

# Disability Inclusive Marketing: What's the Playbook?

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# Who we are



# By the end of this session, you will...

- Understand the importance of disability inclusion in marketing
- Understand the key elements of a disability inclusive marketing playbook
- Understand how accessibility and disability inclusive marketing relates to different teams
- Get tools to know where to start

# Agenda

1. Introduction: why/who needs a playbook
2. Getting started: what you need
3. Defining your core values
4. Storytelling & Representation best practices
5. Production best practices
6. Examples
7. Recap and Resources
8. Q&A

# A few notes

- This talk is a starting point to mindful and respectful marketing communication around accessibility and disability.  
You will need to dive deeper on your own.
- Language and representation best practices change.  
Our insights are representative of current recommendations.
- Good judgment and thoughtfulness are great assets.

**Why do you need a playbook?**

# Why?

You are only truly customer obsessed when your customers can **see themselves** and access in the content you create.



# Why?

Recent studies have shown that **73%** of people without disabilities said it was important that companies are **inclusive** of people with disabilities in their communications, advertising, and marketing.

That percentage rose to **83%** for both caregivers and **people with disabilities**\*.

\* Studies by Morning Consult, Nielsen and the Institute of Public Relations ([Institute of PR – VOYA disability report; page 3](#))





# Why?

You're not doing **good** marketing if you're missing a large portion of your audience.

# Why?

You owe it to under-represented communities to get it **right**.

Tokenism and tropes are **harmful** to the Disability community.

**Who needs a playbook?**

# A playbook is most useful to...

- Any organization/company who advertises
- Specifically, roles related to:
  - **Creatives:** video, still, animation, direction, etc.
  - **Storytelling:** public relations, marketing, communications, executive communications, etc.
  - **Production:** casting, direction, set design, etc.

# What goes into the playbook?

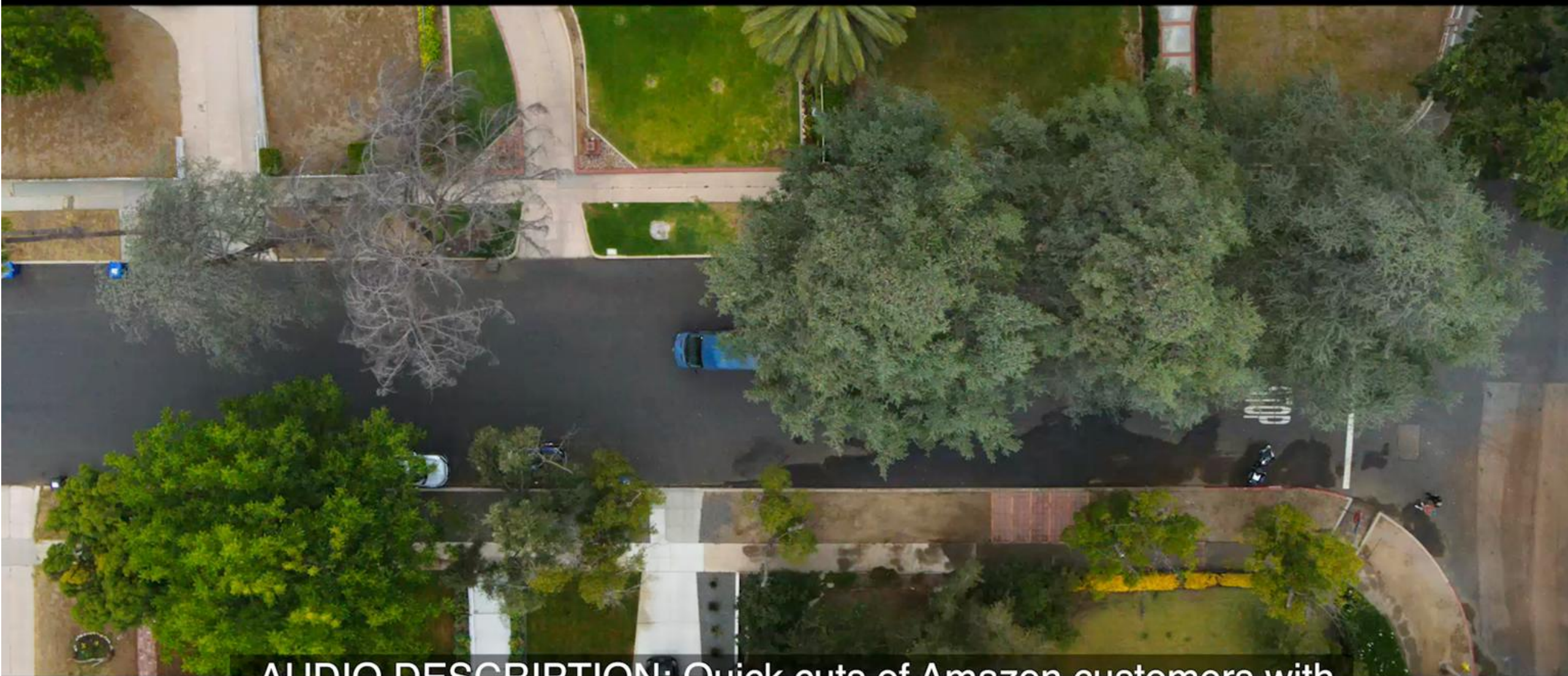
# What goes into a playbook?

- Glossary
- Branding strategy
- Core values (tenets)
- Representation best practices
- Production best practices
  - Pre-prod
  - On set
  - Post-prod
- Content accessibility guidelines
- Resources

# How did we develop our playbook?

- Based on both quantitative and qualitative data
- Included results and insights from the 2022 Amazon A11y campaign
- Consulted with people with lived experiences
- Tapped into connections to the Disability Community





- AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Quick cuts of Amazon customers with disabilities.



**Getting started: what do you need?**

# What you need:

- **Brand strategy**

- Know your customer: Who are you talking to?
- Have a position: What do you stand for? What do you offer?
- Identity: What are the brand's personality traits?
  - Forward-thinking? Empowering? Innovative?

- **Marketing goals**

- What do you hope to achieve in the end?
- What do you need to showcase?

# Defining Inclusive Marketing Core Values

# Core values (for this line of work)

- “Nothing about us, without us”
- Always be authentic
- Do not perpetuate harmful tropes
- Be clear that disability isn’t “bad”
- Elevate and prioritize the voice of disabled people
- Examine social roles – position of authority, parents, etc.



# Storytelling and Representation best practices

# Storytelling & representation should be...

- Authentic
- Balanced and affirmative
- Focused on active roles rather than passive
- Inherently intersectional and diverse
- Solution-oriented
- Free of tropes

# Tropes overview

## Inspiration Porn

Definition: the portrayal of people with disabilities as inspirational solely or in part on the basis of their disability; society's tendency to reduce people with disabilities to objects of inspiration.



# Tropes overview

## **Emotional Manipulation**

Definition: the concept that content featuring people with disabilities needs to be emotional or tear jerking to be worth watching.

This type of content takes you on an emotional journey where first you feel sad or concerned for a person or PWD, and then relieved, often through a solution proposed by a brand.



# Production best practices

# Before you create (Pre-Production)

- Diverse casting
- Accessible situations/sets
- Think about accessibility in advance
  - E.g. audio descriptions, light sensitivity, cognitive disabilities, etc.

# Before you create (Pre-Production) – cont'd

- Are my creative partners committed to accessibility?
- Have I ensured that both crew and talent can easily access the premises and communicate?
- Have I consulted with talent or agency to see if someone needs a reasonable accommodation?

# While you create (On Set)

- Provide disability etiquette training and refresher for everyone on set
- Ensure framing and composition should promote equality
- Be mindful of camera angles
- Create a safe and trusting environment to allow for disabled talent to feel empowered to call out things that are inauthentic

# After you've created (Post-Production)

## **Music/Voice over**

- Be conscious of your music's impact on anxiety, PTSD, etc.
- Watch out for tropes caused by music/voice over
- Use plain language
- Use descriptive VO

## **Video accessibility**

- Captions (not subtitles!)
- Audio Description
- Transcripts

# Examples

# Scripted



# Non-scripted





# Amazon Inclusive Photography for Devices



# Recap

# Summary

- Always honor “Nothing about us, without us”
- Know your customer and your brand
- Put together guidelines
- Keep things authentic
- Prioritize disabled voices
- Honor intersectionality
- Create society-nudging content!

# Resources

# External resources

- *Language:*
  - National Center on Disability and Journalism (NCDJ) Disability Language Style Guide
- *Representation:*
  - Amazon Studios Inclusion Playbook
  - Critical Axis – community driven project from The Disabled List that collects and analyzes disability representation in media
  - Center for Scholars and Storytellers: The Case for Authentic Disability Representation



**Thank you!**