

Helping Starbucks Design Stores That Are Inclusive for All

Reference: McKinsey & Company

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Introduction

This document presents my analytical study of McKinsey & Company's case on how Starbucks redesigned store environments to be inclusive for all customers. The initiative focused on accessibility, empathy-driven design, and scalable retail transformation.

Background

Starbucks serves diverse communities globally, but traditional store designs did not always meet the needs of customers with disabilities, neurodiverse individuals, caregivers, or aging populations. McKinsey partnered with Starbucks to identify barriers and redesign stores to create welcoming, accessible spaces.

Objective

The goal was to improve accessibility, enhance customer comfort, strengthen employee confidence, and embed inclusive design into scalable store standards.

Approach

Through research, workshops, and collaboration with accessibility experts and frontline employees, Starbucks redesigned seating, lighting, acoustics, signage, counter heights, and store layouts to reduce friction and improve navigation.

Impact

Pilot stores showed measurable improvements, including approximately 10–15 percent higher customer satisfaction, increased dwell time, and stronger employee confidence when serving diverse needs.

Insights

Inclusive design benefits all customers, improves brand trust, and can be scaled without compromising operational efficiency.

Summary

This case demonstrates how Starbucks and McKinsey & Company used inclusive design to create better retail experiences while delivering business and social value at scale.

Credit

This analysis is based on the original case study published by McKinsey & Company.