



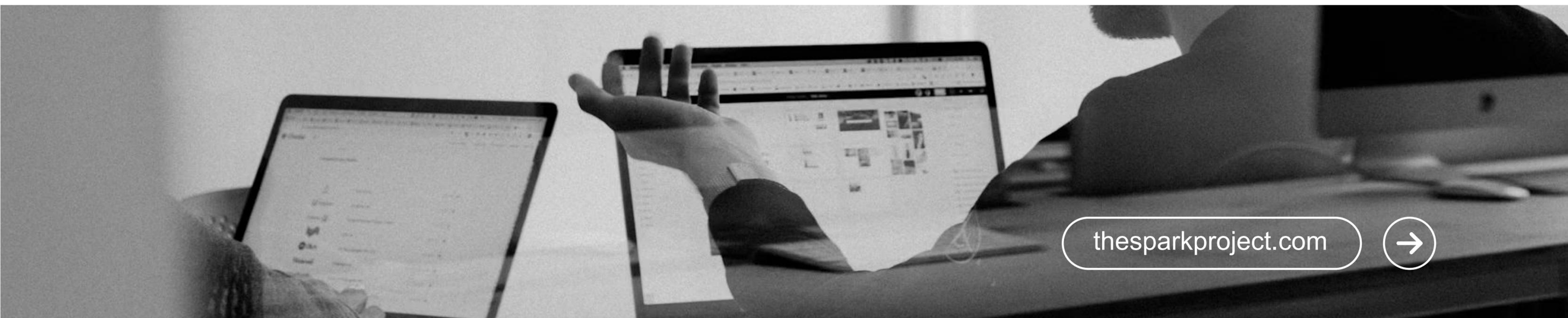
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Inclusive Design Training for Entrepreneurs



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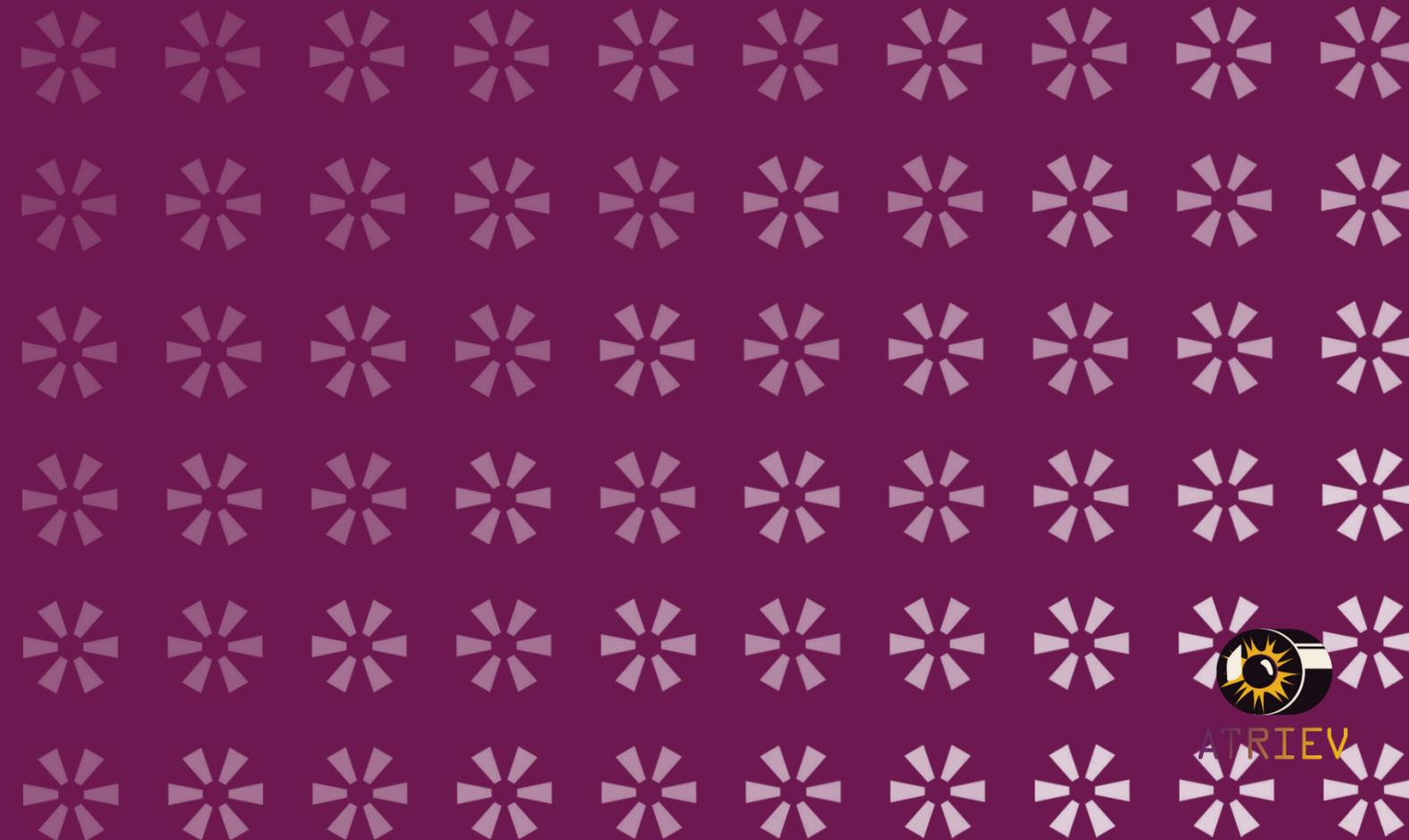




Inclusive Design Training for Entrepreneurs

SHORT COURSE:

**Understanding Accessibility
and Inclusion**



Introduction

You're building your business at a time when technology is booming, and online services help you connect with customers faster than ever. But remember, not everyone can easily join in. As of June 2025, Around 2.5 million Filipinos are registered as persons with disabilities (PWDs), and many seniors and low-literacy users face digital barriers. Even with 73.6% internet penetration and nearly 87 million users in early 2024 according to Digital 2024 Global Overview Report, millions remain excluded from online essentials.

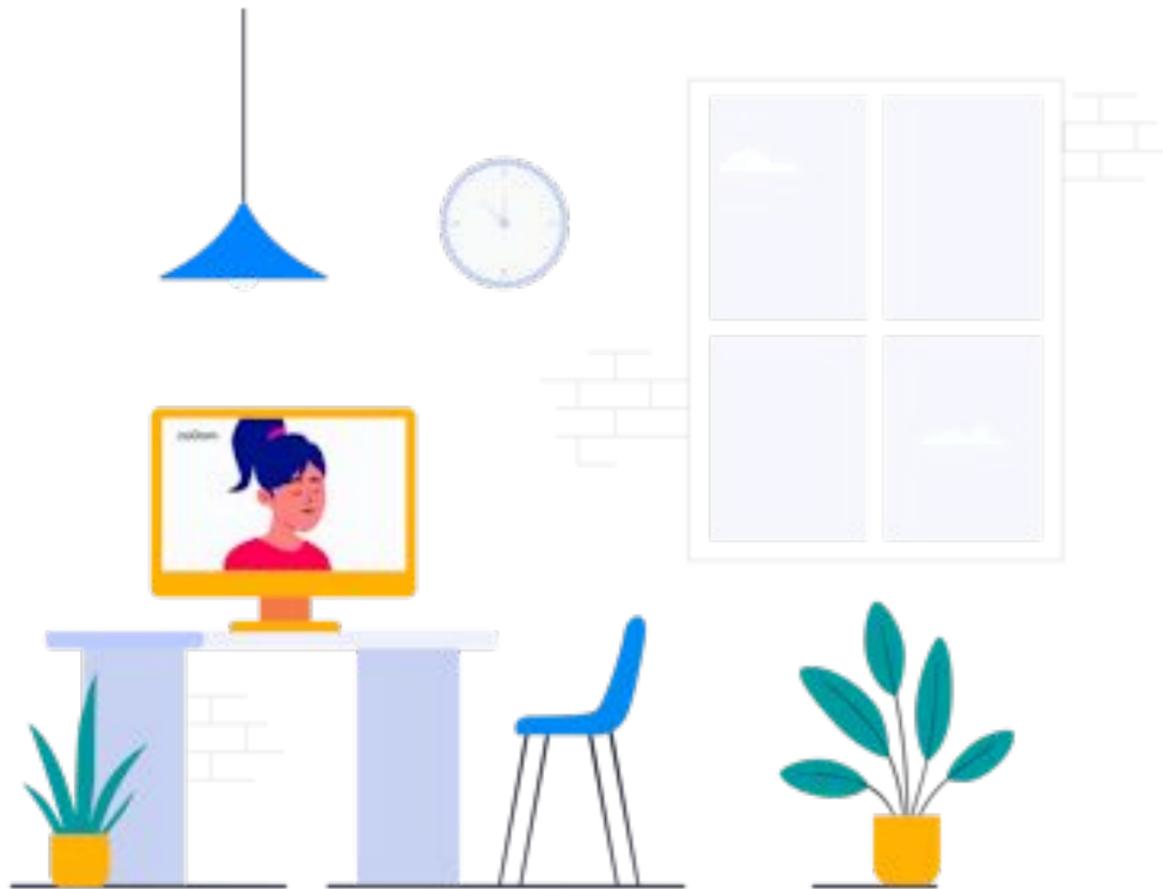
To truly succeed, you must design for everyone like people with visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive challenges; seniors needing simple language and local translations; and those with limited devices or data. By embracing inclusive design in your digital products and services, you not only reach more people but build loyalty and growth.

This training teaches you how to create entrepreneurial solutions that include PWDs and other vulnerable groups, letting everyone benefit from the opportunities of digital business. You'll go through a flexible, self-paced modular course designed for aspiring and current entrepreneurs, business owners, managers, or trainers who support PWD inclusion.

You can complete the full program in **7 sessions about 2 to 3 hours each** for a total of roughly 14 to 21 hours.

Course Objectives

By the end, you will be able to:



- Spot common access barriers in businesses and understand what different customers need.
- Know key accessibility laws and how to use incentives or programs for inclusive business.
- Make your physical space more welcoming and accessible.
- Improve your website, social media, and digital tools to work for everyone.
- Communicate clearly and respectfully with all customers.
- Design or update products/services using universal design and feedback from PWDs.
- Show accessibility as a strength in your branding and marketing.



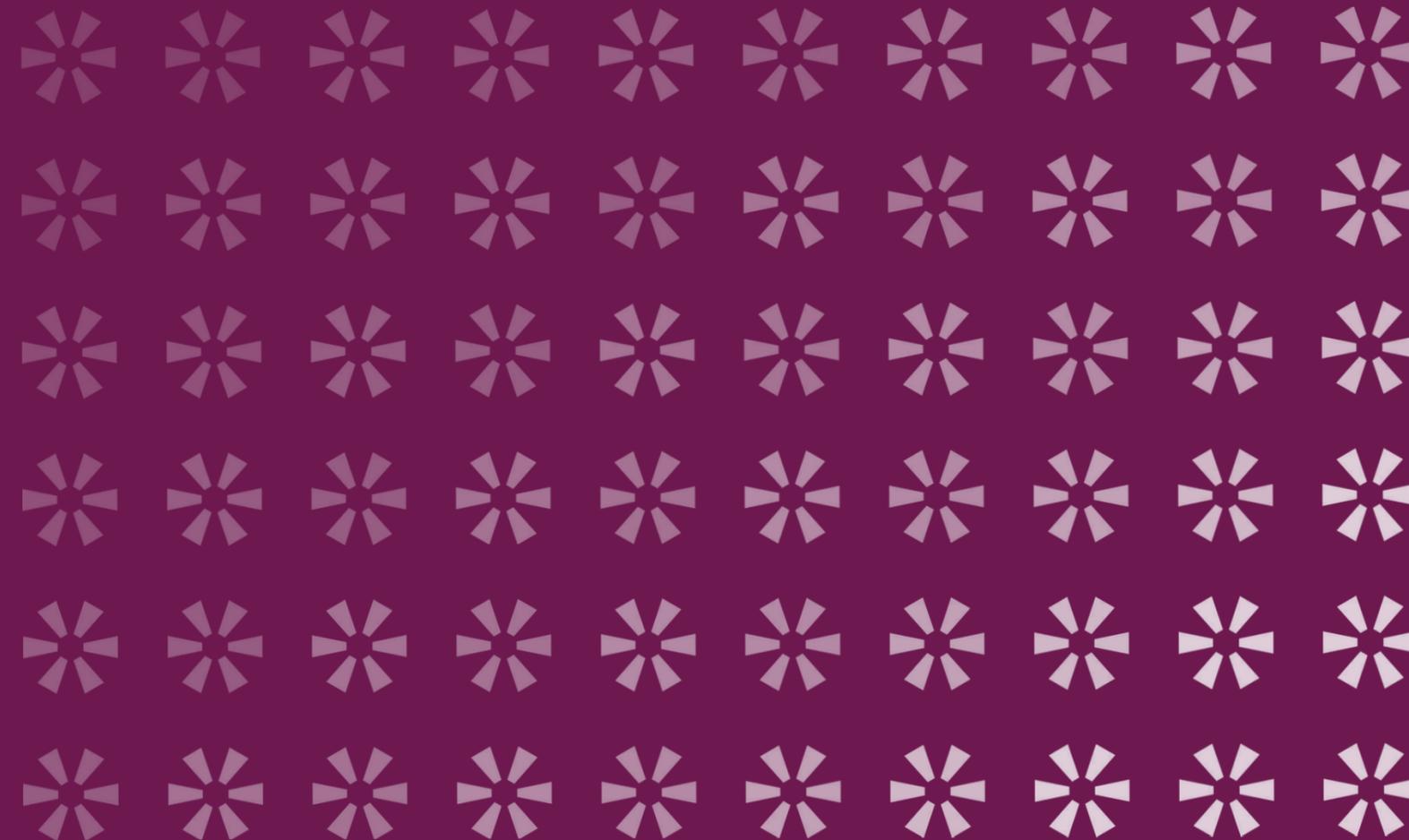
MODULE 1

Understanding Accessibility and Inclusion in Business

Welcome to this short course!

You're starting your journey to build more inclusive and welcoming enterprises. In this segment, you'll explore core ideas, learn why they matter, and discover real challenges faced by diverse customers.

At the end, you'll do a brief activity to apply what you've learned.



Lesson 1:

What is accessibility and inclusion?

Welcome! In this lesson, you'll learn the meaning of accessibility and inclusion, discover what inclusive design is, and see how it applies to entrepreneurs.

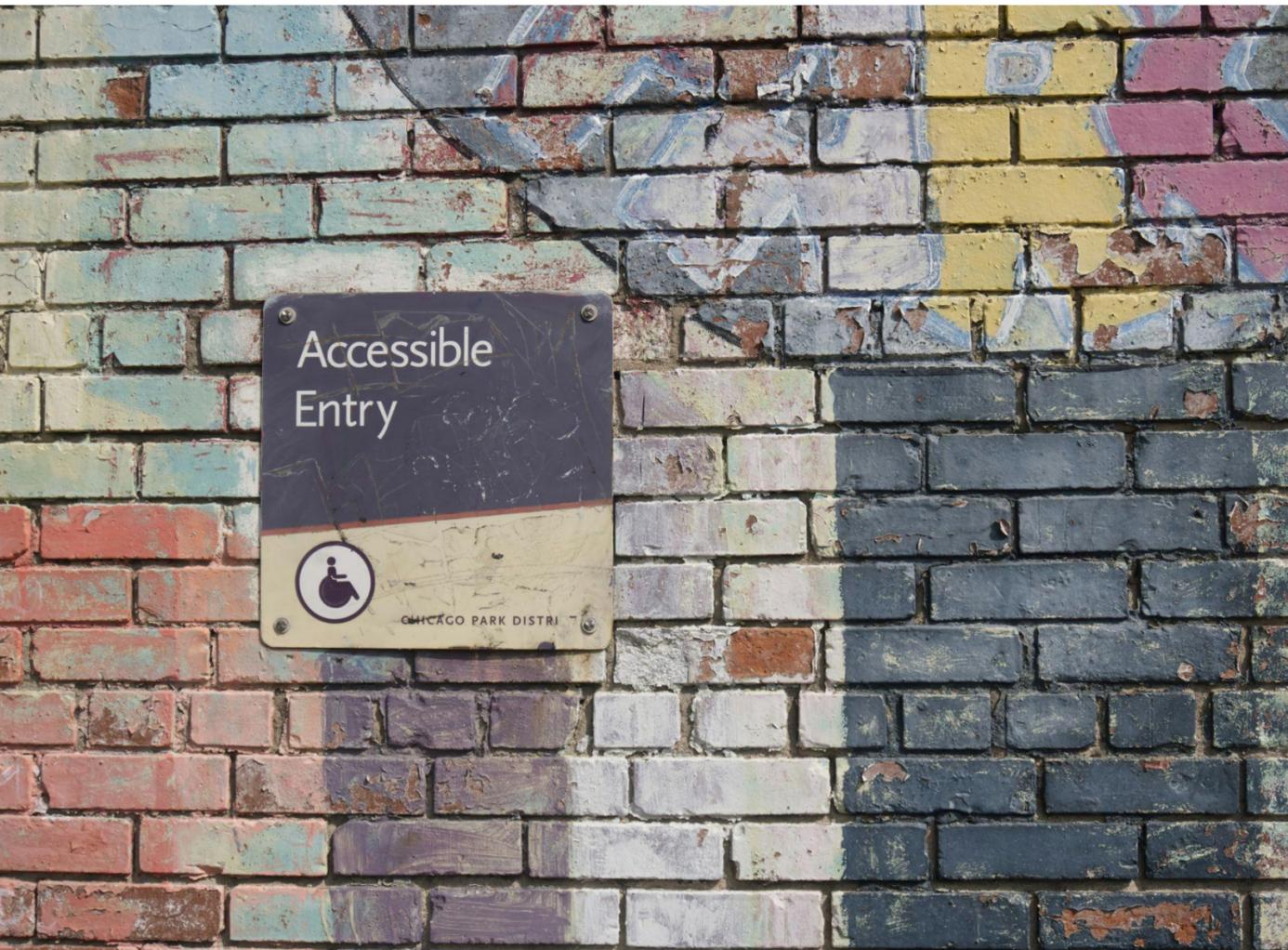
1. What is **Accessibility** ?



Accessibility means making products, services, or environments usable by as many people as possible including those with disabilities without needing help or adaptation. Example:

- Adding written captions to videos helps deaf viewers and language learners.
- Including wheelchair ramps and accessible bathrooms ensures physical spaces don't exclude anyone.

2. What is **Inclusion** ?



Inclusion means creating spaces where everyone can participate fully, feel welcomed, respected, and valued in decision-making or interactions. Examples:

- Beyond ramps, the office design includes adjustable desks, non-fluorescent lighting options, quiet focus zones, and gender-neutral restrooms.
- Before launching a product or service, the company requires consultation with PWDs, LGBTQIA+, senior citizens, women or external advocates to ensure it is usable by the widest possible audience.

Accessibility vs. Inclusion

Accessibility focuses on **removing barriers** so that people with disabilities can use products or services independently.

Examples:

- Adding **alt text** to images for screen reader compatibility
- Installing **ramps** and **automatic doors** for wheelchair access
- Providing **plain-language guides** for those with low literacy or cognitive challenges

Why it matters:

These modifications give equal access, which means that a person with a disability can use the service on their own.

Accessibility vs. Inclusion

Inclusion is about **actively inviting people to participate**, and ensuring that they feel welcomed and valued far beyond mere access.

Real-World Examples:

- Accessibility = Building a wheelchair ramp so that someone can enter the store.
- Inclusion = Greeting that person at the door, asking how you can help, and ensuring that they feel welcome once inside.

Overall, **accessibility opens the door**, and **inclusion invites people in** and welcomes their full participation. Together, they deliver not only fairness, but also **strategic advantage**, such as stronger customer relationships, richer innovation, and better reputation.

Inclusive Design for Entrepreneurs

Inclusive design is a planning process that ensures your business tools, services, or spaces work for people of all ages, abilities, languages, cultures, and backgrounds.

Inclusive design for entrepreneurs means creating business models, products, and services from the start with diverse users in mind, especially PWDs and other marginalized groups. By doing so, the venture is able to serve everyone while unleashing further innovation.



Inclusive Design for Entrepreneurs

1. Legal and Ethical Responsibility

Ensuring accessibility and inclusion aligns with human rights frameworks, like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and local laws, such as the Magna Carta on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RA 7277), and the Accessibility Law / Batas Pambansa (BP) 344 in the Philippines.

2. Fair Access for All Customers

Your business becomes more equitable when everyone (including PWDs and other vulnerable groups) can use your offerings independently and comfortably.

Inclusive Design for Entrepreneurs

3. Better Business Outcomes

Inclusive design widens your customer base, boosts loyalty, and fosters innovation. Companies embedding accessibility into their core operations see improved reputation and financial returns.

4. Improved Usability for Everyone

Features like captions, high contrast, and clear navigation help not only PWDs, but also seniors, low-literacy users, and even people in challenging environments like bright sunlight or noisy cafes.

Accessibility removes barriers, and inclusion ensures everyone feels welcomed. Together, these two concepts help entrepreneurs design businesses, products, and services that serve all people fairly and effectively, leading to stronger customer trust, innovation, and overall better business results.

Lesson 2:

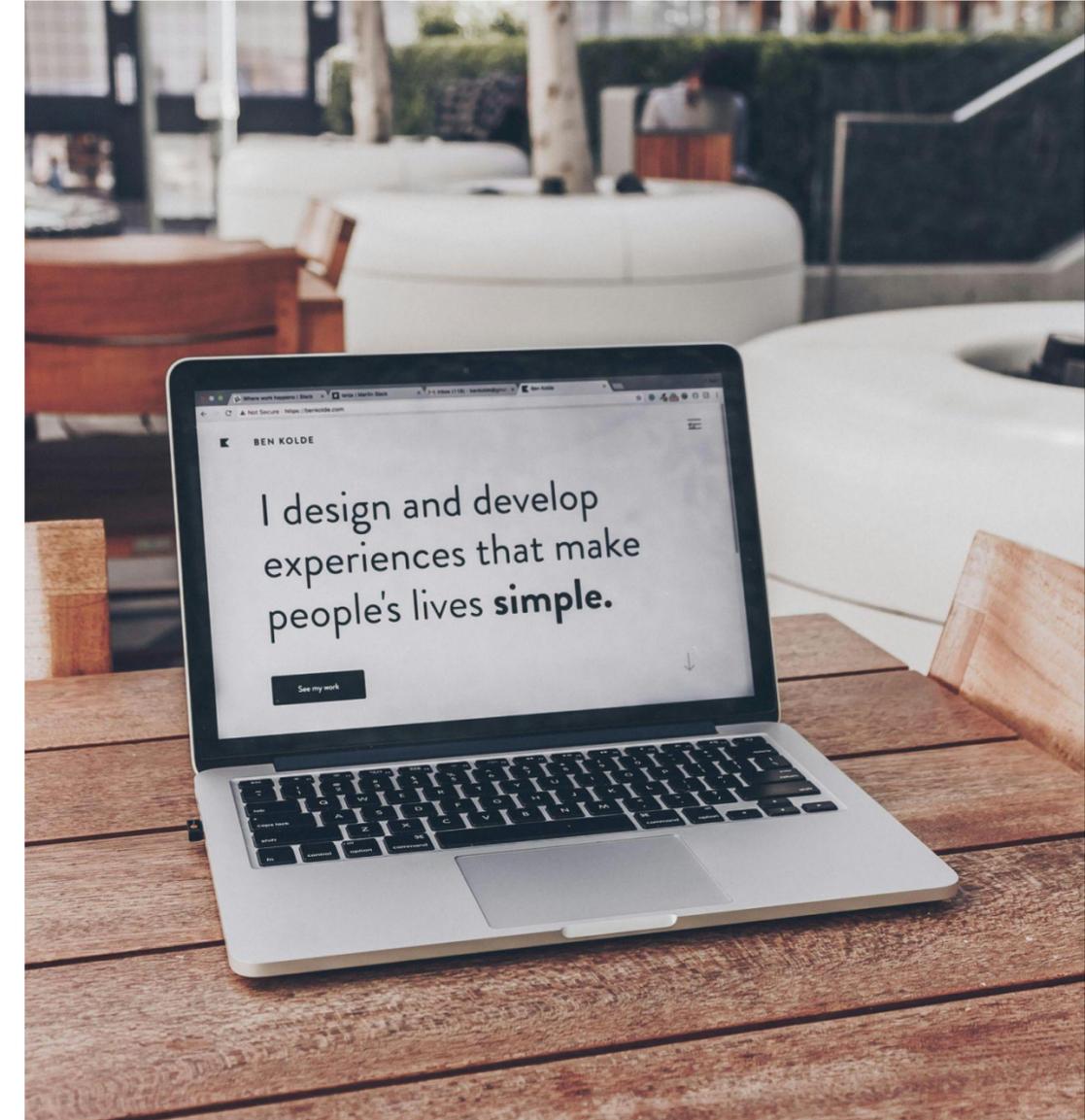
Why Accessibility Matters for Entrepreneurs

Welcome! In this section, you'll learn what accessibility is, and why it is important for your business. We'll talk about how making your products, services, and spaces easier to use helps everyone, including PWDs. You'll also get simple tips on how to make your business more inclusive, trusted, and successful.

Accessibility for Entrepreneurs

Accessibility means making your products, services, or spaces easy to reach, use, and understand so anyone, including people with disabilities, can participate fully and independently. It is about removing barriers, not adding special versions of things.

- For digital services, this means adding alt-text to images, ensuring keyboard navigation, and providing captions in videos.
- For physical spaces, this means installing ramps, having clear signage, and offering friendly assistance.



Why Accessibility Matters

1. **Expands Your Reach:** Access a wider market, including people with disabilities, seniors, and low-literacy users.
2. **Boosts Reputation:** Shows you care about everyone, enhancing trust and brand image.
3. **Fuels Innovation:** Inclusive design sparks creativity and better products.
4. **Avoids Legal Risk:** Meets standards like RA 7277 and international accessibility best practices.
5. **Improves Usability for All:** Features like high contrast and clear layout help everyone in everyday situations, such as glare (due to lighting) or noisy environments.

Best Practices for Inclusive Design in Your Business

1. **Offer Multiple Formats:** Use captions, transcripts, alt-text, audio, and simple visuals to reach all users.
2. **Design for Real-Life Situations:** Prepare for low light, slow internet, noisy places, and different devices. For example, include dark mode and keyboard-only navigation.
3. **Keep It Simple and Consistent:** Use clear layouts, common patterns, and plain language. Avoid clutter, as this makes interfaces intuitive for everyone.
4. **Work with Diverse Teams and Users:** Include people with various abilities and backgrounds in your design process. Co-designing ensures the product fits real needs.
5. **Design for Mistakes:** Provide undo options, confirmation prompts, and clear error messages, especially helpful for cognitive, mobile, and aging users.

Best Practices for Inclusive Design in Your Business

6. **Test with Real Users:** Use screen readers, keyboard navigation checks, contrast tools, and usability testing to catch issues. Iterate based on feedback from users.
7. **Learn about Your Users' Needs:** Research their tasks, settings, language, and devices. Test, for instance, using no mouse to uncover hidden issues.
8. **Follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Standards:** Build around WCAG 2.1 Level A/AA standards, alt-text, form labels, and proper headings.
9. **Make Inclusion Part of Your Strategy:** Embed accessible design into your business. Cite how it supports growth, customer experience, and market reach.
10. **Aim for Ongoing Improvement:** Inclusive design isn't "done." It is better to regularly gather feedback, update features, and adapt as needs change.

Lesson 3:

Different Types of Disabilities and Their Needs

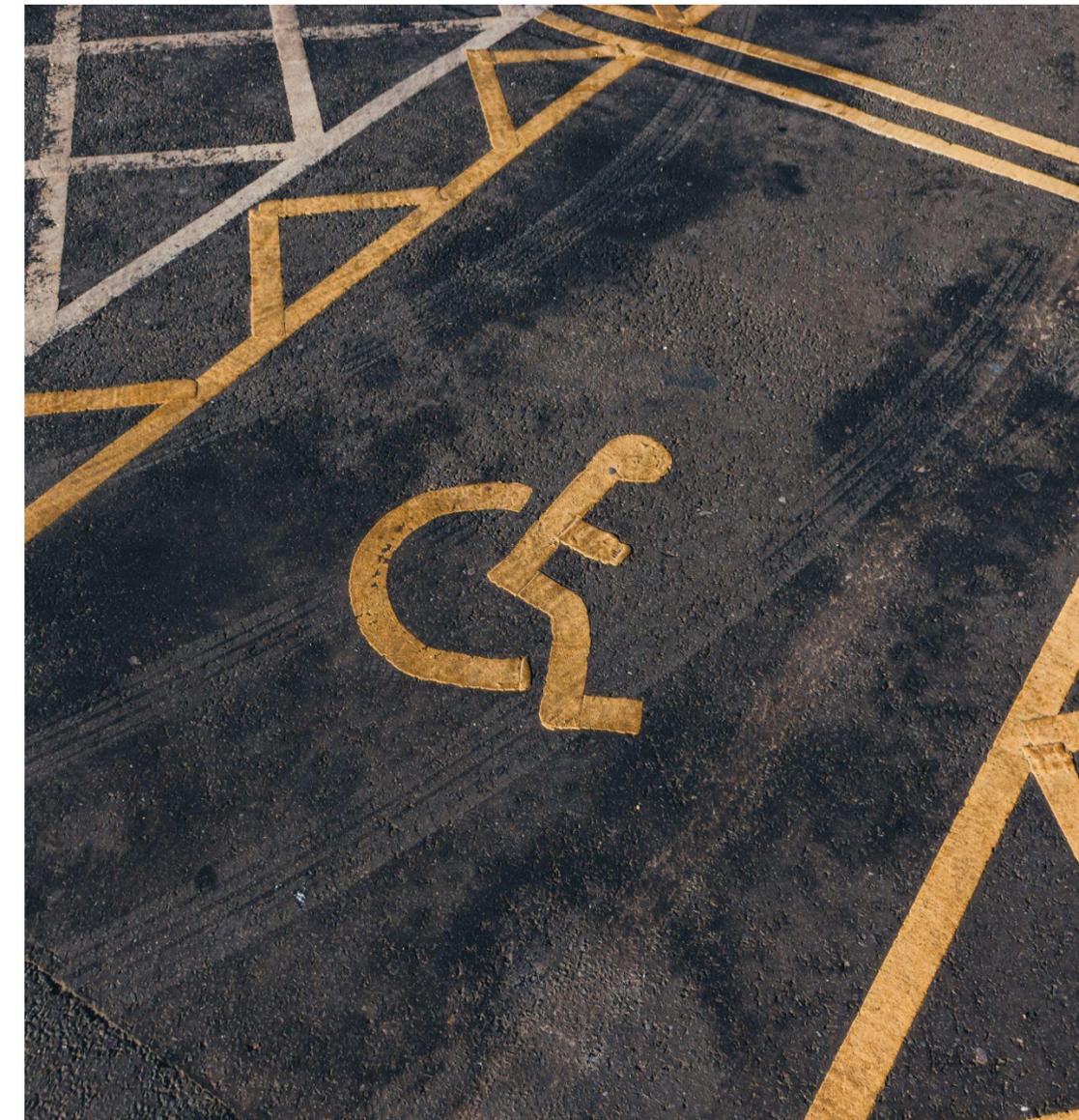
Welcome! In this section, you'll learn what disability means, and the different types people may have – whether permanent, temporary, or situational. Understanding these will help you make your business more welcoming, and there will be easier access for everyone, no matter what their needs may be.

Accessibility for Entrepreneurs

Disability: A condition that makes it harder for a person to do certain activities or fully participate in society, often due to physical, intellectual, or sensory differences interacting with barriers in their environment.

Categories of Disabilities

- Permanent: Ongoing, lifelong conditions
- Temporary: Short-term conditions (e.g. post-surgery recovery)
- Situational: Universal, temporary barriers anyone might face (e.g. carrying a child, using a mobile device in bright sunlight)



Types of Disabilities and their Typical Needs

The information in this segment takes reference to the Department of Health and NCDA guidelines.

Orthopedic (Physical Disability)

- Musculoskeletal or joint limitations, affecting mobility, dexterity, or endurance
- Typical needs include ramps, accessible seating, grab bars, adjustable corners, wide aisles

Visual Impairments

- Total/Complete Blindness: No shapes, no light perception (NLP)
- Color Blindness: Having trouble with telling certain colors apart, especially red and green
- Low Vision: Hard to see clearly even with glasses, surgery, or standard treatment
- Partial Blindness (Some Vision Loss): Blurred images
- Typical needs include screen readers, alt text, high contrast, large fonts, tactile signage

Types of Disabilities and their Typical Needs

The information in this segment takes reference to the Department of Health and NCDA guidelines.

Hearing (Deaf/Hard of Hearing)

- Deaf: Refers to profound hearing loss, meaning a person cannot understand spoken language even with amplification or may hear only very sounds
- Hard of Hearing: Refers to mild to severe hearing loss, when some hearing remains, but normal speech or soft sounds are harder to detect
- Typical needs include captions, transcripts, sign-language interpreters, visual alert systems

Speech and Communication Disability

- Issues affecting voice, articulation, rhythm, or language processing
- Typical needs include text chat options, communication boards, writing templates

Types of Disabilities and their Typical Needs

The information in this segment takes reference to the Department of Health and NCDA guidelines.

Learning (Intellectual/Cognitive) Disability

- Challenges when thinking, reasoning, memory, or learning
- Typical needs include simple language, clear instructions, consistent navigation, and supportive reminders

Intellectual Disability

- Includes psychiatric or organic brain disorders
- Typical needs include quiet spaces, trained staff, flexible timing, and patient communication

Psychosocial and Behavioral Disability

- Conditions affecting emotional control and social interactions
- Typical needs include mental-health support, calm environments, sensitivity-trained personnel

Types of Disabilities and their Typical Needs

The information in this segment takes reference to the Department of Health and NCDA guidelines.

Chronic Illness with Disability

- Includes long-term health conditions (e.g. diabetes, heart disease) that impair normal functions
- Typical needs include rest areas, flexible scheduling, supportive service accommodations

Neurodivergent (e.g. Autism)

- Describes people whose brains are wired differently, leading to unique ways of thinking, learning, and interacting with the world compared to what is considered “typical”
- Typical needs include predictable routines, low sensory environments, visual schedules, alternative communication methods, use of simple words/language

The Importance of **Understanding Disabilities**

Understanding different types of disabilities and their associated needs help you design inclusive solutions.

Physical Adjustments

- Ramps and signages help with orthopedic and situational access

Digital Accessibility

- Alt-text, captions, and visual aid help hearing, cognitive, and situational users

Communication Options

- Supports speech, cognitive, and neurodivergent needs

Supportive Environments

- Quiet zones and flexible services benefit intellectual, psychosocial, chronic illness and situational users

Lesson 4:

Common Barriers in Business Environments

Welcome! In this topic, we'll explore the common barriers in businesses from physical spaces to online platforms and learn how to remove them so your business can be more inclusive, user-friendly, and open to all.

Let's discover how simple changes can make a big difference!

What are **Barriers**?

Barriers are **obstacles** that make it difficult or impossible for some people especially those with disabilities to **access and benefit** from your business.

As an entrepreneur, recognizing and addressing these barriers helps ensure your services are inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to all.



Different Types of Accessibility Barriers

Type of Barrier	Examples
<p>Physical Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Obstacles in the physical space that prevent people with mobility or sensory disabilities from entering, moving around, or using your facilities.- Customers with physical or visual impairments may feel excluded, or may not be able to enter or use your space at all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- No ramps or elevators for wheelchair users- Narrow doorways and aisles- High counters and shelves- Lack of handrails or grab bars in restrooms- No tactile markings or braille for blind users- Poor lighting that affects low-vision individuals
<p>Digital Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Issues in online platforms or digital services that make it hard for people with disabilities to access information, use websites, or complete transactions.- People with visual, hearing, or cognitive disabilities may not be able to access your website or social media accounts, leading to lost customers and reduced trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- No alternative text (alt-text) on images- Websites or apps that don't work with screen readers- Missing captions in videos for deaf or hard-of-hearing users- Small fonts or poor color contrast- Websites that require a mouse but not keyboard-accessible- Complex forms without labels or clear instructions

Different Types of **Accessibility Barriers**

Type of Barrier	Examples
Communication Barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none">- These happen when information is not shared in a way that is understandable or usable by people with communication difficulties or language needs.- Customers may feel confused, frustrated, or excluded if they cannot ask questions, express their needs, or understand what is being offered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Only verbal instructions without written options- Use of complex language or industry jargon- No sign language or visual cues for deaf users- No text or chat option for people with speech difficulties
Attitudinal Barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none">- These come from negative attitudes, assumptions, or lack of awareness about people with disabilities.- This creates an unwelcoming environment, and may damage your business' reputation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Having the mindset that people with disabilities are not your target market- Avoiding interaction with customers with visible disabilities- Underestimating their needs and decision-making abilities- Lack of staff training on disability etiquette

Different Types of **Accessibility Barriers**

Type of Barrier	Examples
<p>Policy or Organizational Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules or lack of accommodations that limit access to services or flexibility for customers with special needs. - PWDs may feel that their needs are ignored or that they can't fully participate in your business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inflexible appointment systems - “No companion” or “no service animal” policies - Not allowing extra time for people who need assistance - Lack of return/exchange options for customers with chronic illness flare-ups
<p>Financial Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs can also be a barrier for both customers and entrepreneurs. - This excludes people who may have lower income due to disability, and discourages small business owners from investing in inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High prices for basic accessible products or services - No budget or funding for accessibility improvements - Not knowing about tax incentives for making your business accessible
<p>Social and Cultural Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some businesses may not account for how disability interacts with gender, age, language, or local culture. - This excludes people who already face multiple challenges, reducing business reach and inclusivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Materials not available in local languages - Not considering how seniors or indigenous people experience disability - Ignoring hidden disabilities like mental health or neurodivergence

The Importance of **Barrier Identification**

As a small business owner or entrepreneur, addressing these barriers gives you a major advantage:

- You build a **more inclusive brand**
- You **reach more customers**
- You show that your business cares about **fairness**
- You **reduce legal risk** and complaints
- You make your space and services **easier to use**

Common barriers in entrepreneurship include physical, digital, communication, attitudinal, organizational, financial, and cultural obstacles that limit access and participation for people with disabilities, but removing these barriers creates a more inclusive, usable, and successful business.

Closing Activity

To check your understanding and see what you've learned from Short Course 1, please complete this short activity.

Instruction: Using any writing material digital or paper, write a personal reflection on the prompt below.

- **What barriers have you experienced, whether as a person with a disability (PWD) or as an able-bodied individual?**

Your reflection should be at least 150 to 300 words long and should describe real-life experiences or observations that relate to the barriers discussed in this module.

Wrapping Up the Course

We've just completed the course Understanding Accessibility and Inclusion in Business.

After going through this module, you now have a clearer understanding of:

- What accessibility and inclusion mean, and their importance in running a fair and inclusive business.
- How accessible design can help you reach more customers, build a positive reputation, and drive innovation.
- The different types of disabilities and the typical support needs for each.
- Common barriers that limit access and how recognizing them is the first step to removing them.



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Thank you!

This short course was prepared by ATRIEV Inc., in partnership with The Spark Project, under the ELEVATE Program.



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