula One cars and Flying Taxis develops wheelchair small and light enough to fit as carry-on.

Travel Use Case: Revolve air can either be purchased outright, or as an on-demand rental via an app. It may also be rented via airport concessions. [Watch video](#).

- [WelcoMe](#): An inclusive customer service app that alerts businesses when a disabled user is 15 minutes from their location. Includes information about disability and purpose of visit. Additionally, the “Button” companion app [enables users to open doors and operate pedestrian crossings with their smartphone](#). (Scotland).

Travel Use Case: DMO’s can persuade their attractions, restaurants and museums partners to engage with WelcoMe as an instantaneous training partner. And the “Button” app addresses the fact that 41% of disabled travelers name heavy doors as the greatest obstacle they encounter when traveling.

- [Alinker](#). What began as an innovative non-motorized “[walking-bike](#)” designed for people with mobility challenges who are looking to maintain an active lifestyle, has evolved into a wellness ecosystem that includes Alinker yoga classes, nutrition programs supplemented by a produce farm in Kentucky that employs disabled workers. (Canada)

Travel Use Case: Resort Hotels, Cruise Lines can use them as innovative amenities for those using walkers and DMO’s can recommend them to city managers/recreational managers.

- [Mobi-Mat](#): Not only does the Mobi-mat produce slip-free [Rollout mats for beaches](#) for uneven surfaces it also makes floating wheelchairs for beach and water use. (France).

Travel Use Case: DMO’s can recommend both products to beach and watersports nature providers to enhance their accessibility for wheelchair users. Meanwhile, hotels with pools that are not equipped with a power lift may use the floating chair as an accommodation that may reduce the chance of being sued.

- [Vispero](#): Vispero has introduced the Jaws Kiosk, portable kit that adds screen reader software that transforms self-service kiosks so they can be used by the visually impaired. (Florida)

Travel Use Case: DMO’s with visitor center kiosks, as well as airports, airlines, attractions and cruise lines where self-service kiosks are widely used.

- [Champion Autism Network](#) CAN: CAN has partnered with “Lead with Love” to prepare their industry service staff and management to serve customers on the autism spectrum through a series of affordable online training modules.

Travel Use Case: Hotels, resorts, restaurants and attractions can now prepare their staff to serve families with autistic children, while the CAN network can help promote them to the autism family market.

- [Good Maps](#): Goodmaps is a [wayfinding platform that uses LiDar laser-driven technology](#) where clients can design, edit and access their digital maps so that they are useable not only by the blind travelers to find points of interest, but helps wheelchair users locate accessible areas such as bathrooms. (KY)

Travel Use Case: Theme parks, attractions, hotels and convention centers would be suitable uses cases.

- [Service Animal Travel Solutions](#): A central [database for service animal verification](#) recently launched with Alaska Airlines as their first airline partner. Once a passenger form is completed it is stored in a proprietary database which can be used by other airlines. This was founded by Open Doors Organization and Gina Emrich, formerly accessibility and customer service specialist for American Airlines for 33 years.(IL)

Travel Use Case: Ultimately, once this is rolled out to other airlines, it will save passengers who travel with documented service animals an immense amount of time and paperwork.

- [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#): The Sunflower icon discreetly indicates to staff and professional service providers during the travel experience that the person has a hidden disability (e.g autism, dementia etc) and may need additional support, help or a little more time. Widely used in the UK by airports, hotels and retailers, they are now expanding into North America (UK)

Travel Use Case: Airports, theme parks, attractions and retail venues.

- [Threshold 360](#). With coverage of more than 100,000 locations in hundreds of destinations and over two million views daily, Threshold is the world’s largest provider of interactive 360° virtual tours. For travelers who need to “Know before they go” this is an ideal feature.

Travel Use Case: Destinations, conference resorts, hotels and attractions currently use these videos for marketing purposes. Families with members on the autism spectrum can use virtual video tours to familiarize themselves and their children with a visual experience of what to expect.

- [Omeo](#): Hands-free power wheelchair that uses Active Seat Control technology in which users core muscles control movement. Features include access to off-road experiences, zero-degree turning circle and battery range of 40 miles on one charge.(New Zealand)

Travel Use Case: Outdoor destinations, ski resorts and mountain resorts can work with the company to schedule demo day promotions for disabled visitors.

- [Aira](#): connects people who are blind or low vision to a remote trained professional agent who can provide hands-free assistance at the touch of a button.

Travel Use Case: Airports, hotels and attractions who can assist blind travelers with information in real time.

- [Be My Eyes](#) is a free app that connects blind and low-vision individuals with sighted volunteers and companies from all over the world through a live video call. They have over 2,000,000 volunteers worldwide.

Traveler Use Case: Hotels can have this app pre-loaded and available at check in to help blind guests navigate their hotel room.

- [Whill](#) is the brand name for the next generation of “smart” and stylish self-driving power wheelchairs that can be summoned with an app.

Travel Use Case: Airports can use them as wheelchair assistant robots for transporting passengers to their gates.

- [Free2Go Rollator](#) is the first product to combine the benefits of a raised toilet seat, toilet safety frame, and rolling walker.

Travel Use Case: Amenity for cruise line passengers, hotels and attractions

- [Jeenie](#) is a language assistance app that connects travelers with on-demand sign-language translators through three party video chats. www.jeenie.com

Travel Use Case: Hotels, attractions, airports can make this service available to customers.

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