

10 Tips for Improving Accessibility, Service and Experience for Customers with Blindness or Visual Impairments



*A guide for your employees to provide a quality
experience for customers with blindness or visual impairments*

Accessibility is a customer experience issue.

Customer experience is a critical component of your business. You invest in training your employees how to greet, communicate with and help your customers. But, if the customer is blind or visually impaired, do your employees know how to best help them? We've put together easy tips and best practices you can share with your team to improve interactions with visually impaired customers.

5 tips for improved accessibility:

Be proactive.

Many companies don't address accessibility until a customer demands it. Show that you value all of your customers by reviewing your organization's documents and communications and available accessibility options. Set a plan in place for alternate format requests. Train your employees on how to respond to accessibility requests.

Offer accessible format choices.

Visually impaired customers may prefer braille, large print, audio or other alternative formats of your regular business documents. If a customer needs accessible documents, ask them what format they prefer. This is required by federal law and this one-on-one service shows that you respect their independence and care about their experience.

Have an ADA accessibility letter available.

This is a letter that acknowledges the federal requirements of ADA law, contains a personalized message from your organization and provides the steps needed to request materials in a communication method that best fits the customer's needs. This letter should be available in all accessible formats: braille, large print, audio and accessible PDF.



Make sure your digital experience is compliant and accessible.

Before you direct customers to your website or send an email, make certain both are ADA compliant and accessible. For example, PDFs are not generally accessible to screen readers and therefore are not considered accessible to persons with visual disabilities.

A process known as document remediation (often referred to as 508, WCAG, or PDF/UA remediation) must take place on all PDFs to make them accessible.

Make accessibility part of the script.

Some disabilities are known as “invisible” because they are unseen. Make it a part of your customer service and account management training to ask every client, every time, what their individual needs are.

5 tips for improved customer service and experience:

Communicate clearly and often.

When addressing a customer with visual impairment, introduce yourself clearly and let them know what you are doing as you do it. Even if the customer has an escort, remember to speak directly to the customer unless asked to do otherwise.

Ask questions rather than making assumptions.

Sometimes our best intentions get in the way of good customer experience. Rather than making assumptions about a person’s abilities and the type of assistance they need, first ask if the person needs assistance and if so, what type of assistance would be most helpful.

Check in with customers, in case needs change.

Every customer interaction is unique, and accessibility needs may change over time. Check in with customers to see if their preferred method of communication has changed.

Remember, it's not polite to point.

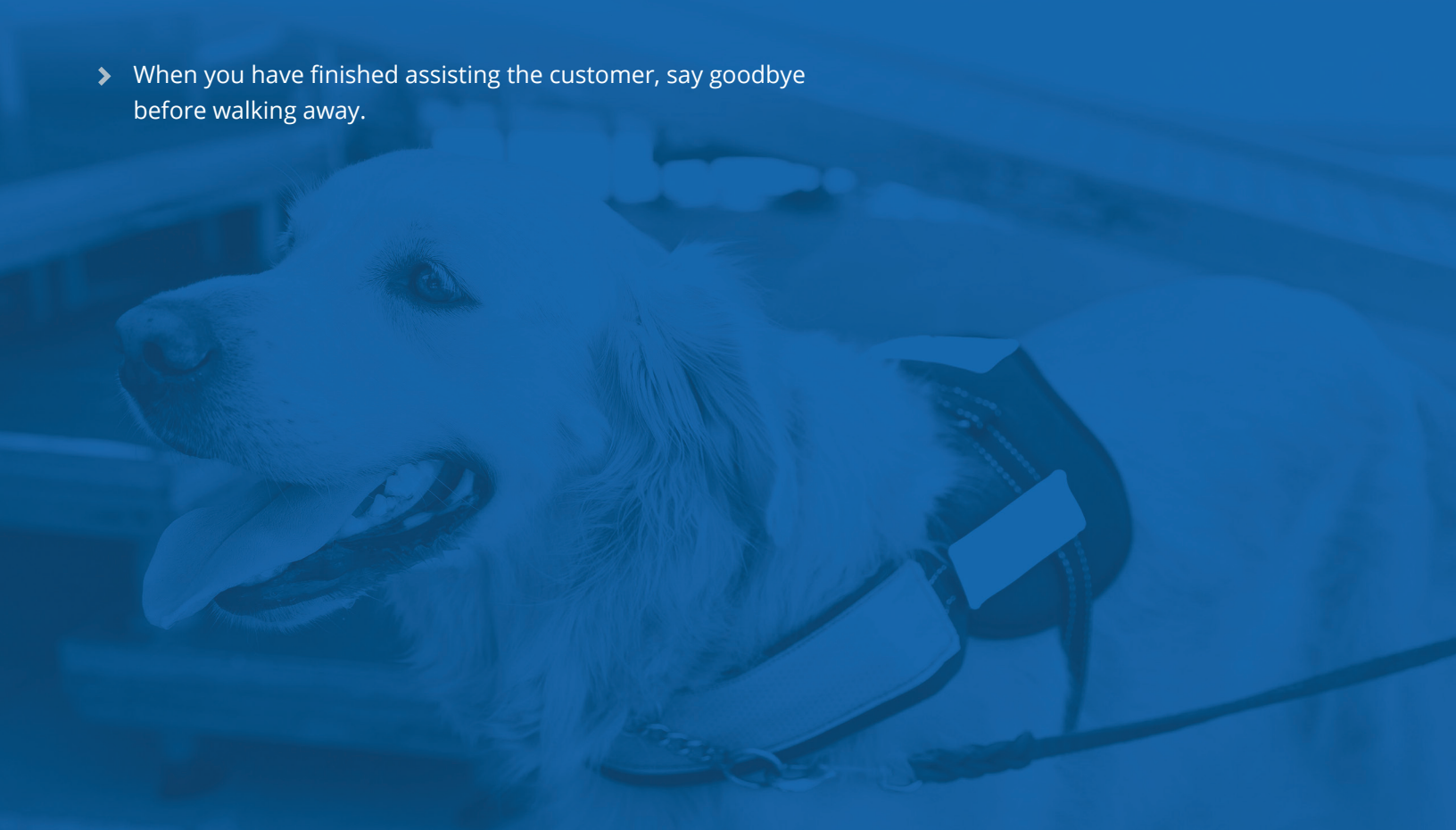
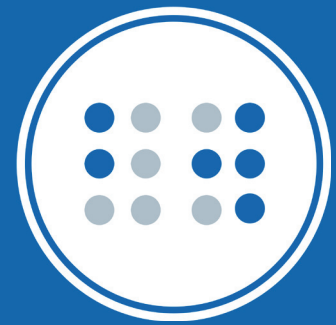
When assisting a customer who is blind or has low vision, offer clear directional assistance rather than pointing. For example: “You will need to walk about 10 paces to your right and the help desk is on your left.” Follow up with, “Would you like assistance in locating the desk?”

Keep your hands to yourself, unless asked.

If a customer asks for assistance in locating something, do not grab their arm, hand or cane. Instead, offer your elbow, shoulder or arm for them to take and you will guide them to the location. Again, this should be at the request of the customer.

More tips for communicating with customers who are blind or visually impaired.

- › Don't assume a customer with visual impairment can't see you.
- › Do not approach or pet service animals. They are working and need to focus.
- › Walk up to a customer; do not address them from across the room.
- › If guiding a customer or providing directions, describe the environment. Be sure to explain the layout of the building and mention important landmarks or obstacles.
- › If you have to leave the customer, let them know you are doing so. Explain where they are in your building and offer to help them to a chair or waiting area.
- › When you have finished assisting the customer, say goodbye before walking away.



Start with all customers in mind.

Communicating with all of your customers the same way reduces the chance of an unpleasant experience for customers with visual impairments. Having an accessibility strategy also reduces the legal risk of non-compliance and discrimination complaints. When you start with all your customers in mind, you can ensure everyone is included.

Are you ready to provide all of your customers' the same level of care and service? Contact Braille Works to see how we can help you include everyone with accessible documents!



INCLUDE EVERYONE IN LIFE & BUSINESS WITH ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS.

See how Braille Works solutions can help.

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