



HELP YOUR VENDORS AND SPONSORS BE ACCESSIBLE

PART TWO: ACCESSIBLE BOOTH DESIGN



The Message

If a booth is not accessible to customers with disabilities, it may be difficult or impossible to approach or enter the vendor's booth and purchase items or experience the sponsor's promotion. The underlying message is, at best, "Oops, we forgot to include you," or could even be perceived as "You are not important enough for us to make any changes."

When a booth is accessible the message is "We value your patronage. Thank you for making the effort to come to this event and come to our booth." Which message do you want to send?

Risk

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that any business open to the public be accessible to people with disabilities. If there is a complaint about an inaccessible booth, under the ADA, *the vendor or sponsor, and the event itself, could be liable*. Bottom line, it makes good business sense not to turn customers away.

Principles of Booth Design

- **Aisles:** Make sure all aisles are at least 36 inches wide, allowing a person in a wheelchair to get into and around your booth. Overcrowding your booth is not a pleasant experience for anyone, including those without disabilities. Keep it simple and accessible to all.
- **Counters:** When money or goods are exchanged over a counter, make sure that at least one 36-inch wide section of that counter is no higher than 36 inches. This makes it easier for a person in a wheelchair to use the counter. In many cases it is simpler to make all counters no higher than 36 inches.
- **Ground Surfaces:** As patrons approach and enter your booth the floor and ground surfaces should be stable, firm, and slip resistant. Sand, gravel, wood chips, mud etc., are not accessible surfaces. In these settings, plywood is a commonly used accessible surface. Some booths put down carpeting to smooth out the ground surface.
- **Flooring:** If you use flooring that is one quarter to one half inch high, you will need to bevel the edge at an incline no steeper than 1:2. If it is higher than one half inch, make sure that the incline is no steeper than 1:12. You may need a threshold ramp.



The flooring leading to the booths is several inches too high and needs ramping to make it accessible. The counter is significantly higher than the 36" maximum.

Festival producers, this is the second of a two-part series with information to help make sure that your vendors and sponsors are aware of their obligations to be accessible to your patrons with disabilities. As the producer, you want everyone who attends to feel welcomed and included in all aspects of your event. Share this information with your vendors, sponsors, and also your Site Team, as they are often the ones to build the booths.

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- **Merchandise:** Display your merchandise so that it is visible to everyone whether they are short, tall, or seated in a wheelchair. Wares displayed on high counters or high shelves may be difficult to see. Try it out. Make sure that you can see all of your merchandise from all perspectives.
- **Customer Service:** Be sure that your team is trained in how to serve customers with disabilities. If you missed it, check the previous issue of "ie" magazine for "Part One: Serving Customers with Disabilities."

Being more accessible to your patrons with disabilities will help your event build audience, be more compliant with the law, and develop a more positive relationship with your community.

Everyone's Invited, LLC, founded by **Laura Grunfeld**, is winner of the gold level "Best Accessibility Program," for the 2018 IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards. Laura writes a regular column helping producers make their events accessible to people with disabilities. She has worked many festivals across the nation and readers can learn more about her event accessibility consulting, training, and production company at www.EveryonesInvited.com and www.linkedin.com/in/lauragrunfeld. Suggest topics or ask questions by writing to Laura@EveryonesInvited.com. © Laura Grunfeld, Everyone's Invited, LLC, October 2018