Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement

Business Case and Overview
The Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement was developed by Dolmen (www.dolmen.ie) on behalf of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority, Ireland.

It was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. The Toolkit is based on the specifications contained in the Irish Standard (I.S.) 373:2013 ‘Universal Design for customer engagement in tourism services’, published by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

Download the entire Toolkit for free at:
http://www.universaldesign.ie/tourism
Now, more than ever before, your focus is on running an effective and efficient business. Time, personnel and funds are limited and all your focus is on the day-to-day running of the business and bringing in money.

When it comes to engaging with your current customers and targeting new ones…

• Is the warm Irish welcome being translated into a better experience for your customers, and more revenue for your business?

• Are you communicating with your customers as well as you can in your print materials, on your website, over the phone and in person?

• After you make the first sale, how are you keeping customers engaged?

Better communication can increase the spend by your customer, widen your market, improve brand recognition and customer loyalty.

### Three good reasons to use this Toolkit

52% of customers purchase more from a business as a result of a good customer experience.

Two thirds of customers are willing to spend an average of 13% more with a business they believe provides good customer service.

24% of customers will continue to use service providers for two or more years after good experiences.

### Universal Design for customer engagement

Universal Design for customer engagement is the design of all forms of customer communications so that they can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability and disability.

### Universal Design can work for you

Following the guidance in this Toolkit will help you to:

• Increase your number of repeat customers.

• Improve word of mouth referrals and online reviews.

• Improve how you successfully communicate to a wider market.

• Increase spend by your customers.
This Universal Design Toolkit will help your tourism business achieve better customer communication.

It shows you the most important things to get right and gives you simple to follow guidance that makes sense and is easy to apply. It helps you check that what you are doing is correct and offers good and bad practice examples. Finally it enables you to recap on the most important points so you and your staff don’t forget!

“We implemented training using the Toolkit to improve our customer engagement; this has resulted in a 46% increase in our food sales.”

(Hotel and restaurant West of Ireland).
Who is the Toolkit for?

This Toolkit is for all businesses that provide services to tourism customers. This ranges from local B&Bs to large hotels, from small coffee shops to large restaurants as well as music venues, cultural institutions, tour and transport operators, and everything in-between!

3 ways to use the Toolkits

1. Training - in the classroom or on the job
   Use the guidance for training staff in good customer communications. The Toolkit is useful as a quick reference guide, for classroom training and for testing your knowledge on what you have learnt.

2. Keep the guidance to hand - and refer to it often
   Use it when designing new forms, brochures, signage, websites or apps, or asking someone to do it for you. Base your designs on the guidance in the Toolkits.

3. Need a refresher - just check the checklists!
   Pull out or copy the checklists and keep them posted somewhere that staff can see and use them. Good practice never gets old.

The information in this Toolkit:

- Is designed for quick and easy training of staff.
- Can be applied at little or no extra cost.
- Is practical, easy to use and understand.
- Can be read and understood quickly.
Why use the Toolkit?

The three key reasons why Universal Design is important to customer engagement:

- The Business Case
- The Demographic Case
- The Legal Case

The Business Case

All businesses should be focused on meeting the needs of as many existing and potential new customers as possible. This Toolkit will help you to provide a better service and experience to your customers and potential customers. The impact of this will be an increased market reach; making your services available to a larger number and broader range of potential customers.

Key reasons for using the Toolkit are:

- **All your customers will benefit**
  
  This Toolkit will help make communication more accessible to, understandable and usable by as many of your customers as possible. The more flexible your service is and the more options it gives your customers, the more likely a service is to meet the diverse needs of as wide a customer base as possible.

  As your customers get older, they are more likely to experience difficulties. In Europe, tourists over 65 are the only customer segment that has grown (by 10%) between 2006 and 2011. Their tourism expenditure has also grown by 33% in these five years.

  This is because there are an increasing number of tourists over 65, who have money to spend and more leisure time than other customer segments.

Tourism customers over 50 years old buy 40% more holidays than the under 30s, averaging five or six breaks per year.
• **A good reputation makes good business sense**

A satisfied customer will tell other people about your service, increasing awareness and potentially creating new customers. Two thirds of customers are willing to spend an average of 13% more with a business they believe provides good customer service.

Increasingly, TripAdvisor and Facebook (among others) are places where potential customers learn about you based on reviews and feedback from previous customers. This has changed the dynamics of how you can engage with your customers. Your customers’ purchasing decisions are often made before you ever get a chance to talk to them and sell them your service. This is why this Toolkit is important.

**Almost 70% of people trust online customer reviews as much as personal recommendations, when making a decision about purchasing a product or a service.**

• **What’s good for society benefits your business**

If you incorporate a Universal Design approach in your business, you are likely to receive a reputation for a high level of corporate social responsibility. Welcoming all customers to use your service not only increases your bottom line - it benefits your local community and society as well.

**In 2012, 54% of travel bookings were made online. However, only 27% of tourism customers felt that the travel websites were easy to use.**
The Demographic Case

There are no typical tourism customers. They can be male or female, of all ages and all different in size. Tourism customers typically consist of a range of nationalities, where English may not be their first language.

It is important to remember, that at some stage we all will experience some form of difficulty, such as only having the use of one arm because you’re carrying a baby, or having difficulty hearing because of loud background noise. However this additionally may include more long term personal difficulties, ranging from hearing and seeing difficulties, to mental health and physical difficulties. In Europe there are 80 million people with a range of difficulties or disabilities.

Customers come in all Shapes & Sizes

The key message therefore is that there are no typical tourism customers. All businesses have a broad range of customers with different needs and difficulties.

The Legal Case

Under the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2011 and the Disability Act 2005 both the private and public sectors are legally required to provide a standard of service to all customers, which does not exclude or discriminate. Universal Design promotes compliance with this national legislation.
What is the Toolkit?

In 2013, Irish Standard (I.S.) 373:2013 ‘Universal Design for customer engagement in tourism services’ was published by NSAI, the National standards Authority of Ireland. This voluntary standard will assist tourism service providers to meet their legal obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2011 and the Disability Act 2005 (where applicable). I.S. 373:2013 provides best practice reference on design requirements for tourism service providers in applying Universal Design.

This Toolkit has been developed to help you apply the guidance provided in the standard. It provides you with practical and useful guidance on how to use Universal Design as a tool for better engaging with your customers.

Key areas of customer engagement

1. Written communication.
2. Face-to-face, telephone and video communication.
3. Electronic and web based communication.
Universal Design is the design of a building or place, products, services or information/communication technologies so that they can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.