

MISSED BUSINESS HOW TO ATTRACT MORE CUSTOMERS THROUGH BETTER ACCESS

A guide for small business



Message from the Minister



**The Hon Ray Williams MP,
Minister for Disability Services**

In 2014, the NSW Government introduced the Disability Inclusion Act 2014, which demonstrates our commitment to upholding the rights of people with disability and ensuring they have equal opportunity to participate in social, economic and community life.

The NSW Government also developed a NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and required all NSW Government agencies and local councils to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan. We acknowledge this is only part of the response and inclusion must be the responsibility of the whole community. That is why I am pleased to support this initiative by the NSW Business Chamber.

This easy to read guide has practical tips and suggestions that will make your business more attractive for people with disability. Increasing your customer base is sound business practice. People with disability make up a significant part of the economy and it doesn't make sense to ignore this substantial part of your market. By improving the customer experience you will profit from return patronage and grow your business.

By developing these guidelines and providing real opportunities for people with disability, the NSW Business Chamber demonstrates its commitment to playing an important role in building strong, vibrant and inclusive local communities.

I recommend this publication to all small business owners in NSW and thank the NSW Business Chamber for its continuing commitment to the inclusion of people with disability.

**Ray Williams MP
Minister for Multiculturalism
Minister for Disability Services**

Message from the CEO



In Australia, over 4 million people, or 20 percent of the population, have a disability. More than half of people aged 55 years and over have difficulties with mobility, sight and hearing.

Applying simple strategies to improve access to your business will help ensure all of your potential customers aren't missing out.

People with vision impairments, a physical disability or that use mobility tools such as wheelchairs, all obviously benefit from easier access but so too do parents of young children – with strollers or prams, as well as shoppers with heavy bags or people delivering goods.

Simple changes like installing a ramp at your front entrance can mean the difference between someone making a purchase at your business or taking their business elsewhere. But improving access is not just about investment in new equipment – ensuring staff are ready, willing and able to assist people with disability is essential if you want to not only attract customers but repeat sales.

Improving access is not just a good thing to do, it's good for business!

**Stephen Cartwright
Chief Executive Officer
NSW Business Chamber**

DID YOU KNOW

The personal income of Australians living with a disability is collectively worth around \$100 billion annually, a figure that is only set to increase with an ageing population.



1 IN 3 CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITY HAVE CEASED A TRANSACTION BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT TREATED RESPECTFULLY OR FAIRLY.



1 IN 3 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY REPORT THAT THEIR CUSTOMER NEEDS ARE OFTEN UNMET.

What are my legal obligations?

Under Australian law, customers with disabilities have a right to access your goods or services just like any other customer. If a customer with a disability cannot get into your building or cannot access your goods or services they can make a complaint under State or Territory anti-discrimination laws, or the Federal Disability Discrimination Act.

BETTER ACCESS CAN HELP GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Making your business more accessible is not just about ensuring you're compliant with the law, it can help your business build more customers and grow.



ADVERTISE YOUR ADVANTAGES

If your business is accessible, let people know in your promotions, advertisements and website.

Consider putting up clear external signs to help people with vision impairments or learning difficulties identify your shop as accessible.



ADD A SPLASH OF COLOUR

Using bright contrasting colours can help make your entrance way stand out but also provide important safety cues for changes in surface levels with ramps and stairs.

Painting the entrance to your business in a colour that contrasts well with the surroundings will make it stand out for people with vision impairment.



BE REFLECTION AWARE

Be aware of reflective glass in your shopfront. One good solution is to put safety markings on the glass so people don't walk into it.

People with vision impairment often find that reflective glass presents them with a confusing picture of reflections, light and shadow. Safety markings help make it easier to tell the difference between the window display and the doorway.



DON'T MAKE YOUR SHOPFRONT AN OBSTACLE COURSE

If not placed appropriately, advertising boards, displays, bargain bins or furniture can present a significant hazard for customers.

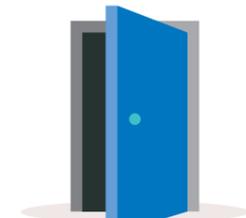
Make sure any items around your shopfront are not impeding the path of your customers.



TRY TO PROVIDE A LEVEL ENTRY

Look at purchasing a portable ramp that can be taken in and out when a person requires entry to your business.

If you are leasing your premises, speak with your landlord about making the entrance to your business accessible or moving the entrance to another, more accessible position.



BETTER DOORS AND DOORWAYS

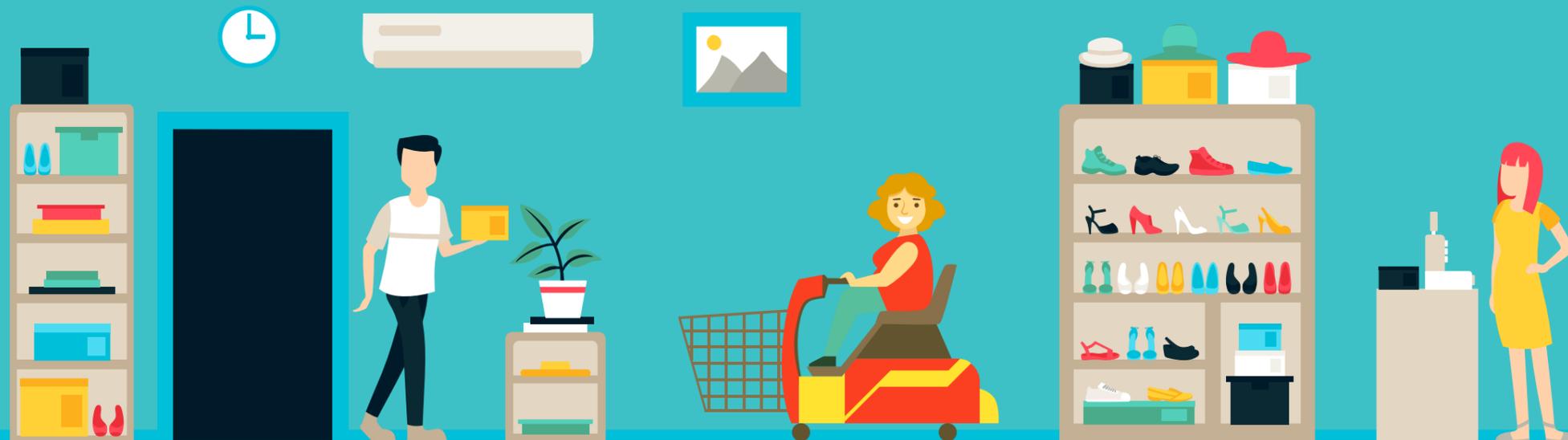
Look at repositioning the door handles to an easier height.

You could even make the door easier to open by making it lighter. If you have stairs inside your business, look at installing a handrail.



CLEAR SIGHT LINES

If possible, make sure there are clear sight lines between the entry and the counter so that staff are aware when a customer needs assistance to enter the premises or purchase goods.



Ideally, once inside your shop or premises, customers with disabilities should be able to find their way to all sales areas, browse and inspect goods, bring them to the service counter or receive services in the same way as people without disability.

To find out more tips about making a customer's shopping experience more accessible visit:

[http://www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au/getattachment/Issues/Issues/Workforce-Skills/Employ-Outside-the-Box-the-benefits-of-diversify/Making-your-business-accessible-\(1\).pdf.aspx](http://www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au/getattachment/Issues/Issues/Workforce-Skills/Employ-Outside-the-Box-the-benefits-of-diversify/Making-your-business-accessible-(1).pdf.aspx)

<http://www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au/getattachment/Issues/Issues/Workforce-Skills/Employ-Outside-the-Box-the-benefits-of-diversify/Ensuring-your-business-is-accessible-to-all.pdf.aspx>

CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

Making your business accessible doesn't just cover how people can physically access your business.

One of the simplest and cheapest solutions is to think about the way you approach customer service for people with disabilities.



RESPECT

You and your staff should treat customers with disability as you do with all customers – with respect



FOCUS ON THE PERSON

Treat each customer with a disability as an individual customer with their own likes and dislikes

Always focus on the person and not their disability. Always address the customer directly, not the other people that may be with them (such as a carer or Deaf sign interpreter).



SOUND AND SURROUNDS

Use your normal tone of voice and volume. If possible, move out of the way of background noise.

Have a pen and paper on hand to help you communicate with your customer if they have difficulty hearing, and always face the customer with no bright lights behind you so that customers who lip read have better visibility to see your lips.



GUIDE AND ASSISTANCE DOGS

Never pat or distract a Guide or Assistance Dog or offer it food while it is in its harness. It is a working animal under the control of its owner..

In NSW, a Guide or Assistance Dog in a harness is legally allowed to enter all public places, food service businesses such as restaurants, cafes, pubs and clubs. Refusing a harnessed Guide or Assistance Dog entry to a public space can result in legal action.



ALLOW TIME

Allow your customer time to ask questions and try not to rush them.

If a customer has an intellectual disability – don't overload them with information. Give them plenty of time and opportunity to ask questions. Reassure them you're there to help if they forget anything.



ASKING QUESTIONS

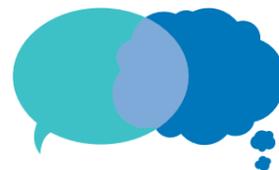
Ask customers with disability how they would like their goods and services to be provided, particularly where there are barriers to equal access.



GIVING ASSISTANCE

Always ask the customer first if they want help; don't assume they need assistance.

Always accept the answer if the customer declines your help. If you have a conversation that will last more than a few moments with a customer using a wheelchair, bend to eye level or pull up a chair.



BE CLEAR

Address the customer directly, listen carefully, speak clearly, and check for understanding. Always use clear language without being patronising.



To find out more quick tips on serving customers with disability visit:

http://www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au/NSWBCWebsite/media/Workforce-Skills/MEM-2280C-Tips-sheet-Communicating_WEB.pdf

<http://www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au/NSWBCWebsite/media/Workforce-Skills/MEM-2280D-Tips-sheet-Interacting- WEB.pdf>

NSW Business Chamber

Tracing our heritage back to 1825, NSW Business Chamber's mission is to create a better Australia by helping businesses maximise their potential. The Chamber is a passionate advocate for business in the public arena: whether standing up to government and decision makers when business interests are neglected or working together to create positive change.

On a one-to-one basis, the Chamber helps all businesses from small enterprises to large corporations. Our commercial services division, Australian Business, delivers a range of business services to both member and non-member clients throughout Australia, with the operating surplus going back to supporting Chamber initiatives. In all, we believe it's important for Australia's business community to succeed, because prosperity creates new jobs, social wealth, and better communities in which to live.

- Local, regional, state and national coverage
- Public policy and advocacy.
- Reducing complexity to manage risk
- Empowering business through connections, knowledge and expertise.

Let the NSW Business Chamber team be an extension of your business so you can concentrate on what you do best – growing your business.

For more information: nswbusinesschamber.com.au

NSW Business Chamber Head Office

Street Address
140 Arthur Street
North Sydney NSW 2060

Postal Address
Locked Bag 938,
North Sydney NSW 2059

t 13 26 96
f 1300 655 277
e businesshotline@nswbc.com.au

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ABN 63 000 014 504

Further contacts

For more information, assistance and guidance around disability inclusion, accessibility and employment of people with disability:

NSW Business Chamber – Disability Inclusion Promotions Officer
02 9458 7928
sean.willenberg@nswbc.com.au

For more information on planning issues, building approvals and local access requirements:

Contact the Planning Officer, Building Surveyor or Disability Services Worker at your Council.
www.olg.nsw.gov.au/find-my-council

For more information on design ideas and contacting an access consultant:

Association of Consultants in Access Australia Inc.
www.access.asn.au

For more information on legal issues and responsibilities:

Australian Human Rights Commission
02 9284 9600
www.humanrights.gov.au
or your State/Territory anti-discrimination agency.