U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section

Expanding Your Market

The U.S. Department of Justice believes that compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) makes good business sense. Businesses can tap into a huge and growing market of people with disabilities, and customers with disabilities can gain access to services, products, and employment opportunities. This census and financial information, gathered from a number of sources, illustrates how businesses can benefit by welcoming customers with disabilities.

Customers with Disabilities Mean Business

Facts about Americans with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2002 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) found that there are 51.2 million people with disabilities in the United States. More than one in six people in this country are potential customers for businesses that are accessible to people with disabilities. (9)

To put that number into perspective, the 2002 SIPP indicates that the U.S. population's percentage of people with disabilities is 18.1 percent. (9) That is larger than the percentage of Hispanics in the U.S. population (13.3%), the country's largest ethnic, racial, or cultural minority group. (12)

Each U.S. ethnic, racial, and cultural group has members with disabilities. The 2002 SIPP reported that at least 11.5% of each of these groups self-identified as having disabilities. For example, Black Americans reported 19.8%; Hispanics/Latinos reported 13.8%; Whites reported 19.0%; and, Asians or Pacific islanders reported 11.5%. (9)

Millions of people with disabilities regularly travel, shop, and eat out with family and friends. According to Census 2000, approximately 20.9 million families in this country have at least one member with a disability. (10)

The 2000 Census reported that almost 42% of older adults (65+ years) have one or more disabilities. (11) The Administration on Aging projects that by 2030 there will be more than 69 million people age 65 and older, making up approximately 20% of the total U.S. population. (1)

Information about the ADA and Business

For more information about how businesses can comply with the ADA and reach this nearly untapped market of people with disabilities, visit the U.S. Department of Justice's ADA Business Connection website at **www.ada.gov**. Or, call the toll-free ADA Information Line:

800-514-0301 (voice) or 800-514-0383 (TTY)

National Captioning Institute research found that 66% of viewers of captioned TV are more likely to buy a product that has a captioned commercial; 53% will actively seek out products advertised with captions; and, 35% will switch to brands that use captioned ads. (6)

Americans with Disabilities Act

ADA Business Connection

Spending Power of Americans with Disabilities

The large and growing market of people with disabilities has $175 billion in discretionary spending, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. (13) $175 billion is more than four times the spending power of tweens (8-14 year-olds), a demographic sought after by businesses. (3)

An Open Doors Organization study estimated in 2003 that diners with disabilities would spend $35 billion in restaurants that year. The study found that more than 75% of people with disabilities eat out at restaurants at least once a week. (7)

The New York Times reported that spending by travelers with disabilities exceeds $13.6 billion annually. (5)

AARP says that four million Americans turn 50 each year and that people age 50 and older spent nearly $400 billion in 2003. (4) At age 50, adults are likely to experience age-related physical changes that may affect hearing, vision, cognition, and mobility. While they may not think of themselves as having disabilities, people in this age group often seek out businesses that accommodate those changes by offering better lighting, less ambient noise, and fewer stairs.

People with Disabilities Globally

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are 600 million people with disabilities around the world. (13) Examples of the global spending power of people with disabilities include:

- United Kingdom: The Employers' Forum on Disability estimated in 2005 that there are 10 million adults with disabillities in the UK. The estimated annual purchasing power of people with disabilities there is £80 billion. (2)
- Canada: The Conference Board of Canada reported in 2001 that the combined annual disposable income of working-aged Canadians with disabilities was CAN $25 billion. (8)

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