

Marketing Strategies for Reaching People with Disabilities

There are 54 million people with disabilities in this country. They are the largest and fastest-growing subgroup of the population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Experts in marketing to people with disabilities say the way to reach the majority of this market is to target the mainstream disability market before segmenting by specific types of disabilities. Other suggestions include the following.

- Get early feedback from people with a variety of disabilities in your product development.
- Make sure your office environment is friendly to visitors with disabilities.
- Integrate graphics of people with disabilities into the material and product design.
- Do research on people with disabilities to orient your materials development and marketing strategy. The Harris Survey conducted for the National Organization on Disability (NOD) (www.nod.org) is a good starting point.
- Although people with disabilities share a stronger common identity with one another than ever before, make sure your ideas reflect the diverse needs of the disability community.
- Do not assume that one modification or message will work for everyone.
- For the best local and regional access to people with disabilities, contact the Governors' Committees on Employment of People with Disabilities, local cable access channels, radio shows, and independent living centers. NOD also has representatives in each state.
- Reach people with disabilities through special-interest magazines, national radio, cable television networks, or the Internet.
- Reach the disability community through your mainstream advertising avenues. For every person with a disability, there are many family members and friends who are seeking information for their friends or family members who have a disability.

Adapted from National Organization on Disability— May 2004