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Bridging the Gap Between the Disability Community and Marketers

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Bridging the Gap Between the Disability Community and Marketers

A Capstone Submitted to the

University Honors Program

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By

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Abstract

People with disabilities have a large amount of buying power, due to their significant collective disposable income. This has resulted in a large untapped market which marketers could target in the future. This study seeks to understand how to people with disabilities would prefer disability inclusive marketing to be executed. One of the research objectives within this study are to understand the importance of disability inclusive marketing when individuals are choosing to purchase from a company. The other objective is to understand what marketing tactics individuals with disabilities prefer. Research method utilized within this study is a Qualtrics survey, which was distributed to sixty-nine participants with disabilities.

Our major findings were that only forty percent of people with disabilities find it extremely important to support businesses that have disability representation. This support is also dependent upon the different marketing tactics and channels that are utilized. Consumers with disabilities prefer disability inclusive campaigns focused on everyday activities. Consumers with disabilities may also be reluctant to support businesses that unintentionally incorporate stereotypes in campaigns. People with disabilities may utilize Facebook to build online communities with each other. People with disabilities have begun to view digital marketing and social media marketing as more compelling than print media. This shows marketers should focus on social media marketing on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok when executing disability inclusive marketing campaigns. As a result from our findings and consumer insights, I recommend to companies consult people with disabilities and participate in anti-ableism training prior to launching disability inclusive marketing campaigns. Companies should also accompany disability inclusive marketing campaigns with constant disability related philanthropy and partnerships with influencers with disabilities.
**Disability Defined**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), Disability is any condition of mind or body (impairment) that overcomplicates the people with the condition’s ability to participate in certain activities (activity limitations) and interact with world around them (participation restrictions). Both structural and functional impairments affect the body. While structural impairments are significant issues with components of the body, functional impairments may cause complete or partial loss of function of a body part. Under the Americans with Disability Act, the definition of disability is slightly more complicated. Disability is defined as currently or a history of having physical or mental impairment that impacts one or more major life activities or regarded as having an impairment by others despite not being disabled (*How Is Disability Defined in the Americans With Disabilities Act? | ADA National Network, n.d.*).

The Prevalence of Disability

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023), up to one in four (27 percent) adults in the United States have some type of disability. There is a wide range of disability type prevalence with mobility disabilities (12.1%), cognitive disabilities (12.8%), disabilities affecting independent living (7.2%), Deafness or difficulty hearing (6.1%), vision disabilities (4.8%), and disabilities affecting self-care (3.6%). According to Statista (2021), In the elderly age group (75 years and older) 46% live with a disability. Cognitive disabilities are the most common disabilities of people under the age of twenty. Ambulatory disabilities are the most common disabilities for people between the ages of 21 and 64 (at 4.7 percent) and 75 years old and above (at 30 percent). Adults with disabilities are more likely have heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and to smoke.
Categories of Disabilities

Disability categories are important to ensure government benefits and services are allocated properly. Categorization is also important because “…diagnosis often sculpts the self-image of those who receive the diagnosis (Smart, 2016).” While disability categorization has benefits, these categories will never be able to adequately represent a person with a disability’s individual experience. Categorization can also lead to self-fulfilling prophecies (a person’s label affects their performance), false stereotypes, and needs generalization with disability types. There are no universal disability categories, but symptom-based disability categories are widely accepted. Based upon this symptom-based disability categorization model, there are three broad categories.

Physical Disabilities

A physical disability is a condition that limits one or more traditional physical life additivities. Physical disability may make it difficult to walk, climb, or reach. Physical disabilities are usually easier to test for through quantifiable methods. Physical disabilities include mobility impairments, neurological impairment, sensory loss, health disorders, musculoskeletal conditions, trauma brain injuries, and more. Physical disabilities include:

- Mobility impairments
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Dual Sensory Loss (or D/deaf-Blindness)
- Health Disorders or Chronic Illness

Specific examples of physical disabilities include:

- Amputation
Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

Neurodevelopmental disabilities are lifelong conditions that impair one’s perception, information processing, memory, attention, sensory discrimination (auditory & visual), or reasoning. Neurodevelopmental disabilities often fall into two categories of intellectual and learning disabilities. According to a former Utah State University Rehabilitation Counseling professor named Julie Smart, “It is estimated that approximately 6 million people in the United States (3% of the population) can be classified as having intellectual disability, with 90% of these classified as having a mild intellectual disability (Smart, 2016).” Learning disabilities were previously taught to only affect someone in their childhood, but learning disabilities may continue to affect the individual in adulthood. Learning disabilities may continue to affect adults with executing financial responsibilities. Specific examples of neurodevelopment disabilities include:

- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Auditory Processing Disorder (APD_)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Conduct Disorder (CD)
- Down Syndrome
• Dyscalculia
• Dyslexia
• Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

**Psychiatric Disabilities**

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, “A psychiatric disability is a mental impairment that substantially limits one or more the major life activities of an individual (Enforcement Guidance on the ADA and Psychiatric Disabilities, 1997).” Psychiatric disabilities include mental illness and chemical abuse. The disability category of psychiatric was the last category to receive benefits and services through government funding. People with psychiatric disabilities were commonly institutionalized for the entire lives. Medications have assisted people with psychiatric disabilities with living independently and doing life activities. Specific examples of psychiatric disabilities include:

• Alcohol Use Disorder
• Illicit Drug Use Disorder
• Generalized Anxiety Disorders
• Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
• Panic Disorder
• Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
• Schizoaffective Disorder
• Schizophrenia Disorder

**The World is Not Built for People with Disabilities**

People with disabilities have a difficult time navigating the world independently because it is physically inaccessible and inconvenient. Within American culture and society, accommodations
for people with disabilities are not widely accessible. Barrier-free environments are not the standard within the United States. Barrier-free environments include features such as wide-walkways, ramps, elevators, screen readers, sign language interpreters, and more. This lack of accessibility lads to inability to participate in basic life activities such as getting a job, going to the grocery store, and casting your ballot. According to Julie Smart, “Often, inaccessible environments and the lack of appropriate technology and personal assistance services result in helplessness; dependence; isolation; and narrow, constricted lives for PWDs (Julie Smart, 2016).” The United States has made progress in accessibility since the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990. However, the passing of the ADA shows that accessibility for people with disabilities is not the default feature and progress is usually made after it is mandated.

Ableism Defined

Ableism has been defined as “a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human” (Loja et al., 2013). Ableism views a whole group of people (people with disabilities) as lesser than. Ableism has a persistent deep hold within United States history. Systemic examples of this include discrimination in the workforce and education and segregated living within institutionalization. A specific example of systemic ableism is the Ugly Laws, in effect in some states until the 1970s, which dictated that unsightly or unseemly people with disabilities be excluded from and/or monitored within public society. This exemplifies how disability representation has only become a possibility within the United States in the past fifty years.
Ableism Invades Aspect of our Society

Ableism is embedded in US culture often in subtle ways. Ableism can range from audio description not being available with trying to watch a movie to asking people with disabilities invasive questions. Microaggressions based in ableism are also very common. An example of an ableism microaggression is “the blind leading the blind”, which implies blindness makes a person inept. Subtitle ableism can be seen movies, TV shows new stories, and other popular forms of media. Disability stereotypes are often normalized within media such as people with disabilities being viewed as only inspirational, burdensome, objects of curiosity, and pitiable. For example, the class movie of Forest Gump has an ableist portrayal because it views Forest as pitiable until he is “cured” of his cognitive disability.

Problem Defined

After attending Northern Illinois University for four years, I have taken at least ten marketing courses. These marketing courses covered topics ranging from global marketing, digital marketing, sales, and marketing research. After progressing through half of my marketing degree’s requirements, I realized there was a lack of research for disability inclusive marketing. In these courses, I would ask my professors individually how the discussed procedures would affect the disability community. The professors would usually suggest that I engaged in supplemental independent research. Despite my disability, I have enjoyed purchasing from companies that engage in marketing tactics that are inaccessible for me. This lack of research and guidance on how to engage in disability inclusive marketing translates to companies’ marketing departments intentionally excluding people with disabilities.

The intentional exclusion of people with disabilities results in an untapped market. According to Yin et al., “The total disposable income for working-age people with disabilities is about $490 billion” (Yin et al., 2018). Although this amount of disposable income is minuscule in
comparison to individuals without disabilities, it is still a sizable amount. This shows marketers have an opportunity to target a market segment which may result in extensive revenue increases. Yin et al. also says, “The total discretionary income of $21 billion is higher than the combined discretionary income of African American ($3 billion) and Hispanic populations ($16 billion)” (Yin et al., 2018). This also exemplifies how the market segment of people with disabilities may is not targeted to their fullest potential, especially in comparison to other minority groups. People with disabilities also have loyal friends and family members who may prefer companies that effective target the disability community. Performing research to determine people with disabilities marketing preferences will allow marketers to create guidelines in order for them to effectively target the market segment and their disposable income.

My research project proposed both some problems and opportunities. The research was going to be difficult due to the sample size being limited and composed of a minority community. My chosen research type must also be diligently researched to ensure it is accessible for people with disabilities to participate in. But the research project would also be a jumpstart into understanding disability inclusive marketing. This allows for an opportunity for marketers to understand an untapped market segment.

Research Objectives

In this research project, I aim to answer the research objectives listed below:

1. Is disability inclusive marketing important to individuals when choosing to purchase from a company?
   
   a. By conducting this research, I seek to understand if individuals take disability inclusive marketing into account during their purchase process.

2. Do people with disabilities have specific marketing tactics preferences?
a. By conducting this research, I seek to understand if individuals with disabilities have preferences for specific marketing tactics. These marketing tactics could encompass social media platform preferences and the steps marketers take before and after a campaign launch.

Research Methodology

Within this research project, I have conducted both primary and secondary research. The secondary research within this project was utilized as supplemental assistance/support while conducting primary research. My secondary research was a great starting point for my primary research. This secondary research allowed me to define disability and ableism. My secondary research also allowed me to understand disabilities impact on media. For the next steps of my research project, I utilized secondary research to categorize disability types. The secondary research I conducted compelled me to choose the most effective primary research method.

Within this marketing research capstone project, the main form of quantitative primary research utilized was surveys. Surveys were chosen due to their flexibility and adaptability, which is shown through their ability to be customized and distributed in many different forms. Surveys can be quickly and inexpensively designed in order to be distributed to a large sample size. Then the survey can be used to explain trends within these large sample sizes. Another benefit of surveys is that the collected data can be quickly populated as visualizations such as graphs and charts. Disadvantages of surveys include difficulty finding enough participants to have a significant sample size. Surveys must also be short and concise to avoid participants skipping questions. For this research project, the advantages of surveys outweighed the disadvantages.
Survey Collection

This survey collected data from people with disabilities above the age of 18 years old. The survey was distributed both digitally and on paper. The paper survey was distributed at the Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association March 11th through March 15th. The online survey was distributed through Qualtrics in the month of March.

Limitations

The quantitative research form of surveys resulted in setbacks in the context of this research project. Due to my preferred sample size being composed of people with disabilities, my survey needed to be customed to be accessible for people with disabilities and their specific needs. In order to customize the survey properly, I needed to first categorize disability types within the demographics section. This posed difficulty because there are no universal disability categories. This issue was slightly offset by adding an “Other” answer choice to each disability question.

Another limitation faced within this research project was the complications faced when distributing the paper version of these surveys. My paper survey was distributed at the Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association (KSRA). Due to varying daily participants’ attendance, all of the survey questions were not answered by all of the participants. The paper surveys were also left anonymous and sent back in different orders making it difficult to analysis the data. The lack of data consistency made my project reliant upon the digital distribution of the surveys.

The data collected may also be affected by participants having difficulty understanding the questions and marketing terms within the survey. For the paper survey, in order to combat this lack of understanding I created informative packets for staff and participants to explain step
on the survey. For the online survey, the participants needed to interpret the questions and marketing terms based on the discretion. This lack of understanding may have resulted in some nonresponses to questions within both the online and paper surveys. Also, some individuals took this survey despite not having a disability.

**Data Analysis & Results**

Below are visualizations and explanations of each question:

This question wants participants to identify how important it is to them to support businesses that have disability representation in their marketing campaigns. A total of sixty individuals answered this question. The options are “not all important” (5%, 3), “slightly important” (7%, 4), moderately important (20%, 12), “very important” (28%, 17), and “extremely important (40%, 24)”.

![Bar chart showing the distribution of responses to the question about supporting businesses with disability representation in marketing campaigns.](chart1)

This question wants participants to identify how important it is to them to support businesses that have disability representation in their marketing campaigns. A total of sixty individuals answered this question. The options are “not all important” (5%, 3), “slightly important” (7%, 4), moderately important (20%, 12), “very important” (28%, 17), and “extremely important (40%, 24)”.

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to the question about anti-ableism training in marketing.](chart2)

Training - Companies should participate in anti-ableism training before embarking on disability inclusive marketing?
This question wants participants to answer “Yes” or “No” to whether companies should participate in anti-ableism training before embarking on disability inclusive marketing. A total of fifty-nine participants answered this question with “Yes” (92%, 54) or “No” (8%, 5).

This question wants participants to answer “Yes” or “No” to whether it is important for a business to consult people with disabilities when planning their marketing campaigns. A total of sixty participants answered this question with “Yes” (92%, 55) or “No” (8%, 5).

This question wants participants to identify whether they prefer person-first language (73%, 44) or identify-first language (27%, 16) used in a digital marketing campaign. A total of sixty participants answered this question.
Participants were asked “When viewing digital marketing campaigns, which statement best describes the activities you prefer to be highlighted?” A total of fifty-five participants answered this question. Participants answered, “I would prefer a digital marketing campaign to have people with disabilities participating in everyday activities” (91%, 50) and “I would prefer a digital marketing campaign to have people with disabilities participating disability or health focused activities” (9%, 5).

In this question, participants should rate how much they agree with this statement “I am less inclined to support a business that portrays people with disabilities as symbols of ‘inspiration’ for non-disabled people.” A total of fifty-five participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Strongly agree” (18), “Somewhat agree” (11), “Neither agree nor disagree” (16), “Somewhat disagree” (3), “Strongly disagree” (7).
In this question, participants should rate how much they agree with this statement “I am inclined to support a business that hires actors with disabilities to portray the disability representation in campaigns.” A total of fifty-five participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Strongly agree” (29), “Somewhat agree” (10), “Neither agree nor disagree” (4), “Somewhat disagree” (5), “Strongly disagree” (7).

In this question, participants should rate how much they agree with this statement “I If the campaign is not accessibility friendly, I do not consider it effective representation.” A total of fifty-five participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Strongly agree” (29), “Somewhat agree” (14), “Neither agree nor disagree” (8), “Somewhat disagree” (2), “Strongly disagree” (2).
Participants were asked to answer this question “Which stereotype would you find to be most detrimental to the disability community if unintentionally included in an advertisement?” A total of 50 participants answered this question. The count of the participants’ answers was “Supercrip (having a disability granted one with a superpower)” (2), “Pitiable/Pathetic” (17), “Object of curiosity or violence” (5), “Sinister or evil” (10), “Their own worst enemy” (1), “A burden” (11), “Laughable” (1), "Non-sexual" (0), and “Inspirational” (3).

Participants are being asked to answer the question, “Should companies collaborate with influencers with disabilities?” A total of 52 participants answered this question. Participants answered “Yes” (90%, 47) and “No” (10%, 5).
In this question, participants should rate how much they agree with this statement “I view a company’s disability inclusive marketing as authentic if they are involved in philanthropy within the disability community.” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Strongly agree” (35%, 17), “Somewhat agree” (40%, 19), “Neither agree nor disagree” (23%, 11), “Somewhat disagree” (0%, 0), “Strongly disagree” (2%, 1).

In this question, participants should rate how much they agree with this statement “I only want a person's disability to mentioned when it is essential to the story.” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Strongly agree” (21%, 10),

This question wants participants to choose “I prefer companies to portray human interest stories” or “I prefer companies to portray tearjerking stories” for which one best describes the type of stories they prefer a company to portray. A total of forty-eight participants answered this question with “I prefer companies to portray human interest stories” (96%, 46) or “I prefer companies to portray tearjerking stories” (4%, 2).

This question wants participants to answer “True” or “False” to whether they prefer a company to release multiple disability inclusive advertisements than only one. A total of forty-eight participants answered this question with “True” (90%, 44) or “False” (10%, 5).
In this question, participants should rate how much they agree with this statement “If a company releases an insensitive advertisement, I would like them to adjust and try again.” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Strongly agree” (63%, 31), “Somewhat agree” (27%, 13), “Neither agree nor disagree” (6%, 3), “Somewhat disagree” (0%, 0), “Strongly disagree” (4%, 2).

Participants are asked to answer the question “What social media platforms do you use to interact with disability communities? Select all that apply.” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered “Instagram” (58%, 28), “Facebook” (73%, 35), “X (Formerly Twitter)” (10%, 5), “TikTok” (46%, 22), “Snapchat” (10%, 5), “YouTube” (38%, 18), “I do not use social platforms” (8%, 4), and “Other, Please describe” (10%, 5).
In this question, participants should rate how much they agree with this statement “I trust companies that do not have disability representation in their social media content.” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Strongly agree” (4%, 2), “Somewhat agree” (15%, 7), “Neither agree nor disagree” (31%, 15), “Somewhat disagree” (35%, 17), “Strongly disagree” (15%, 7).

Participants are asked to answer the question “What communities' feedback should a company listen to after a campaign has launched?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this
question. Participants answered, “People with disabilities” (13%, 6), “People without disabilities” (4%, 2), and “Both people with and without disabilities” (83%, 40).

Participants are asked to answer this question “Which Integrated Marketing Channel do you believe targets you best?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Public Relations” (4%, 2), “Digital Marketing” (50%, 24), “Direct Marketing” (6%, 3), “Broadcast Media” (0%, 0), “Print Media” (6%, 3), “Out-of-Home” (6%, 3), “These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability” (2%, 1), and “None of these answers are compelling” (25%, 12).
Participants are asked to answer this question “Which form of digital marketing compels you the most?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Online Communities/Blogs” (15%, 7), “Social Media Marketing” (48%, 23), “Content Marketing” (10%, 5), “Search Engine Optimization (SEO)” (6%, 3), “Paid Search (PPC)” (2%, 1), “Mobile Marketing” (2%, 1), “Virtual Reality Marketing” (0%, 0), “These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability” (0%, 0), and “None of these answers are compelling” (17%, 8).

Participants are asked to answer this question “What type of direct marketing most compels you?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Catalogs” (0%, 0), “Direct Mail” (6%, 3), “Infomercials” (2%, 1), “Mobile/ SMS Texts” (4%, 2), “Email Marketing” (10%, 5), “Display Ads” (2%, 1), “Social Media” (46%, 22), “Telemarketing” (2%, 1), “Promotions” (4%, 2), “Personal Selling” (2%, 1), “These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability” (0%,0), and “None of these answers are compelling” (21%, 10).
Participants are asked to answer this question “Which form of broadcast media most compels you?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Television” (23%, 11), “Radio” (9%, 4), “Video Ads” (21%, 10), “Podcasts” (21%, 10), “Product Placements” (11%, 5), “These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability” (0%, 0), and “None of these answers are compelling” (15%, 7).

Participants are asked to answer this question “Which form of print media most compels you?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Magazines” (8%, 4), “Newspaper” (13%, 6), “Brochures” (8%, 4), “Signage” (10%, 5), “Flyers” (8%, 4), “E-books” (15%, 7), “Direct Mail” (10%, 5), “These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability” (0%, 0), and “None of these answers are compelling” (27%, 13).
Participants are asked to answer this question “Which form of out-of-home marketing most compels you?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Billboards” (46%, 22), “Kiosks” (8%, 4), “Transit (Bus Ads)” (4%, 2), “These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability” (2%, 1), “None of these answers are compelling” (40%, 19).

Participants are asked to answer this question “What form of Public Relations most compels you?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Press Releases” (10%, 5), “Sponsorships” (13%, 6), “Community Relations” (23%, 11), “Speeches” (6%, 3), “News Stories” (31%, 15), “These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability” (4%, 2), and “None of these answers are compelling” (13%, 6).
Participants are asked to answer this question “Now, finishing up with some demographics questions. How do you describe yourself?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Female” (81%, 39), “Male” (10%, 5), “Non-binary/third gender” (6%, 3), “Prefer to self-describe” (0%, 0), and “Prefer not to say” (2%, 1).

Participants are asked to answer this question “What is your age?” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants asked “18-24” (10%, 5), “25-39” (31%, 15), “40-55” (35%, 17), “56-74” (23%, 11), “75 and older” (0%,0), and “Prefer not to say” (0%, 0).
Participants are asked to answer this question “Please select one or more you identify with:” A total of forty-eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “American Indian or Alaskan Native” (4%, 2), “Asian” (2%, 1), “Black or African American” (29%, 14), “Hispanic, Latino or Spanish” (8%, 4), “Middle Eastern or North African” (2%, 1), “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander” (2%, 1), “White” (63%, 30), “Prefer to self-describe” (2%, 1), and “Prefer not to say” (4%, 2).

This is “other” choice of the previous question. One person answered, “African American and White.”
Participants are asked to answer this question “Please select one category you identify with:” A total of forty-seven participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Physical” (9%, 4), “Neurological” (6%, 3), “Sensory” (9%, 4), “Health/Chronic Illness” (17%, 8), “Psychiatric” (15%, 7), “Neurodivergent” (17%, 8), “Multiple Disabilities” (21%, 10), and “Other:” (6%, 3).

This is “other” choice of the previous question. One person answered “None.”

Participants are asked to answer this question “Which physical disabilities do you identify with?” A total of four participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Musculoskeletal
Condition” (0%, 0), “Spinal Cord Injuries” (0%, 0), “Amputation” (0%, 0), “Mobility Impairment” (75%, 3), and “Other:” (25%, 1).

Participants are asked to answer this question “Which sensory disorders do you identify with?” A total of four participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Blindness or Low Vision” (0%, 0), “Deafness or Hard of Hearing” (50%, 2), “Dual Sensory Loss: D/deaf-blindness” (0%, 0), “Sensory Processing Disorder” (25%, 1), and “Other:” (25%, 1).

Participants are asked to answer this question “Which neurological disorders do you identify with?” c Participants answered, “Traumatic Brain Injury” (0%, 0), “Cerebral Palsy” (0%, 0), “Seizure Disorder” (33%, 1), “Brain Tumors” (0%, 0), “Bell's Palsy” (0%, 0), “Muscular
Dystrophy” (0%, 0), “Multiple Sclerosis” (0%, 0), and “Other:” (67%, 2). The participants who selected “Other” did not elaborate in the available text box.

Participants are asked to answer this question “Which health disorders do you identify with?” A total of eight participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Diabetes” (38%, 3), “Hemophilia” (13%, 1), “Sickle Cell Anemia” (0%, 0), “Cystic Fibrosis” (0%, 0), and “Other:” (50%, 4).

This is the other choice for the previous question. Participants answered, “Fibromyalgia”, “Ulcerative colitis”, and “Autoimmunity.”
Participants are asked to answer this question “Which psychiatric disorders do you identify with?” A total of seven participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Mental Illness” (71%, 5), “Chemical and Substance Abuse” (0%, 0), and “Other:” (29%, 2). The participants who selected “Other” did not elaborate in the available text box.

Participants are asked to answer this question “Which form of neurodivergence do you identify with?” A total of 8 participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)” (13%, 1), “Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)” (50%, 4), “Dyslexia” (13%, 1), “Dyspraxia (Development Coordination Disorder DCD)” (0%, 0), “Dyscalculia” (0%, 0), “Anxiety” (25%, 2), “Tourette's Syndrome” (0%, 0), “Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)” (0%, 0), and “Other:” (0%, 0).
Participants are asked to answer this question “Please list the multiple disabilities you have.” Participants answered, “Diabetes, Depression, Anxiety, ADHD, PTSD”, “Mental illness; chronic pain”, “anxiety, depression, chronic pain, IBS”, “Multiple sclerosis, bipolar, ADHD, OCD”, “4”, “Autism, ADHD, chronic health conditions, depression, anxiety, OCD”, “hearing loss, low vision, ADHD”, “Rheumatoid arthritis, Fibromyalgia, mental illness”, “Physical Mental”, and “Sensory, psychiatric, mood, neurodivergent.”
Participants are asked to answer this question “Information about income is very important to understand. Would you please give your best guess? Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in (previous year) before taxes.” A total of 48 participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Less than $10,000” (8%, 4), “$10,000 to $19,999” (6%, 3), “$20,000 to $29,999” (0%, 0), “$30,000 to $39,999” (15%, 7), “$40,000 to $49,999” (10%, 5), “$50,000 to $59,999” (4%, 2), “$60,000 to $69,999” (6%, 3), “$70,000 to $79,999” (6%, 3), “$80,000 to $89,999” (6%, 3), “$90,000 to $99,999” (6%, 3), “$100,000 to $149,999” (19%, 9), “$150,000 or more” (6%, 3) and “Prefer not to say” (6%, 3).
Participants are asked to answer this question “What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?” A total of 47 participants answered this question. Participants answered, “Less than high school degree” (0%, 0), “High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)” (9%, 4), “Some college but no degree” (13%, 6), “Associate degree in college (2-year)” (4%, 2), “Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)” (32%, 15), “Master's degree” (23%, 11), “Doctoral degree” (9%, 4), “Professional degree (JD, MD)” (9%, 4), and “Prefer not to say” (2%, 1). 

Crosstabs

Cross tabulation (crosstab) is an embedded feature within Qualtrics, which allows a researcher to compare the results of one variable to the results of another variable. A primary confidence level of 90% was utilized for the crosstabs within this study. Below is a list of questions that had significant relationships with different demographic criteria:

1. Gender & Digital Marketing: Which form of digital marketing compels you the most?
2. Gender & DisabilityRep: How important is it to you to support businesses that have disability representation within their marketing campaigns?
3. Gender & Training: Companies should participate in anti-ableism training before embarking on disability inclusive marketing?
4. Gender & Essential Story: I only want a person’s disability to mentioned when it is essential to the story.
5. Gender & Story Type: Select the statement that best describes the type of stories you prefer a company to portray.
6. Gender & After Launch: What communities feedback should a company listen to after a campaign has launched?
7. Gender & IMC: Which Integrated Marketing Channel do you believe targets you best?
8. Gender & Direct Marketing: What type of direct marketing most compels you?
9. Gender & Out-of-Home: Which form of out-of-home marketing most compels you?
10. Gender & Public Relations: What form of Public Relations most compels you?
11. Age & Broadcast Media: Which form of broadcast media most compels you?
12. Age & Public Relations: What form of Public Relations most compels you?
13. Disability & Inspiration Porn: I am less inclined to support a business that portrays people with disabilities as symbols of “inspiration” for non-disabled people.
14. Disability & Digital Marketing: Which form of digital marketing compels you the most?
15. Disability & Out-of-Home: Which form of out-of-home marketing most compels you?

**Consumer Insights**

My survey has resulted in a large amount of consumer insights. It is difficult to support these consumer insights with external resources due to the lack of previous research pertaining to the marketing tactic preferences of people with disabilities.

Below is a list of the most compelling consumer insights:

1. Consumers with disabilities would prefer a digital marketing campaign to have people with disabilities participating in everyday activities.

2. Consumers with disabilities may not support businesses that unintentionally incorporate stereotypes pertaining to people with disabilities. Consumers may take action to especially avoid companies that utilizes pitiable/pathetic, sinister or evil, and burdensome stereotypes.

3. Consumers with disabilities may be more inclined to support a company that utilizes disability inclusive marketing in conjunction with philanthropy within the disability community. These consumers will view this community involvement and marketing type as authentic and sincere.
4. People with disabilities utilize the social media platform of “Facebook” to build communities with one another.

5. People with disabilities find digital marketing, specifically social media marketing, to be the most compelling Integrated Marketing Channel.

6. People with disabilities do not find print media to be compelling.

7. From the data present, we can infer that issues concerning disability inclusive marketing will mostly impact females. But future research could further explore this connection to gender with a larger sample size.

**Recommendations**

Below is a list of my recommendations to marketers exploring disability inclusive marketing:

1. When researching the buying behavior of consumers with disabilities ensure your surveys are extremely customizable and accompanied with detailed instructions. You must ensure every participant’s broad spectrum of needs are meet within these customized surveys. This requires a consistent amount of communication with participants.

2. Prior to executing any disability inclusive marketing campaigns, marketers should both consult with people with disabilities and participate in anti-ableism training. These actions are a form of preventive care and will ensure the campaigns centered around feelings and reactions of people with disabilities.

3. When choosing between integrated marketing channels, marketers should utilize social media marketing within the digital marketing channel. When engaging in social media marketing, marketers should focus more on the platforms of Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.
4. Companies should organize philanthropy initiatives continuously before, during, and after launching disability inclusive marketing campaigns. In order to promote these philanthropy initiatives, companies should also partner with influencers with disabilities.

5. There should be future research efforts to further explore the relationship between the gender of people with disabilities and disability inclusive marketing efforts.
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Appendix A Survey

Spring 2024 - Disability & Marketing Preferences - Richardson

Intro Thank you for your willingness to help out with this research project. Your participation is voluntary and all of your responses will remain anonymous.

The survey on the following pages is part of a class project for a Marketing Capstone, MKTG 499. We will use the information gathered from this data to understand how to statistically analyze and gain consumer insights from research.

I, Amari Richardson, am supervised by Ms. Michele Kaczka. This survey will ask about your marketing communication preferences and will gather insight on whether shoppers are more or less likely to spend their dollars with a company marketing to people with disabilities. Some basic demographic data will also be collected.

Before you proceed, please note that you must be over 18 years old to participate. By continuing the survey, you acknowledge that indeed you are over 18 years old.

We thank you for participating in this survey! If any questions, feel free to contact my professor.
Yes, I am at least 18 years old and wish to participate in this survey (1)

No, I am either not at least 18 years old or do not wish to participate in this survey (2)

DisabilityRep How important is it to you to support businesses that have disability representation within their marketing campaigns?

- Not at all important (1)
- Slightly important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Very important (4)
- Extremely important (5)
Training Companies should participate in anti-ableism training before embarking on disability inclusive marketing?

- Yes (23)
- No (24)

Consult People It is important for a business to consult people with disabilities when planning their marketing campaigns.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Language Which would you prefer be used in a digital marketing campaign?

- Person-First Language (1)
- Identity-First Language (2)
Activity Form  When viewing digital marketing campaigns, which statement best describes the activities you prefer to be highlighted?

- I would prefer a digital marketing campaign to have people with disabilities participating in everyday activities. (1)
- I would prefer a digital marketing campaign to have people with disabilities participating disability or health focused activities. (2)

Inspiration Porn I am less inclined to support a business that portrays people with disabilities as symbols of "inspiration" for non-disabled people.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)
Actor Representation I am inclined to support a business that hires actors with disabilities to portray the disability representation in campaigns.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Accessibility If the campaign is not accessibility friendly I do not consider it effective representation.

- Strongly agree (9)
- Somewhat agree (10)
- Neither agree nor disagree (11)
- Somewhat disagree (12)
- Strongly disagree (13)
Stereotypes Which stereotype would you find to be most detrimental to the disability community if unintentionally included in an advertisement?

- Supercrip (having a disability granted one with a superpower) (1)
- Pitiable/Pathetic (2)
- Object of curiosity or violence (3)
- Sinister or evil (4)
- Their own worst enemy (5)
- A burden (6)
- Laughable (7)
- "Non-sexual" (8)
- Inspirational (9)

Influencers Should companies collaborate with influencers with disabilities?

- Yes (1)
- No (3)
Authenticity  I view a company's disability inclusive marketing as authentic if they are involved in philanthropy within the disability community.

- Strongly agree  (9)
- Somewhat agree  (10)
- Neither agree nor disagree  (11)
- Somewhat disagree  (12)
- Strongly disagree  (13)

Essential Story I only want a person's disability to mentioned when it is essential to the story.

- Strongly agree  (9)
- Somewhat agree  (10)
- Neither agree nor disagree  (11)
- Somewhat disagree  (12)
- Strongly disagree  (13)
Story Type Select the statement that best describes the type of stories you prefer a company to portray.

- I prefer companies to portray human interest stories. (1)
- I prefer companies to portray tearjerking stories. (2)

Frequency I would prefer a company to release multiple disability inclusive advertisements than only one.

- True (23)
- False (24)

Try Again If a company releases an insensitive advertisement, I would like them to adjust and try again.

- Strongly agree (9)
- Somewhat agree (10)
- Neither agree nor disagree (11)
- Somewhat disagree (12)
- Strongly disagree (13)
Platforms What social media platforms do you use to interact with disability communities?

Select all that apply.

- Instagram  (1)
- Facebook  (2)
- X (Formerly Twitter)  (3)
- TikTok  (4)
- Snapchat  (5)
- YouTube  (6)
- I do not use social platforms  (8)
- Other, Please describe  (7)
Trust Companies I trust companies that do not have disability representation in their social media content.

- Strongly agree (9)
- Somewhat agree (10)
- Neither agree nor disagree (11)
- Somewhat disagree (12)
- Strongly disagree (13)

After Launch What communities' feedback should a company listen to after a campaign has launched?

- People with disabilities (9)
- People without disabilities (10)
- Both people with and without disabilities (11)
IMC Which Integrated Marketing Channel do you believe targets you best?

- Public Relations (1)
- Digital Marketing (2)
- Direct Marketing (3)
- Broadcast Media (4)
- Print Media (5)
- Out-of-Home (6)
- These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability. (7)
- None of these answers are compelling. (8)
Digital Marketing Which form of digital marketing compels you the most?

- Online Communities/Blogs (1)
- Social Media Marketing (2)
- Content Marketing (3)
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) (5)
- Paid Search (PPC) (6)
- Mobile Marketing (8)
- Virtual Reality Marketing (9)
- These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability. (10)
- None of these answers are compelling. (11)
Direct Marketing What type of direct marketing most compels you?

- Catalogs (1)
- Direct Mail (2)
- Infomercials (3)
- Mobile/ SMS Texts (4)
- Email Marketing (5)
- Display Ads (6)
- Social Media (7)
- Telemarketing (8)
- Promotions (9)
- Personal Selling (10)
- These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability. (12)
- None of these answers are compelling. (11)
Broadcast Media Which form of broadcast media most compels you?

- Television (1)
- Radio (2)
- Video Ads (3)
- Podcasts (4)
- Product Placements (5)
- These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability. (6)
- None of these answers are compelling. (7)

Print Media Which form of print media most compels you?

- Magazines (1)
- Newspaper (2)
- Brochures (3)
- Signage (5)
- Flyers (6)
- E-books (7)
- Direct Mail (8)
- These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability. (10)
- None of these answers are compelling. (9)
Out-of-Home Which form of out-of-home marketing most compels you?

- Billboards (1)
- Kiosks (2)
- Transit (Bus Ads) (3)
- These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability. (6)
- None of these answers are compelling. (5)

Public Relations What form of Public Relations most compels you?

- Press Releases (1)
- Sponsorships (2)
- Community Relations (3)
- Speeches (4)
- News Stories (5)
- These marketing types are not accessible due to my disability. (6)
- None of these answers are compelling. (7)
Gender Now, finishing up with some demographics questions. How do you describe yourself?

- Female (1)
- Male (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer to self-describe (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

Age What is your age?

- 18-24 (1)
- 25-39 (2)
- 40-55 (3)
- 56-74 (4)
- 75 and older (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)
Ethnicity Please select one or more you identify with:

☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native (1)
☐ Asian (2)
☐ Black or African American (3)
☐ Hispanic, Latino or Spanish (4)
☐ Middle Eastern or North African (5)
☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)
☐ White (7)
☐ Prefer to self-describe (8)
☐ Prefer not to say (9)
Disability Please select one category you identify with:

- Physical (1)
- Neurological (2)
- Sensory (3)
- Health/Chronic Illness (4)
- Psychiatric (5)
- Neurodivergent (7)
- Multiple Disabilities (8)
- Other: (6) __________________________________________________

Display This Question:
If Please select one category you identify with: = Physical

Physical Which physical disabilities do you identify with?

- Musculoskeletal Condition (1)
- Spinal Cord Injuries (3)
- Amputation (4)
- Mobility Impairment (5)
- Other: (6) __________________________________________________
**Display This Question:**
If Please select one category you identify with: = Sensory

**Sensory** Which sensory disorders do you identify with?

- Blindness or Low Vision (1)
- Deafness or Hard of Hearing (2)
- Dual Sensory Loss: D/deaf-blindness (3)
- Sensory Processing Disorder (5)
- Other: (6) __________________________________________

**Display This Question:**
If Please select one category you identify with: = Neurological

**Neurological** Which neurological disorders do you identify with?

- Traumatic Brain Injury (1)
- Cerebral Palsy (2)
- Seizure Disorder (3)
- Brain Tumors (4)
- Bell's Palsy (5)
- Muscular Dystrophy (6)
- Multiple Sclerosis (7)
- Other: (8) __________________________________________
Health Which health disorders do you identify with?

- Diabetes (1)
- Hemophilia (2)
- Sickle Cell Anemia (3)
- Cystic Fibrosis (4)
- Other: (5) ________________________________

Psychiatric Which psychiatric disorders do you identify with?

- Mental Illness (1)
- Chemical and Substance Abuse (2)
- Other: (3) ________________________________

Neurodivergent
Neurodivergent Which form of neurodivergence do you identify with?

- [ ] Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (1)
- [ ] Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (2)
- [ ] Dyslexia (3)
- [ ] Dyspraxia (Development Coordination Disorder DCD) (4)
- [ ] Dyscalculia (5)
- [ ] Anxiety (6)
- [ ] Tourette's Syndrome (24)
- [ ] Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) (28)
- [ ] Other: (29) ________________________________

Display This Question:

If Please select one category you identify with: = Multiple Disabilities

Multiple Please list the multiple disabilities you have.

__________________________________________________________________

Page Break
Income Information about income is very important to understand. Would you please give your best guess? Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in (previous year) before taxes.

- Less than $10,000 (1)
- $10,000 to $19,999 (2)
- $20,000 to $29,999 (3)
- $30,000 to $39,999 (4)
- $40,000 to $49,999 (5)
- $50,000 to $59,999 (6)
- $60,000 to $69,999 (7)
- $70,000 to $79,999 (8)
- $80,000 to $89,999 (9)
- $90,000 to $99,999 (10)
- $100,000 to $149,999 (11)
- $150,000 or more (12)
- Prefer not to say (13)
Education
What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree (1)
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (2)
- Some college but no degree (3)
- Associate degree in college (2-year) (4)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) (5)
- Master's degree (6)
- Doctoral degree (7)
- Professional degree (JD, MD) (8)
- Prefer not to say (9)

Zip code
What is your ZIP code?

End of Block: Demographics