

Utilising Inclusive Imagery to Attract the Growing Accessible Tourism Market

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Travelers with disabilities and their families represent a strong and growing market that can be captured by travel properties, destination marketers, wholesalers, tour operators and the retail tourism sector.

Customers who have specific access needs are part of every tourism 'segment'. Their interests are as wide as any other group of people. They may be looking for mountain adventures, concert performances or a honeymoon hotel. In business terms, they are simply 'customers' but they need good access – otherwise, they will choose to go elsewhere. They also travel with family and friends. Through not marketing to travellers with a disability, tourism organisations risk not one customer but potentially many more whether it be family groups, groups of friends, wedding functions or corporate conferences. It is about recognising people with a disability as an inclusive part of the traveling society. Incorporating imagery featuring people with disabilities enjoying travel all around the world with their families and friends will give those potential customers with disabilities the inspiration and confidence that they too can enjoy the opportunity to experience new destinations that can accommodate their accessibility needs.

Inclusive tourism should be treated the same as any other destination marketing. Accessible facilities are one thing, but the right imagery sends a powerful message that 'we want your business'.

Money spent in structural modification of a property, but not followed up with Inclusive imagery that demonstrates this accessibility, is a missed opportunity. It is also a relatively economical way of increasing market share.

When potential customers with a disability log onto a page for a resort, or see an advertisement in a magazine or brochure, and see an image that represents them, they will more than likely want to patronize that provider, and if the experience is positive, return again. Loyalty is an important aspect of this market as well, as a good experience and will be shared among various disability oriented social networks. It is estimated that the total value of direct expenditure by the Inclusive Tourism sector will be 25% of the market by 2020, marketing correctly to travellers with a disability is critical to maintaining competitive advantage in the industry. This presentation will examine how to present people with a disability in a positive manner and develop targeted marketing material.