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Accessible Mainstreet – Tipsheet

What You Need To Know When Dealing with Customers with Disabilities over the Phone

Everyone is different in some way. Each of us has a different way of doing things and there are some things we can't do without some help from people, or from machines and products that are easy to use.

Here are some tips on serving customers with disabilities on the phone:

- ❖ Speak normally, clearly and directly.
- ❖ Don't worry about how their voice sounds. Concentrate on what's being said.
- ❖ Don't refer to the disability, and never use phrases like "handicapped".
- ❖ Be patient, don't interrupt and don't finish your customer's sentences. Give your customer time to explain him/herself.
- ❖ Don't try to guess what your customer is saying. If you don't understand, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- ❖ If you're not certain what was said, just repeat or rephrase what you've heard.
- ❖ If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a TTY line, just speak normally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- ❖ If your customer has great difficulty communicating, make arrangements to call back when it's convenient to speak with someone else.

Additional Tipsheets can be found at:
www.toronto-bia.com/resources/tipsheets.php

Based on: "May I Help You?" – Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" Resource Package, Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2005