

Mystery Clients with disabilities evaluating the accessibility and usability of services

ISRAEL/ACCESS ISRAEL – ACCESSIBILITY TESTING AND EVALUATION

In 2018 Access Israel, a leading DPO and advocacy organization based in Tel Aviv, launched a tool for companies to assess the level of accessibility and usability of their services. The assessment is done by persons with various disabilities who are trained to systematically test, for example, supermarkets, call centres, and smartphone apps. Over three years the test teams have performed more than 300 evaluations, paid by the companies whose services they have assessed.

Problem targeted

Many services in Israel are not fully accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities despite being compliant with local laws.

Solution, innovation, and impact

Access Israel trains persons with disabilities to test and evaluate how usable and accessible services are by conducting undercover accessibility audits. The process of using undercover customers is also known as 'covert customer control' or 'mystery shopping'. An individual who behaves like a regular customer assesses the business services by using a pre-determined script to check various parameters of its accessibility and usability. For example, to assess a



Covert customers at work, testing online services such as call-centers on accessibility.

“Our focus is on how persons with disabilities receive services, understanding their needs, wants, and experiences.”

Michal Rimon, CEO, Access Israel

supermarket Access Israel prepares various scenarios and puts together a cross-disability team comprised of one person who is blind, one with a hearing disability, another who uses a wheelchair, and someone with a hidden disability. The team tests the accessibility of various features in the supermarket, such as ordering, shopping, customer service, online shopping, and mobile application. The information is then recorded and compiled in an evaluation report that includes recommendations for improvement. Over a period of three years Access Israel has conducted more than 300 evaluations, including companies that test their accessibility every few years.

Outlook, transferability, and funding

Access Israel charges between €200 and €550 for different assessments, and the price is evaluated after determining the scope of the project. It defines various scenarios for each assessment, such as the size of the undercover team, the analyses and documentation process, and the final corporate presentation. Companies pay for the assessment service, which helps them to improve and learn, and many use the service once or even twice a year to continually track their performance. Access Israel offers discounts to NGOs and other low-income organizations, using funding from donations.

FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- 50 clients have been served over the past year.
- Over 200 assessments have been conducted between 2019 and 2021.
- 12 Mystery Shoppers carry out the assessments.
- *A practice of Civil Society.*



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