

November 2018

Think
Designable

Inclusivity: the new sustainability?

An introduction to
inclusive brand practice.

**Disability
has never
had it
so good.
Kind of.**

In the UK at least, the 2012 Paralympics was truly a watershed moment. Encouraging people to consider disabilities in ways they had never before.



Marianne Waite
Founder & Director,
Think Designable

Disability is now way more likely to appear on our screens, in the form of presenters, actors or in advertisements. It is also more likely to be discussed openly in the workplace, or down the pub between friends. And consequently, the pace of change over just a few years has helped break down barriers that have held disabled people back for centuries.

But in many ways, significant challenges remain. Challenges that go beyond on-screen diversity and communication. We now need to focus on how we accommodate

disabled people in all aspects of society. Not congratulate ourselves on how much we all enjoyed the 2012 Paralympics.

Such focus will enable inclusive, life-changing brand experiences: from retail access and product development to employee engagement.

The key to these experiences is inclusive design. A term defined by the UK Government as “products, services and environments that include the needs of the widest number of consumers”. Put simply, inclusive design is good design. And insight from disabled consumers will drive much needed innovation, creating meaningful experiences for as many people as possible.

This guide is an introduction to innovation within inclusivity, outlining the benefits of marrying inclusive design with more mainstream brand practices.

What does good look like?

Here are two of our all-time favourite examples of inclusive design. Both were inspired by disability but work for a much broader group of people.



The Eone Bradley timepiece; tell time by touch or sight. Perfect for surreptitiously checking the time in meetings...



The Under Armour MagZip™ designed for foolproof zipping, even with one hand.

A message from the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work.



As a brand, you are in the privileged position of having significant 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.

Brands have the power to change the way that society thinks about disability. By collaborating with disabled people, by considering their needs in your product design, and by reflecting their lives in your campaigns, you have the power to make sure that no disabled consumer is left behind.

This isn't just the right thing to do for disabled people, or for our society as a whole. It also makes the best business sense. In order to promote sustainable growth, brands need to be connecting with as many customers as possible, and this has to include disabled people.

This isn't about a niche customer base, this is about one billion people worldwide, and their families and carers. By using disabled insight as your creative starting point, you can improve products and services for the masses.

This short-hand guide to inclusive brand practice is a great launch pad for any brand that thinks it has the potential to do more.

Think Designable's mission is commendable, and will hopefully inspire more brand experience and innovation specialists to think more deeply about inclusivity.

I urge you to consider how you can improve your customer experience for more people, and how you can use your influence to make real change.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Sarah Newton". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sarah Newton MP

Why bother being inclusive?

Catering to the needs of disabled people is not just about doing the right thing as decent human beings. Although providing human rights through consumer rights seems like a pretty strong reason in itself. Inclusivity is becoming an increasingly important business driver, and therefore, imperative to brands:

1. Disabled people are part of a growing consumer base.*

Disability comes in all shapes and sizes. It can cover everything from physical and cognitive impairments to mental health. It can range from the temporary to the lifelong. And it's the only minority any of us can find ourselves a part of, at any point of our lives.

Such variety means there are one billion disabled people in the world and counting. As the Return on Disability Report puts it, that's an emerging market the size of China.

Now consider that figure won't include those who fear prejudice from disclosing their condition. Now add friends, family and carers into the equation. Throw in ageing populations of many developed countries, and it becomes obvious that disability touches around 53% of people. And it becomes even more obvious that this is a section of society we can no longer overlook.

***that you'll likely be part of one day**

2. Disabled people spend money like the rest of us. Shocker.

The global spending power of disabled people, their carers and families has been calculated by the report at \$8 trillion. And like the rest of us, disabled people want to spend their money on the products they want, the services they need and the brands they love.

However, many disabled people are prevented from getting in on this action. And failure to meet their needs is currently costing UK business to the tune of £420m a week. This lack of provision is currently costing all of us: consumers, business and wider society.

“disability touches around 53% of people.”

Let's figure this out.



91% of leading UK high street retailers provide no accessibility information about their stores or websites. (Disabled Go)



One billion

disabled people globally
(The UK has 13.9m
disabled people)
(The World Bank)

Only **17%**



of people
are born with
their disabilities
(Disabled Living
Foundation)

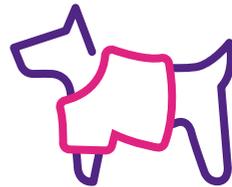


Only **5-7%**
of disabled
people in the UK

use a wheelchair, despite
public perception and the
wheelchair being the symbol
for accessibility.
(Disability Sport)

Over 80%
of disabled
customers

will spend their money,
not necessarily on the
website that offers the
cheapest products,
but where fewest barriers
are placed in their way.
(Click-Away Pound Report)



**There are
more clothing
lines for dogs**
than for disabled people.
(The Guardian)

Disabled by default.

Most of us negotiate the world on autopilot. We get dressed, we make a cuppa, we travel to work, we go to the pub etc., etc. No trouble at all. All part of a subconscious process we take for granted throughout our daily lives.

It is not like that if you have a disability. Imagine inhabiting a world that simply isn't designed for you. Each day being confronted with environments, interactions, and experiences, that all present physical or attitudinal barriers.

These barriers aren't always related to explicit accessibility issues like whether there's a lift or not. They're often smaller, more discrete exchanges that knock confidence and hinder participation.

And it's this lack of consideration and provision that makes an experience exclusive. So unless brands actively consider how to remove these barriers, they disable by default.

We know what you're thinking. "2018 is an era of innovation, empathy and enlightenment. How is this still happening?". Well, the reason these barriers persist is mostly down to legacy.

The historical hangover of our environments and infrastructures coupled with outdated ideals and a fear of disability, has meant change has often been slow and hard.

“...People are therefore disabled by the society they live in, not directly by their impairment.”

Dr Graham Pullin,
'Design Meets Disability'

You have the ability to drive change.

Thankfully we have a new hero on the horizon. We know that people look to brands to effect positive social change. And as someone with the power to influence brands, **our hero, is you.**

Whilst governments and associated organisations will never be replaced, their roles are limited. Increasingly brands have become drivers for change, harnessing millennials' willingness to invest in those they believe will help fight for the causes they care about. Brands have become vehicles through which consumers can make their voices heard.

But so far, the efforts of mainstream brands to tackle disability have been superficial and at times, tokenistic. A few however, have become shining beacons of hope; demonstrating how brands can create impactful change. Their success demonstrates any efforts must go beyond regulatory box-ticking and trend following. Change must be achieved as part of a long-term programme which shifts not only attitudes but also fundamental behaviours.

“...so far, the efforts of mainstream brands to tackle disability have been superficial and at times, tokenistic.”

Going deeper than diversity.

Diversity is incredibly important. Creating workplaces and campaigns that are more reflective of society is beneficial to all of us. These initiatives have the power to reposition disability and broaden the minds of the masses, as well as improve business performance.

But wouldn't it be great if we could go even further? What if we could guarantee that commitment to difference transcended mere representation in campaigns, instead aiming to make life better for consumers?

Consider how environmentalism is now firmly in our individual and community conscience, business objectives, and international political agendas. We need to approach disability inclusivity in much the same way. This means strong strategies, board-level investment, measuring and long-term commitment.

Some brands have made a start. For example, the likes of M&S and Tommy Hilfiger have developed clothing lines specifically for people with disabilities. While Under Armour have created a new zip designed for easier use with one arm, which has become a huge selling point for cyclists who understandably often have their hands busy.

We want to hardwire inclusive design into every brand and make life easier for everyone.

**Exceptional
insight**

+ creativity

+ scale

**= better brand
experiences**

What's covered in brand experience?

We know that the landscape of modern marketing is now about delivering broader brand experiences with the consumer at the heart.

Therefore, there are more opportunities than ever to effect huge-scale change through the delivery of these experiences.

Interbrand defines the make-up of brand experience in their Quadrant Model. At the core, is the brand's purpose and identity. This then influences Products & Services, People & Behaviours (who you hire and who you represent), Environments & Channels (on and offline) and Communication (tone of voice, advertising, etc).

Here are a few examples of mainstream brands that are starting to tackle disability across the different quadrants of brand experience.

As a consequence of their efforts, brands like these are starting to experience some of the key benefits of connecting with a wider spectrum of human need.

These include:

- **better consumer loyalty**
- **greater differentiation**
- **enhanced credibility**
- **expansion into new areas**
- **increased brand awareness**

We know that it will take brands time to address every quadrant of the brand experience (shown opposite), but seeing the big picture will allow us to start spotting more opportunities to innovate.

Now it's time to build on this and do more in every sector: technology, fashion, FMCG, banking, hospitality and retail. Each has the

potential to change the lives of disabled consumers, by looking at every aspect of how people interact with their brand – from products and services, to physical and digital environments. Every touchpoint of a customer journey has the potential to make life better.

So on behalf of the 53% of people affected by disability globally, we need you to start putting inclusive design at the heart of your brand. That way, we can work towards a more inclusive world.

Products & Services



Brand Purpose

Environments & Channels



RIVER ISLAND



Maltesers



People & Behaviours



Communications

Where are you on the journey?

Our Inclusive Brand Experience Maturity Model examines performance across the quadrants, categorising efforts in four stages. We can use this to gauge where your brand is in its inclusive design journey.

STAGE

1.

Passive

The majority of brands only just meet the minimum mandated requirements for catering to the needs of disabled people. Most see disability inclusivity as complicated & unnecessary. Those who do not actively attempt to remove barriers disable by default.

2.

Progressive

These brands are enlightened about the issue and look to raise the profile of disabled people through media representation. Success relies on insight from and collaboration with disabled talent. The output may be campaigns or communications which attempt to champion and connect with the 1 billion disabled people and their families worldwide.

CONSUMER
IMPACT

- Limited participation
- Lack of choice & dignity

- Greater social understanding
- Heightened confidence

EXAMPLE

96%
of all brands

Think of all that opportunity!

The logo for Malteseers, featuring the brand name in a stylized, cursive font with a yellow outline and a drop shadow effect.

The most successful disability campaign in the UK.

3.

Pioneering

Pioneering brands invest beyond campaigns to provide augmented products and services for disabled consumers.

They invest heavily in becoming aware of any strengths or weaknesses across the customer journey, before innovating in a way which makes a tangible difference to the day-to-day lives of disabled consumers.

When done successfully, this activity drives brand differentiation, loyalty and awareness.

- Easier living
- Enhanced quality of life



The first razor to be designed with the intent to shave someone else.

4.

Purpose-driven

A select few brands have placed inclusivity so much at the heart of their experiences, that there is no distinction in the provision for disabled and non-disabled consumers.

The ambition of these brands is deeply embedded in their business functions and strategy. It is also evidenced in their brand definition and purpose.

The commitment to and responsibility for radical & sustainable innovation is shared in every area of the organisation.

Campaigns are backed up with the certainty that the entire customer experience has been reviewed and enhanced.

- Social integration
- Enhanced autonomy
- Greater participation



Technology designed for everyone.

How inclusive are you?

For starters, ask yourself these five questions:

- 1 Are you aware of how your brand tests and measures accessibility with disabled consumers?**
- 2 Would you be able to state which aspects of your brand experience outperform competitors in terms of meeting the needs of disabled consumers?**
- 3 Do you know which aspects of your brand experience disabled consumers find particularly challenging?**
- 4 Would you feel comfortable pushing out a disability focussed marketing campaign tomorrow?**
- 5 Are you clear on where the inclusive design innovation opportunities are for your brand?**

If you answered no to one or more of these questions, we have exciting news for you. There are plenty of untapped opportunities for you to connect with a much wider audience.

We invite you to talk to us about your current brand experience in order to clarify where you are on the journey to inclusivity.

To start the conversation, get in touch with Think Designable and along with our specialist partners, we'll help you become a life-changing brand.

If you want to become a
life-changing brand,
send Marianne an email
info@thinkdesignable.com

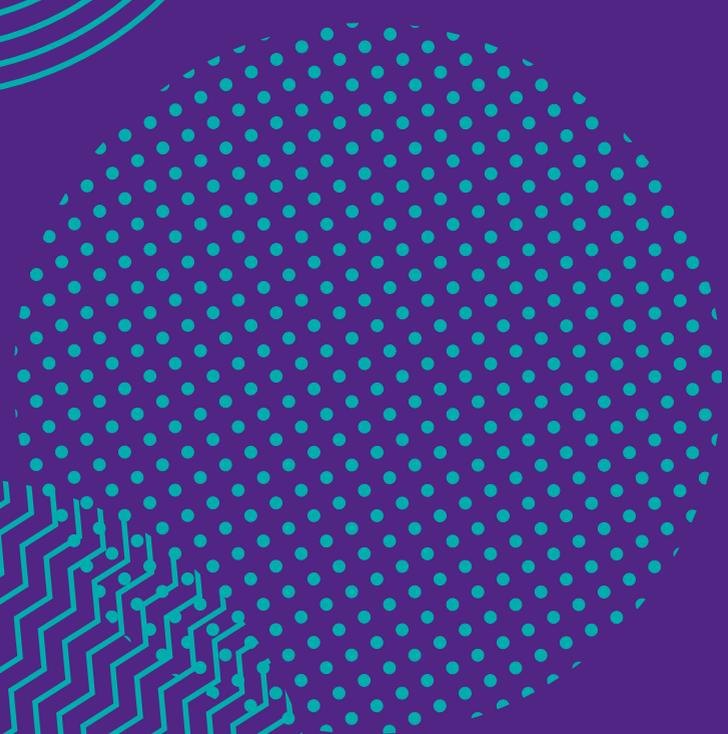
**Let us know if you'd
like this in another
format such as larger
print, word document
or audio file.**

Contributors

Mike Alhadeff, David Ormondroyd,
Marianne Waite and Róisín Waite.

Special thanks to

Interbrand and The Minister of State for
Disabled People, Health and Work.



Thinkdesignable.com
The alliance for inclusive brand practice.