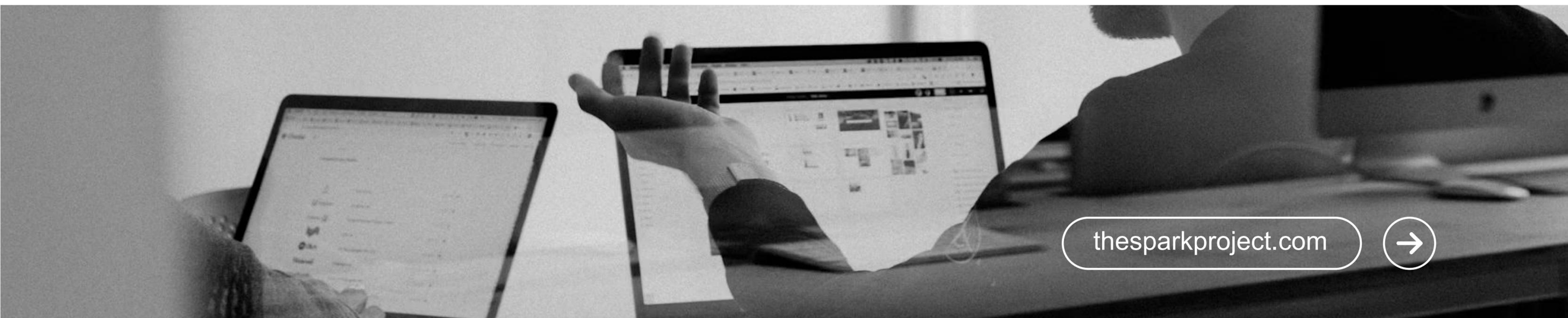the
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SPARK SCHOOL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ATRIEV INC.

Inclusive Design Training for Entrepreneurs

ATRIEV

thesparkproject.com

Inclusive Design Training for Entrepreneurs

SHORT COURSE:

Ensuring Physical Accessibility in Business Spaces

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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.

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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.

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Course Objectives

By the end, you will be able to:
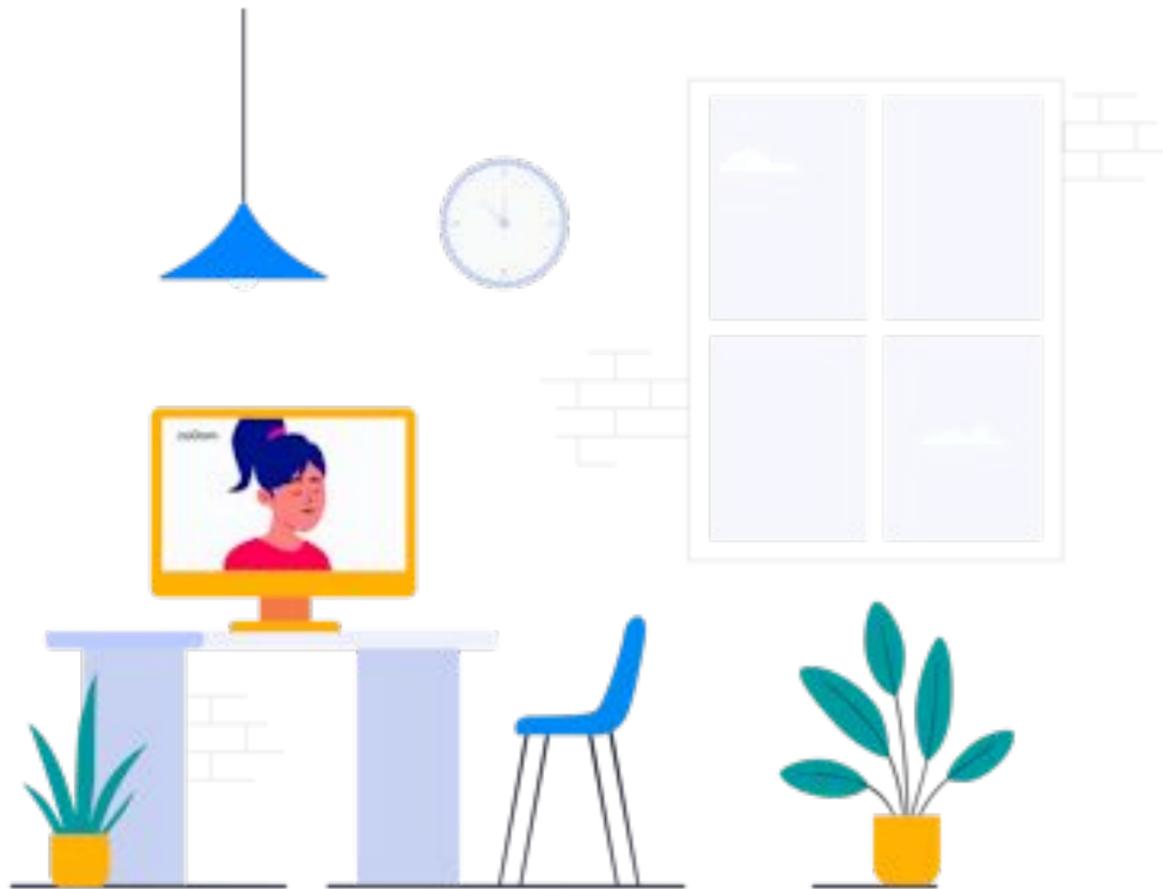
- Spot common access barriers in businesses and understand what different customers need.

- 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.

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SHORT COURSE

Ensuring Physical Accessibility in Business Spaces

Welcome to this short course!

In this module, you'll learn how to make your business spaces accessible to everyone including customers and employees with disabilities.

Accessibility is more than a design trend or legal rule. It's a business value that shows your customers you care about inclusion, comfort, and respect. By learning how to create accessible spaces, you'll not only follow the law (BP 344, or the Accessibility Law of the Philippines) but also build a business that welcomes everyone from persons using wheelchairs, to parents pushing strollers, and even seniors with limited mobility.

So, are you ready to make your business a more inclusive space? Let's begin!
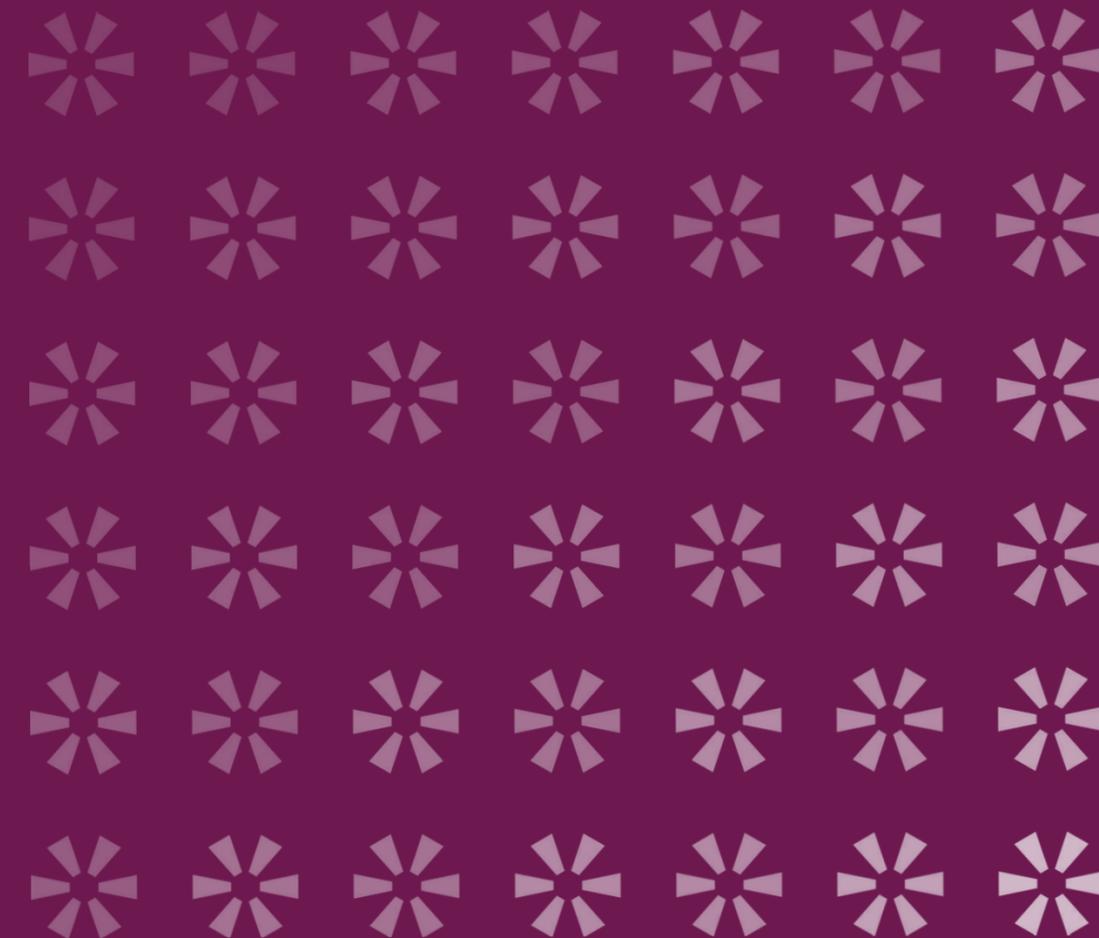
Lesson 1:
Introduction Physical Accessibility
Batas Pambansa 344 & Universal Design

Welcome! In this lesson, you'll learn how making your space accessible isn't just good for business, but shows that you value inclusion, dignity, and equal access for everyone.

Physical Inaccessibility vs. Accessibility

Imagine this, a customer arrives at your store, excited to try your products, but can't enter because of a tall step at the entrance. Or, another case would be that your restrooms are too narrow for wheelchair access. This is what **physical inaccessibility** looks like, and it's more common than you think.

Physical accessibility means making your space usable and comfortable for everyone whether they walk, use crutches, wheelchairs, canes, or have other mobility needs.

When your business is accessible, you show your community that you value equal opportunity and that everyone is welcome.

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Batas Pambansa 344 (Accessibility Law)

- BP 344 aims to ensure people with disabilities (PWDs) can move around and use public spaces, buildings, transport and utilities with ease and dignity.
- It says that persons with disabilities have the **right to full participation** in social life, equal access to facilities, services, and opportunities.
- BP 344 applies to **public and private spaces**, including:
  - Government buildings, private buildings for public use
  - Educational institutions, airports, malls/shopping centers, sports and recreation centers
  - Workplaces, public parking areas, other public utilities
  - Streets, sidewalks, highways, and public transport-related structures (terminals, etc.)
  - Public transport vehicles (buses, trains, domestic vessels/aircraft)

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Batas Pambansa 344: Required Features

- Before any permit for construction, repair, or renovation is granted, the building or facility must include features/facilities that help PWD mobility.
- Typical required features include:
  - Sidewalks, ramps, and railings to enable easier access and movement
  - Reserved parking spaces (accessible parking slots) for persons with disabilities
  - Special bus stops (or other adapted waiting/boarding areas), signages/posters to increase awareness about the rights of PWDs
  - Barrier-free ingress/egress (entrance, routes, etc.), accessible circulation, elevators, accessible restrooms or sanitary facilities
- Minimum standards for accessibility: ramp width/gradient, handrails, parking slots, entrance accessibility, accessible path/route design, etc.

Batas Pambansa 344: Penalties & Compliance

- The law prohibits issuance of building/renovation/repair permits unless accessibility requirements are fulfilled.

- If a person/corporation/establishment owner/operator violates BP 344 or its implementing rules, they may be penalized as follows:

  - Imprisonment (1 to 2 months); and/or

  - Fine (₱2,000 to ₱5,000).

- If it is a corporation or association, the responsible official (e.g. manager, administrator) can be held criminally liable.

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Batas Pambansa 344: Importance

- Public buildings, malls, schools, and offices in the Philippines must have ramps, accessible parking, handrails, and other features to help wheelchair users or those with mobility issues.
- Public transportation (buses, terminals, stations) should allow access to persons with disabilities. They should not face any form of discrimination when boarding or using transport services.
- If a place is being renovated or built for public use, accessibility features are a legal requirement.
- The law gives PWDs a legal basis to **demand access and inclusion**. They can ask for the features required under BP 344 when visiting public facilities or buildings.

1.3 Universal Design in Action

- Universal design means **creating spaces that can be utilized by everyone**, with or without disabilities.
- Ramps or curb-cuts, instead of only stairs, are originally made for people using wheelchairs, but they also help people who are pushing baby strollers, those carrying heavy luggages or boxes, delivery staff with carts, and older people who find it difficult to go up and down the stairs.
- Automatic or easy-open lever handles are very useful for people with limited mobility or who use wheelchairs, but are also convenient for anyone whose hands are full (e.g. carrying shopping bags), or for people who want to avoid touching handles for hygiene purposes.
- Wide hallways, doors, and spacious rooms and paths make it easier for wheelchairs, strollers, carts, or groups of people moving together. These are also helpful when many people need to move through a space at once.

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1.3 Universal Design in Action

- Clear, large, high-contrast signages and easy-to-read directions (ideally with tactile or auditory cues) help people with low vision or visual impairments, and also benefits older people, visitors who are unfamiliar with the place, people in a hurry, or those who speak different languages.

- Benches or resting spots in public spaces (parks, sidewalks, transit stops, malls) are helpful not only for people with mobility issues, but also for senior citizens, pregnant individuals, parents with young children, or anyone who simply needs a break.

- Accessible restrooms and facilities with spacious stalls, grab bars, easy-to-use fixtures, and enough space to maneuver are useful for persons with disabilities, and also for the elderly, parents with young children, or anyone who may need extra space or extra support.

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1.3 Universal Design and Physical Accessibility

- Physical accessibility guided by Batas Pambansa 344 and the principles of Universal Design means making buildings, facilities, and spaces usable by everyone, regardless of mobility, age, or ability.

- When you design for accessibility, features like ramps, wide doors, clear signages, and barrier-free restrooms don't just help persons with disabilities; they make your business more convenient, welcoming, and usable for all customers.

- Accessibility helps everyone, not just a few.

Lesson 2:
Features of an
Accessible Business Space

Welcome! In this lesson, we'll explore the key design elements that make a business truly accessible, and show you simple steps which you can start using right away to make your space more inclusive.

2.1 Entrances and Pathways

Step-by step:

1. Add a ramp beside steps (1:12 slope).

2. Use non-slip flooring to prevent accidents.

3. Install sturdy handrails on both sides of ramps and stairs.

4. Keep pathways at least **1.2 meters wide** so wheelchairs can move easily.

5. Clear away displays or obstacles that block movement.

Tip: Trying pushing a chair or cart around your space. Can you move freely without bumping into anything?

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2.2 Doorways, Corridors, and Flooring

Minimum requirements:

1. Door width of at least **0.80 meters.**

2. Replace round door knobs with lever handles.

3. Corridors with a measurement of **1.2 meters wide** (minimum).

4. Use smooth, non-slip flooring, and avoid rugs that might trip people.

2.3 Restrooms and Facilities

Accessible restrooms include:

1. Grab bars beside the toilet and sink

2. Outward-opening or sliding doors

3. Mirrors and sinks at a lower height

4. Wide space for wheelchairs to be able to turn around

Tip: Test your restroom by imagining you're using a wheelchair. Can you move and reach everything comfortably?

2.4 Signage and Wayfinding

Concrete actions:

1. Use high-contrast colors (like black text on white or yellow backgrounds).

2. Add braille and embossed letters (tactile items related to the sense of touch) for blind customers.

3. Use clear, universal icons (e.g. wheelchair, restrooms, exit).

4. Place tactile floor guides or markers leading to main areas. Tactile refers to anything related to the sense of touch or that is perceptible by touch.

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2.5 Accessible Technology and Communciation

Concrete actions:

1. Install **talking elevators** or audio floor announcements for blind users.
2. Provide **visual announcement boards or LED screens** for deaf customers.
3. Connect alarms to **flashing strobe lights** for emergencies.

Example:

- When a restaurant limits its order and payment process using only a display screen without audio feedback, it will limit the independence of visually impaired users to place and pay for their orders, which may lead to a loss of customers. It is essential to provide options available for all types of customers.

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Creating an ==accessible business space== is not complicated. It starts with **small, practical changes that make a big difference**.

By improving entrances, pathways, restrooms, signage, and communication tools, you make your space **safer, easier to use, and more welcoming** for everyone. Accessibility is **good design, good service, and good business** because when more people can enter and move comfortably, more people can participate.

Lesson 3:

Accommodating Employees and Customers with Disabilities

Welcome! In this lesson, you'll get a simple, practical introduction to inclusive service practices that help everyone feel welcome in your space. We'll cover basic ways to interact with customers and staff with different needs, with more detailed communication strategies.

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Accessibility isn't just about facilities; it's also about how you serve people. Here are some inclusive ways to interact with customers and employees with disabilities:

Disability Type	Inclusive Practices
Mobility	Keep pathways clear, offer a portable ramp if needed, and allow extra time for movement.
Visual	Greet customers by name, describe surroundings clearly, and offer to guide when asked.
Hearing	Face the person when speaking. Write or type if needed.
Cognitive or Neurodivergent	Use short, clear sentences. Avoid rushing or giving multiple instructions at once.
All Types	Always allow service animals. Provide information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, text, audio).

Being accessible isn't just about having ramps and facilities. It's also about ==treating people with disabilities respectfully==, and giving them good service. Simple **inclusive practices** like speaking clearly, offering help when asked, using respectful language, and accommodating different needs make a big different in how welcoming a business turns out to be.

Accessibility should include both the physical environment, and how you serve and communicate with other people.

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Lesson 4:
Evaluating Your Business Accessibility

Welcome! In this lesson, you'll walk through a practical

checklist to examine your space and begin identifying areas

where accessibility can be improved.

It's time to look at and examine your own space!

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4.1 Using an Accessibility Checklist

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
A. Entrances and Pathways				
Is there at least one entrance that is step-free or ramped (with a gentle slope)?				
Is the ramp slope appropriate (not too steep)?				
Are handrails provided on ramps and stairs (on both sides)?				
Are walkways/corridors/paths wide enough for a wheelchair (or for easy movement)?				

4.1 Using an ==Accessibility Checklist==

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
A. Entrances and Pathways				
Are flooring and ground surfaces non-slip, even, and safe (no loose mats, tripping hazards)?				
Are pathways kept clear, without obstacles or items blocking movement (displays, boxes, etc.)? - Good for everyday use/safety				

4.1 Using an Accessibility Checklist

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
B. Doorways, Corridors, and Interiors				
Are doors wide enough and easy to open (lever-handles, minimal force)?				
Do corridors and hallways allow easy passage and turning (for wheelchairs/mobility aids)?				
Is there enough space inside rooms and public areas so people using mobility aids, strollers, carts, etc. can move comfortably?				

4.1 Using an Accessibility Checklist

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
B. Doorways, Corridors, and Interiors				
Is there at least one accessible stall or toilet in restrooms?				
Are toilets/facilities designed with accessibility in mind: grab bars, sufficient space, reachable sinks, door design appropriate (e.g. outward-opening or sliding)?				

4.1 Using an Accessibility Checklist

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
B. Doorways, Corridors, and Interiors				
Is the restroom layout such that a wheelchair user can enter, maneuver, and use the facilities comfortably and safely?				
Is the restroom for persons with disabilities readily available for use and not locked?				

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4.1 Using an Accessibility Checklist

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
C. Signage, Wayfinding, and Information				
Are signs and room labels clear, easy to read, with good contrast (for those with low vision)?				
Where appropriate: Is there tactile or braille signages and accessibility symbols (e.g. for toilets, exits, and accessible facilities)?				
Are directional signs placed at a height and location that is convenient and visible/accessible?				

4.1 Using an Accessibility Checklist

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
D. Public Areas / Shared Facilities / Parking / Elevators / Other Services				
Are there accessible parking slots for PWDs, properly located on the ground level?				
If the facility has multiple floors or level changes, is there an accessible option (e.g. elevator, lift, compliant ramp) rather than only stairs?				
Are common areas, waiting areas, or service counters accessible (enough clearance, reachable counters, accessible walkways)?				

4.1 Using an Accessibility Checklist

When you walk around your business space, ask yourself the following. Mark Yes/No/Needs Improvement/Not Applicable for each item.

Item	Yes	No	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
E. General Comfort, Safety, and Inclusivity				
Is lighting adequate?				
Is flooring even and features non-slip features?				
Are there no obstacles or tripping hazards along the main routes or common paths?				
Is there a way to improve signage, information access, or staff awareness so all customers or visitors (with or without disabilities) can navigate and use the space comfortably?				

4.2 Identification of Potential Gaps

After checking with the list above, write down at least 3 specific areas (gaps) that might cause difficulty for customers with disabilities. Ask yourself:

- Which entrance(s) or paths could be problematic (too narrow, stairs-only, slippery floor, blocked by displays)?
- Are there restrooms or facilities that aren't accessible or only partially accessible (e.g. narrow stalls, no grab bars, doors hard to open)?
- Which signs or informational displays are hard to see or read (poor contrast, small font size, no tactile/braille, etc.)
- Are there public-use areas (e.g. parking, elevator access, stairs-only routes) that lack alternative accessible options?

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4.2 Identification of Potential Gaps

After checking with the list above, write down at least 3 specific areas (gaps) that might cause difficulty for customers with disabilities. Ask yourself:

- Is staff awareness/training needed to ensure inclusive service (not just physical accessibility)?
- Are there hazards for people with mobility or vision impairment (slippery floors, uneven surfaces, obstacles)?
- Are there corridors/doors/interior spaces that are too narrow for wheelchairs or mobility aids?
- Are there features (like narrow doorways, heavy doors, step thresholds, lack of handrails) that make some areas hard to reach or use independently?

4.3 **Improvement Plan** for the Business

Start with **small, easy changes**:

- Rearrange furniture to widen walkways and avoid obstacles.

- Replace door knobs with lever-style handles to make doors easier to open.

- Add clear labels or tactile signs for restrooms, exits, or important areas (with braille or raised lettering if possible) to help customers with visual impairments.

Plan **medium- to long-term** upgrades:

- Consider installing ramps, low-threshold entrances, or other accessible entry points.

- If your business space has multiple levels, think about elevators or lifts, or other options that allow people with mobility challenges to reach all areas.

4.3 ==Improvement Plan== for the Business

Keep **accessibility** in mind in everything:

- Evaluate and maintain safe, non-slip flooring and good lighting to help people with vision or mobility challenges.
- When planning future changes, treat accessibility not as an afterthought, but as a standard part of design and service.

Using a simple accessibility checklist helps you uncover physical or design issues, from narrow doors and steep steps, poor signage, or slippery flooring that might prevent people with disabilities from using your space. By noting at least three such gaps and planning small to long-term fixes, you make your business more inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

Short Activity

After reflecting and understanding the features of an accessible business setting, let us now apply what we have learned from this short course.

Inspect your own business space (if available), or any public place near you.

Write your answers to the following questions:

- What barriers did you notice?
- What improvements could make the place more accessible?
- How can these changes benefit everyone, not just persons with disabilities?

Wrapping Up the Course

Congratulations! You have finished Module 3. You now understand the essentials of creating an accessible business space.

So far, you have learned:

- Understand what physical accessibility, BP 344, and Universal Design mean in a business setting
- Identify the main features of an accessible space
- Recognize how accessibility benefits both customers and entrepreneurs
- Create a simple plan to make your business more inclusive and user-friendly

Accessibility is good for business. It is not only about following the law; it is also about making everyone feel welcome. When your space is open and easy to use, your business grows stronger, friendlier, and more inclusive.

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Thank you!

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