

# The Disability Market

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# **Puzzled About Finding the Disability Market of \$220 Billion?**



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**Tari Hartman Squire's**



**EIN SOF Communications, Inc.  
310-473-5954**

**Tari@EINSOFcommunications.com  
www.EINSOFcommunications.com**

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**Disability-Inclusive Diversity Results Since 1987**



## Disability Market – Connecting the Puzzle Pieces

**Tari Hartman Squire**  
*CEO, EIN SOF Communications, Inc.*

**P**uzzled about how to activate the diverse and highly nuanced disability market? Reaching these brand-loyal segments is challenging because some customers do not self-identify like other diversity segments. Here are some essential puzzle pieces:

### **Puzzle Piece # 1 – The Real “Disability Market”**

Disability markets are interlocking sub-segments overlapping the mature adult market. Baby Boomers acquire disabilities (hearing, sight and mobility loss) that impact independence and affect lifestyle choices. Not a bad thing, just a different thing.

**Disability markets are interlocking sub-segments overlapping the mature adult market.**

After all, it is better to be over the hill, than under it.

No “one size fits all” so try a customized blend of targeted, cause-related, guerilla, social and disability-inclusive diversity general and specialty marketing and advertising.

- A University of Massachusetts Boston survey found 92% of consumers felt favorably toward companies hiring people with disabilities; 87% prefer to do business with such companies.

- The disability market has \$220

billion in purchasing power (plus brand-loyal family, friends and colleagues) – more than the coveted teen market.

### **Puzzle Piece # 2 – Strategic Alliances**

Strategic alliances create mutually beneficial outcomes that increase market share, build brand loyalty and create a diversified workforce. Advisory committees like AT&T’s Advisory Panel on Access & Aging provide insights from thought leaders, key influencers and opinion-makers that drive word-of-mouth, serve as a specialized “focus group” to design and market accessible/usable products/services and help craft successful marketing messages.

Smart marketers realize people with disabilities are tech-savvy early adopters that drive crossover products into general market. Vibrating mobile devices and texting were inventions of the Deaf community. Audiobooks for blind users are popular with long-distance commuters. Curb cuts for wheelchair-users provide access for delivery persons, strollers, rolling luggage and kids on skateboards

Strategic alliances are the hallmark of disability strategic marketing campaigns created by EIN SOF such as MY LEFT FOOT; Mattel’s Becky (Barbie’s wheelchair-user friend); Universal Home Entertainment’s

RAY DVD with DVS (descriptive video for blind audiences) and others.

**Puzzle Piece # 3 –  
Disability-Savvy Language**

Paternalistic euphemisms like “special needs” are outdated. Disability-savvy marketers and advertisers want to catch the “disability power and pride” wave. Like other marginalized groups, people with disabilities choose language to define themselves—they are true experts, not well-intentioned, non-disabled parents or service providers.

Companies across sectors and agencies like FEMA deleted “special needs” from communications. Antiquated telethon/charity models are on a collision course with empowerment, independent living and disability power and pride.

**Puzzle Piece # 4 –  
ERGs – More than Employment:**

Disability Employee Resource Groups are a company’s strongest ally, early warning device and keeper of the external engagement flame. PepsiCo’s EnABLE conceived the “Bob’s House” SuperBowl ad and AT&T’s IDEAL support external projects and are pipelines to prospective employees.

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**Puzzle Piece # 5 –  
Graft Disability onto Diversity & Inclusion**

For higher ROI, graft disability onto specialty and general market campaigns. Diversity is a goal, inclusion is a choice in ad copy, images and marketing messages; smart business to increase market share.

Having supported successful disability casting for Toys “R” Us, Royal Caribbean, McDonald’s and other companies, we know talent with disabilities is plentiful. Production budgets can absorb minimal one-time costs like sign language interpreters, Braille or DVD scripts; or wheelchair-accessible photo shoots. As a result, your ads will reflect the true diversity of your corporate culture and customer base.

Everyone is touched by disability. Why not leverage that touchstone to expand visibility, enhance image and build brand-loyalty? Solve that puzzle to differentiate your brand and sharpen your competitive edge.

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Tari Hartman Squire  
Pres./CEO

**Contact Information:**

EIN SOF Communications, Inc.  
11601 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 500  
Los Angeles, CA 90025  
Ph. 310-473-5954 or 310-650-0595  
Tari@EINSOFCOMMUNICATIONS.COM  
www.EINSOFCOMMUNICATIONS.COM