

‘Quick Wins’: How to Make Accessible and Inclusive Business Changes on a Budget

One of the main misconceptions surrounding accessibility and inclusive design is that changes and adjustments are always costly, time-consuming and generally disruptive or unattainable for businesses in the tourism sector and beyond. The purpose of this guide is to provide businesses with little to no budget with hints and tips for accessibility ‘quick wins’ that will support inclusive experiences for customers, guests and staff members with additional requirements.

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What is a ‘Quick Win’?

‘Quick wins’ are almost a form of business assurance. With low risk and easy, inexpensive implementation, ‘quick wins’ can provide momentum and value to business owners, but also be a way of showcasing business efforts to customers. Because ‘quick wins’ are usually low in cost and time outlay, they can improve accessibility in a speedy and visible way; particularly great if, as a business, you want to bring your customers on your inclusivity journey with you and - with integrity - show that positive steps are being taken, even if financially-dependent improvements are not currently possible. These changes can be simple but incredibly effective; like providing large print menus for visually impaired customers, or ensuring social media accounts include images of disabled people so that all important ‘welcome’ is provided way before a physical visit.

It is important to note that a ‘quick win’ is not designed to remove the need for more expensive, longer-term amendments and adaptations. Dependent on individual business situations, more substantial improvements are simply necessary. However, ‘quick wins’ can kickstart the journey towards equitable experiences for disabled customers and staff

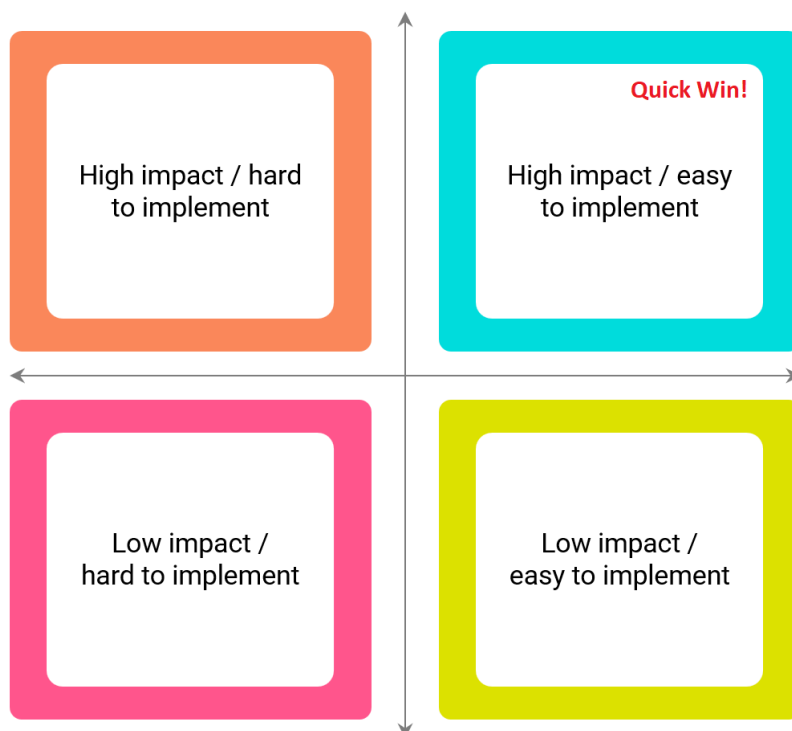
members and be a powerful way for businesses to start shifting their mindsets towards inclusivity. This guide will share several accessible 'quick win' ideas to support this process.

The Impact vs Feasibility Matrix

What would you like to do to make your tourism business more inclusive? Perhaps you'd like to provide all your staff members with a disability awareness training programme and an inclusive recruitment process, improve the digital accessibility of your website and social media, or better signpost your guests to accessible facilities. It might be that you want to create a step-free access route, expand your accessible parking provision, or introduce sensory maps and sensory-friendly equipment to the visitor experience.

Whatever you want to do to improve your accessibility, the first thing you need to do is plot your options! Follow these steps to do so:

1. Draw a line graph. Title one axis 'Impact' and the other 'Feasibility'.
2. Plot all the accessibility improvements you'd like to make on the graph, based on how feasible they are (in terms of budget, time and disruption) and how much positive impact they'd have on your customers and/or staff members.
3. The improvements that are the most feasible and could make the most impact are your quick wins!



Physical, Social and Digital ‘Quick Wins’ in Inclusive Tourism

- **Provide Alternative Means of Communication**

Let’s start with quite possibly one of the most simple yet impactful ‘quick wins’ you could make as a business. Not everyone can access and engage with certain forms of communication. Somebody who is D/deaf¹, or a customer with a speech impairment, may find phone calls difficult and simply decide not to visit or stay with you if a phone number is all you offer in terms of contact details. Similarly, filling in a web form may be particularly tough for someone who is partially sighted and uses magnification or a screen reader; giving you a quick call might be much easier for them!

Whether on your website, in brochures and advertisements or on your social media pages, always offer at least a phone number and email address and invite potential customers to contact you with any questions they might have. Additionally, ensure you provide as much information on your accessibility features as you can, whether in an accessibility guide, FAQs page or similar. There is nothing quite like visiting a new website and having all your questions answered as a disabled person without having to write out an email essay, or spend ten minutes explaining your requirements over the phone!

- **Improve your Social Media Accessibility**

Alt Text

If you’re posting images on social media, ensure that they have alt text, otherwise known as a concise, written image description that provides meaning and context for people who are blind or partially sighted and may not be able to access the visual image. For example, alt text for the following image might read as:

‘A caucasian male sits on a blue and yellow three-wheeled beach wheelchair and looks out to sea. He is being pushed from the sandy beach into clear blue waters by two lifeguards, both in yellow t-shirts and red shorts with tanned skin.’

¹ The capital ‘D’ is used to represent Deaf people who are actively engaged in the Deaf community, its culture and language. They are usually British Sign Language users. The lower case ‘d’ represents those who are hard of hearing but do not necessarily identify in the same way. They are more likely, for example, to use spoken English and be supported by hearing aids.



Hashtags

This is a perfect example of a ‘quick win’ that will simply become second nature after a while! Hashtags are a great way of getting involved in conversations and boosting your engagement on social media, but can be very difficult to identify and read for those who use screen readers, are blind or partially sighted, or have a cognitive impairment. When hashtagging, please capitalise the first letter of every word (otherwise known as using CamelCase). For example, #traveltuesday would become #TravelTuesday.

Captioned Videos

One of the main accessibility barriers for people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing is when videos are not subtitled. When posting your own video content to social media, subtitles should ideally run automatically – and be careful when sharing the content of other organisations on your page; it’s an accessibility solution that many people forget to include in their content and will result in a lack of inclusion for your followers.

- **Diversify your Circle**

Whilst engaging with influencers may not be an immediate priority if funds are tight, a powerful ‘quick win’ to improve the inclusivity mindset of your business is to ensure you’re following individuals and businesses that promote positive experiences for disabled people and those with other protected characteristics. It costs nothing to like, comment on and share posts, and learn some tips and tricks along the way!

- **Free Education!**

Ensuring your staff are well-trained and confident in terms of disability awareness and offering appropriate assistance is absolutely fundamental to the inclusive operations of your business and building a loyal customer base. A full day’s training course for a dozen staff members is likely to cost approximately £2000 and we would strongly recommend that this investment is made as soon as you are able.

In the meantime, ensure that you have a LinkedIn account and follow businesses and individuals with inclusivity close to their hearts. Also make sure you look on [Eventbrite](#); there is an abundance of free or very low cost webinars that you can attend as a starting point to more bespoke training on areas such as language and terminology use, types of impairment and access requirements, and how to best support and assist disabled customers and staff members.

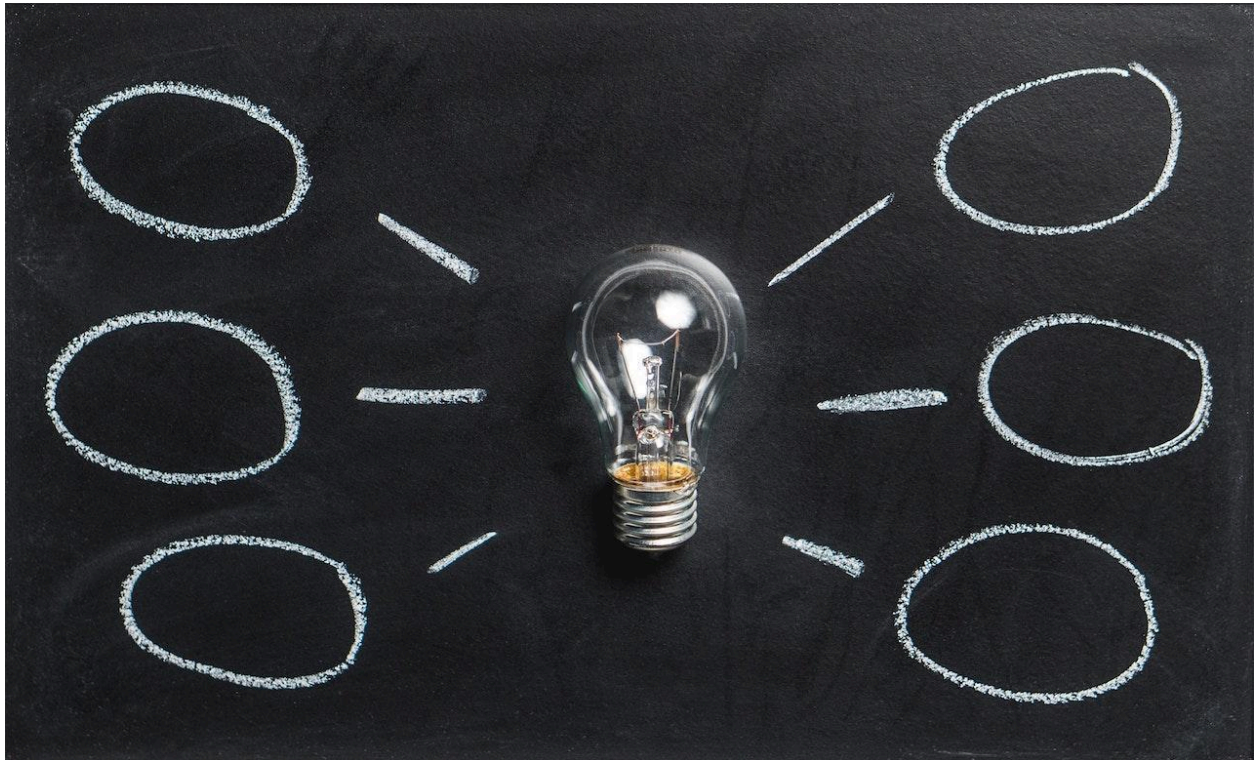


Photo by Pixabay: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/clear-light-bulb-355948/>

- **Better Signpost to Accessible Physical Features**

How many accessible bedrooms does the hotel you work at have, and what specific features do they include? Have you recently installed a Changing Places facility, captioned exhibit videos, multi-faith area or sensory room at your museum? Is there a drop-off area that would be particularly useful for a wheelchair user arriving by taxi to your attraction? Are there quieter, avoidance routes visitors can take through your transport site if the environment gets overwhelming?

All of the above physical features have excellent potential in terms of accessibility, but only if disabled customers know they exist! Make sure that you signpost your accessibility features and facilities online, but also that your staff members are trained to share this information and understand the purpose and benefit of such features.

- **Create Accessibility Guides and Sensory Maps**

Whilst they might sound daunting, accessibility guides are simply an opportunity to put clear, honest information about the features and facilities you currently provide for those with differing impairments and access requirements in one place. Creating an accessibility guide allows potential customers to get an idea of whether or not your business will cater to their requirements, and gives them the autonomy to make their own decision about visiting. In effect, accessibility guides display accessibility strengths and weaknesses and go a long way to removing the need for that tedious and arduous first step for many disabled people: contacting businesses to ask ‘do you provide step-free access/an induction loop/a sensory kit?’ Similarly, it saves time that a member of staff would usually have to spend answering those questions, resulting in a win, win for everyone!

For further information on the benefits of accessibility guides and how to start creating one, visit [the official Accessibility Guides website](#).

For customers who may be autistic or neurodivergent, knowing more about the sights, sounds and smells or an attraction prior to visiting can be particularly useful. A way that you can share this information is by creating a sensory map. Plot out the various areas of your venue on a page, using different pages for different floors, and mark where there is likely to be bright or low lighting levels, distinct smells (such as within a cafe area) and busy, loud routes or areas (mapping quieter options where you can). To support you, here is an example of [a sensory map from the British Museum](#).

- **Implement Quieter Hours**

If your business is an attraction that is open to the public and has a tendency to get both busy and noisy, a brilliant accessibility ‘quick win’ would be to offer regular quieter opening hours. For example, in a museum setting, loud exhibits could be turned off every Sunday morning, all show experiments thoroughly explained so visitors know what to expect, and ear defenders and sensory equipment made available throughout the building, as is the case at [Glasgow Science Centre](#). Locally, [Cadbury World](#) also provides relaxed sessions for those who may require them.

This hugely important ‘quick win’ will only be successful and effective if it is appropriately advertised, so that both those with and without accessibility requirements know what to expect prior to visiting. Post about it on your social media channels, and ensure the information is easy to access on your website.



Photo by Una Laurencic:

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-sitting-on-ottoman-in-front-of-three-paintings-20967/>

- **Engage with Local Lived Experience**

Whilst a fee should be offered for the sharing of time and expertise, there is no better way to improve your inclusivity mindset and get thinking about physical, social and digital accessibility amendments you can make than by talking to local people with lived experience of disability. You might want to contact a local community group that is already established and ask them to visit your business on a 'mystery shopping' basis to provide accessibility feedback. Alternatively, you might choose to recruit and set up your own accessibility steering group to keep you and your business accountable throughout your accessibility journey. Whilst both options come with a cost, the lasting positive impact they are likely to have undoubtedly makes engaging with those who have lived experience of disability a 'quick win'.

- **Assess your own Inclusive Internal Culture**

A business that truly holds inclusivity at its core does not just focus on external accessibility elements for its customers; internal policies, process and cultures also

require focus and amendments to ensure that disabled members of staff would be able to thrive at work and engage with all physical, social and digital elements required. A 'quick win' would be to start reviewing your recruitment process. Do your job adverts encourage applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds and characteristics, including disabled people? Are the adverts posted on inclusive job boards that disabled people are likely to search on, such as [EvenBreak](#)? Can applicants request differing document formats such as large print, high contrast and easy-read versions? And if they have questions about the role or need assistance in completing the application, are there several contact methods provided?

Moving onto the interview, a 'quick win' would be to ensure that any venue offers step-free access and an accessible toilet, at minimum. As standard, ensure interviewees are contacted prior to interview and encouraged to share any accessibility requirements, and it would be truly aspirational to provide information on accessible public transport and nearby car parks. Remember that applicants may wish to bring personal assistants or interpreters with them, but your focus should always be on the interviewee themselves. For a virtual interview, live captioning may need to be enabled for someone who is hard of hearing.

Once you've offered employment to a disabled member of staff, it's time to discuss reasonable adjustments and their ways of working. Your employee might require adaptive computer equipment or a height adjustable desk, for example. They might find public transport particularly difficult to navigate during rush-hour, so ask to start and finish work an hour later. A reasonable adjustment could be as simple as ensuring your employee is always able to sit opposite the speaker giving a presentation for optimum lip reading! Building your awareness and making these 'quick win' adjustments internally will no doubt encourage further accessibility changes externally for your customers, too.



Photo by Christina Morillo:

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/two-woman-in-black-sits-on-chair-near-table-1181605/>

- **Learn from Businesses you Look up to**

Is there a business in your local area doing great things when it comes to accessibility and inclusive design? Ask them if they'd be happy to share their secrets! They are likely very proud of what they've managed to achieve and will be all too happy to help you in taking your next inclusive steps. No doubt, you'll have a skillset they admire too, so a 'quick win' would be to trade expertise and support one another.

- **Ensure Honesty At All Times - It's Not a Competition!**

And finally, one of the best and most impactful 'quick wins' you can commit to making is to be honest about where you are on your accessibility journey, both internally and externally. Too often, accessibility is viewed as a competition and businesses have been known to embellish the truth on the accessible features and facilities they provide. Not only is this dishonest, it is dangerous. There is nothing worse for a disabled customer or member of staff than arriving at a venue or workplace to find it does not cater to certain requirements.

However... there's also a need for more businesses to - honestly! - celebrate their accessibility triumphs, sharing their successes and processes. Disabled people will only

visit your business if they know about the inclusive elements that are provided, so don't be afraid to shout about new equipment installations and policy implementations, or share a brilliant review that has been left by a disable customer. Accessibility is not a competition, but something we should all be striving for together and helping each other to achieve.

Creating and Utilising Access Plans and Strategies

Following on from implementing 'quick wins' that are most feasible and likely to create the highest impact, a longer-term access plan and strategy should be created for your business to ensure that the inclusivity journey continues and accountability is held. Some top tips on how to create and maintain an access plan are as follows:

1. List out the accessibility activities or tasks you would like to complete within your business, whether physical, social or digital. This is going to be a working document, so continue to add to it when inspiration hits!
2. Give each task a value in terms of budget required, the timescale to complete, and give each task an 'owner' who will have responsibility for overseeing its progress, even if they are not directly involved in the work required.
3. Following this, reorder all tasks based on priority for focus and completion - this will help you to work out your immediate 'access strategy' for the next six months to a year.
4. Let your team know what this accessibility focus will be, and organise regular meetings or workshops to ensure everyone in your team is kept informed on the progress of the wider plan.
5. Start to implement the plan! Working in bitesize chunks will prevent overwhelm and it might be necessary to look for relevant funding for certain tasks. Remember, accessibility is not something that can ever be 'completed' so don't rush, ensure integrity and engagement with lived experience groups stays at the heart of everything you do, and enjoy the process!

Further Information and Guidance

Many thanks for reading this guide, we hope you found it useful.

Best of luck on your accessibility journey! Further information on physical and digital 'quick wins' for your business can be found in [Visit Britain's 'Easy Does It' Guide](#).