Event Accessibility Checklist

When organising an event, whether it's a board meeting, an annual conference, or the team Christmas party, there are a few small considerations to make to ensure it can be enjoyed by everybody.

The information below is an overview of considerations that should be made to accommodate people with disability. It is by no means exhaustive, but is a good place to start when planning your event.

Always remember to ask each attendee about their accessibility requirements, the same as you would ask for their dietary requirements; **never assume**.

Choosing a venue

- Ensure there is an accessible entrance with a ramp
- Check that the corridors are wide enough to allow for someone in a wheelchair or mobility scooter to easily turn around.
- Ensure that there are no obstacles such as stairs from the accessible entrance to the lift.
- Ensure automatic doors at entrance are available and functioning.
- Ensure accessible bathrooms are available. Check that the bathrooms are functioning, clear of clutter, and can be easily accessed.
- Choose a venue that can be easily accessed by public transport.
- Make sure your venue understands the laws surrounding service animals in Australia.
- Check that the acoustics of the venue are adequate, and that noise from external sources (traffic, crowds, other events, etc.) will not interfere with your event.

Invitations

- Ask attendees to advise of any accessibility requirements when registering so that these adjustments are managed as a part of the event. Outline the accessibility features of the venue you have chosen.
- Ensure digital invitations are accessible. It is best to have a Word version without any graphics which can be sent with your invitation.
- Ensure guests and participants can register for the event in a range of ways, including by phone, email or online. If using an online form or third party booking service, make sure it is accessible.
- Provide information about accessing the venue, including accessible parking, general parking, public transport, and venue drop-off points.
- For ticketed events, Companion cards and similar services should be honoured.

Marketing and communications

- All print material circulated before, during or after the event should be available in alternative formats such as large print and electronic formats.
- Remember that blind and vision impaired participants will not be able to see any PowerPoint presentations or images. Any PowerPoint presentations should be circulated to blind and vision impaired attendees before the event.
- Signage, presentations and written material should have sufficient contrast levels.
- Make written material available in plain English/Easy English alternatives.

Wayfinding

- Wayfinding materials should be simple and easy to read (clear directions, appropriate signage).
- Ensure your event venue is accessible. Is there level access? Is there braille signage? Are there sufficient Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs)?
- The MC or event organiser should provide a verbal explanation of the layout of the venue at the start of the event. This should include the layout of the room and directions to toilets, meal areas, breakout rooms and fire exits.

Room arrangement

- Book Auslan interpreters as needed, and reserve seats in front to enable a clear view for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Provide sufficient space between tables for wheelchair access.
- Ensure table height is accessible to wheelchair users and people of short stature. This includes refreshment tables and buffets.
- For standing events, provide some chairs for people who may experience fatigue
- Venue should be clear of obstacles, and trip hazards such as cables should be removed or taped down.
- Provide guests with access to a separate, quiet area to allow them to take a break, if needed.

Audio visuals

- Avoid strobe lighting or flashing lights.
- Provide a wheelchair ramp to the stage (if required) and ensure it complies with Australian Standards.
- Provide adjustable height microphones, or lapel microphones if required.
- Ensure a hearing loop is available for people who are hard of hearing.
- Provide space at the front of the room for Auslan interpreters (if required). Ensure interpreters are positioned in a well-lit area and clearly visible to the audience.
- Provide live captioning. This involves having an adequate internet connection available for attendees to connect to through their personal devices, as well as a phone line to connect the captioners. (Alternatively, captions can be displayed on a large screen at the front of the room).
- Venue should be evenly lit throughout.

Presentations

- All videos must be captioned.
- Videos should be audio described where appropriate. If they cannot be audio described, the presenter should supply any visual information that a person with low vision may not be able to access.
- Presenters should describe any visual information in their presentations.

Catering

- Provide a variety of meal options and include items that are easy to eat. Include foods that do not require utensils or intricacy.
- Ensure catering staff are briefed and available to assist attendees with serving items where required.
- Ensure special meals (e.g. vegetarian, gluten free, etc.) are clearly labelled and easily accessible.

Everyone has a role to play to ensure inclusion of people with disability. If you would like to learn more about holding accessible events, please contact the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO).

Sources: Australian Network on Disability, and AFDO