



Inclusive Communication

A language that does not discriminate.

POSITIONER

Table of contents

1. What does inclusive communication mean?

1. Definition of inclusive communication, inclusion & discrimination
2. Areas of inclusive communication
3. Examples of do's & don'ts
4. Evolution and trends
5. Why is inclusive communication so important?

2. Inclusive communication in the hotel industry

1. In writing
2. In picture and video languages

3. Best practices & examples for inclusive communication

4. Other areas to consider

1. Uniforms
2. Interior design
3. F&B and service offer
4. HR

5. Self-reflection

6. Checklists

What does inclusive communication mean?

Definition „Inclusion“

„As a sociological term, the concept of inclusion describes a society in which every person is accepted and can participate in it on an equal and self-determined basis - irrespective of gender, age or origin, religious affiliation or education, any disabilities or other individual characteristics.

In an inclusive society, there is no defined normality that every member of this society has to strive for or fulfil. Normal is only the fact that differences exist. These differences are seen as enrichment and have no impact on the self-evident right of individuals to participate. It is the task of society to create structures in all areas of life that enable members of this society to move within it without barriers.“

Inclusive communication

„Inclusive communication aims to design written, visual, oral and non-verbal communication in such a way that all people are represented and addressed equally.

In doing so, different skin colours, genders, age groups, religions or social origins are represented equally. People with disabilities are portrayed actively and in a way that allows them to participate in social life. In addition to the classic ones, more diverse lifestyles are also portrayed, such as two fathers with one child. In addition, clichés are avoided and stereotypes are broken.“

Definition of „discrimination“

Discrimination is a gross violation of human rights. Discriminated people are systematically prevented from exercising their human rights because of individual or group-specific characteristics (ethnicity, gender, religion, etc.). Discrimination can take various forms in practice:

Differentiation – when, for example, young black men are systematically targeted for police checks.

Exclusion – when no identity documents are produced for e.g. Yenish, Sinti or Roma.

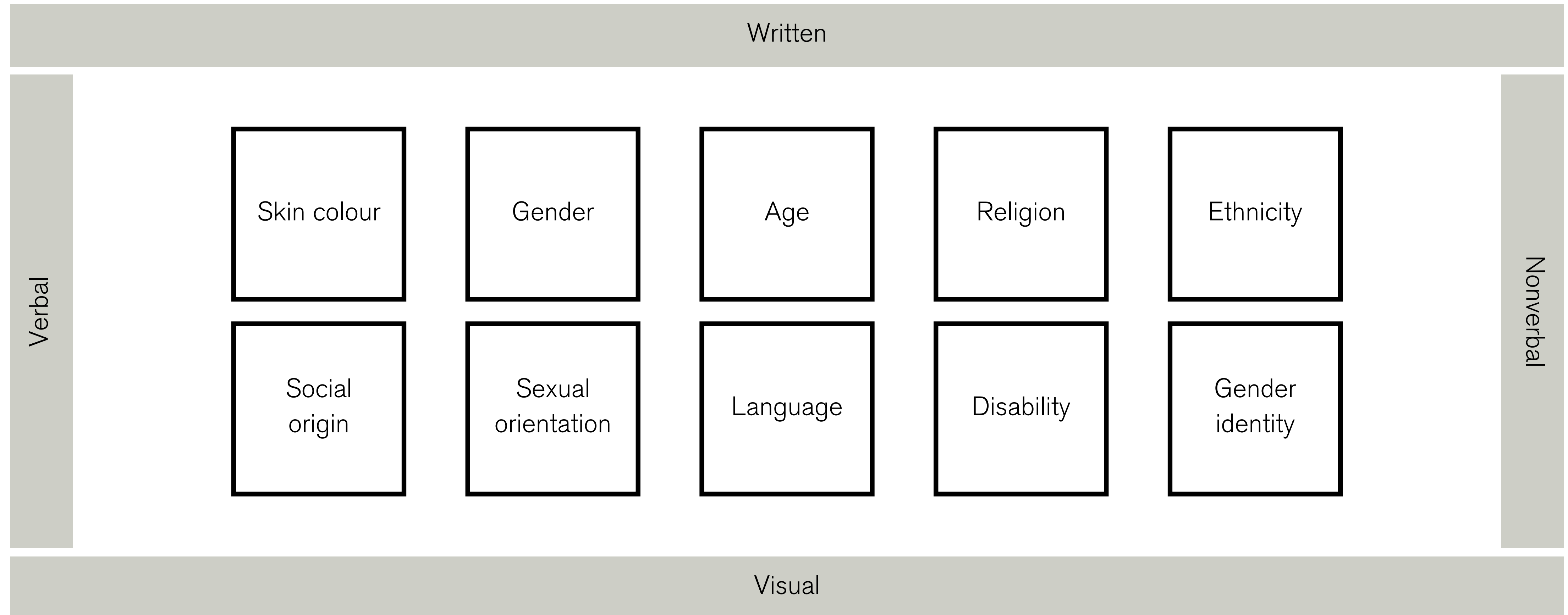
Restriction – when, for example, gays, lesbians, bi or trans people are not granted freedom of assembly.

Preference – when, for example, nationals are given preference in the allocation of housing.

Segregation – when, for example, children of refugees are systematically taught in separate schools or classes without taking their abilities and needs into account.

Denial of adequate facilities – if, for example, public buildings are not wheelchair accessible.

Areas of inclusive communication



Example 1 - Written

 I have blacklisted the guest.

 I put the guest on the deny list.

Why?

These terms equate “black” with “bad” and “white” with “good,” which is a problematic and racist association.

Example 2 - Written

- ✗ Book your cocktail masterclass with our bar guru Max Mustermann.
- ✓ Book your cocktail masterclass with our bartending expert Max Mustermann.





Why?

„Guru“ – used in Buddhist and Hindu religions to refer to a spiritual guide or leader, a Guru is a title of high esteem. To use it as shorthand for your experience with social media trivializes the importance of the title and its origins.

Example 3 - Written (German)

- ✗ Das Hotel ist damals wie heute Treffpunkt für Politiker und Diplomaten, aber auch unkomplizierter Begegnungsort für ganz Zürich.
- ✓ Das Hotel ist damals wie heute Treffpunkt für Politiker:innen und Diplomaten:innen, aber auch unkomplizierter Begegnungsort für ganz Zürich.
- ✓ Das Hotel ist damals wie heute Treffpunkt für Politikerinnen und Diplomaten, aber auch unkomplizierter Begegnungsort für ganz Zürich.
- ✓ Das Hotel ist damals wie heute Treffpunkt für Politik Tätige und Diplomaten_innen, aber auch unkomplizierter Begegnungsort für ganz Zürich.

Example 4 - Written (German)

-  Wir wünschen all unseren Gästen eine gesegnete und besinnliche Weihnachtszeit.
-  Wir wünschen unseren Gästen eine besinnliche Zeit und einen guten Start ins neue Jahr.
-  Wir wünschen unseren Gästen frohe Feiertage.
-  Wir wünschen Ihnen und Ihren liebsten ein schönes Jahresende und alles Gute für das neue Jahr.

Example 1 - Visual



POSITIONER



To note:

- Do not stereotype professional groups
- Men can also work in housekeeping
- Are only foreign employees shown in housekeeping?

Example: Breaking down classic gender roles and stereotypes

Example 2 - Visual



To note:

- Do not stereotype genders
- Men also take care of their children, not only women

Example 3 - Visual



POSITIONER



To note:

- What roles do the different ethnic groups have in the pictures?
- Are POC primarily in the employee role?
- Are POC also shown in the guest role?

Example: Differentiated representation of ethnic groups

Example 4 - Visual



POSITIONER



To note:

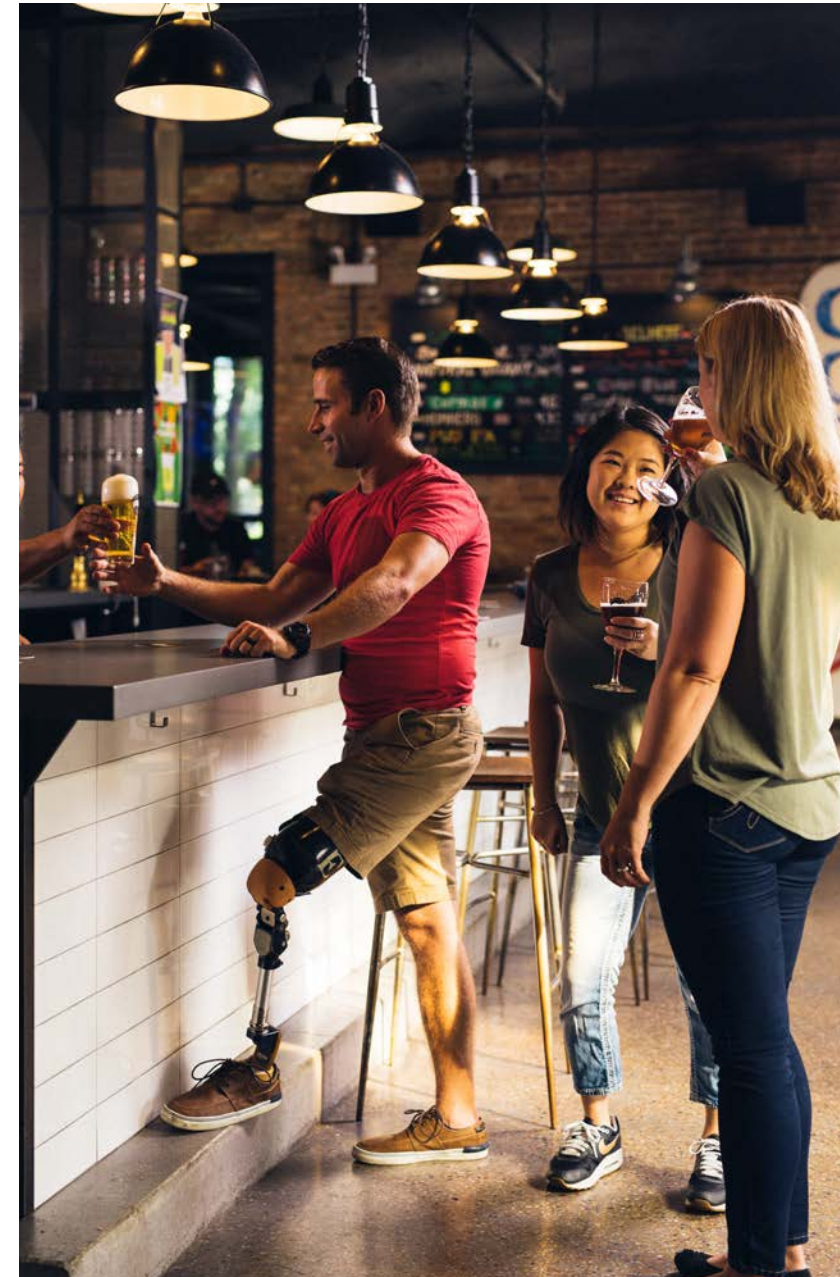
- Do not show people with disabilities alone
- Integrate people with disabilities actively into life and society
- Do not portray people with disabilities as if they need help for everything

Example: Active integration of people with disabilities

Example 5 - Visual



POSITIONER



To note:

- There are different types of disabilities, so don't just show the wheelchair
- Use the diversity of disabilities and actively integrate the people into the scenery
- They should be equally represented in society

Example: Integrating different types of disability

Example 6 - Visual



POSITIONER



To note:

- Show a diverse mix of society
- Make sure you have a diverse mix when taking pictures with lots of people
- There should not only be "white" people in the pictures
- Different ethnicities should not only play a role in staff imagery

Example: Representation of ethnic groups

Example 7 - Visual



POSITIONER



To note:

- Do not show LGBTQIA+ people in exaggerated poses
- Differentiate LGBTQIA+ people (Gay/ Lesbian/...)
- LGBTQIA+ people should be portrayed in natural settings
- LGBTQIA+ people should not be photographed only among themselves (special position), integrate these people naturally into the group

Example: Inclusion and natural representation of LGBTQIA+ people

Example 8 - Visual



POSITIONER



Example: Representing people who are genderfluid in a natural way

To note:

- Drag queens are not necessarily "genderfluid"
- Do not exaggerate when presenting genderfluid people
- With feminine or masculine features you can give the viewer a lot of room for interpretation, so several can see themselves in it
- Do NOT use genderfluid persons only to communicate fun, music and joy (LGBTQIA+ people as well)

Example 9 - Visual



To note:

- There are a wide variety of body shapes, use these
- Don't just show employees with different body shapes
- Make sure that you do not stereotype body shapes
- Make sure that body shapes are not excessively retouched

Example 10 - Visual



POSITIONER



To note:

- Religions can be subtly incorporated into the image
- Don't just show religions among themselves, mix them with other ethnicities/cultures/religions.
- Make sure that the items shown in the picture fit the religion (No alcohol for Muslims for example)
- Be careful not to stereotype religions

Example: Integration of religion

Example 11 - Visual



To note:

- Do not portray older people as if life is already over
- Let older people actively participate in life
- Older people don't always have to be shown with their grandchildren - how about a party?
- Make sure you do not portray older people stereotypically

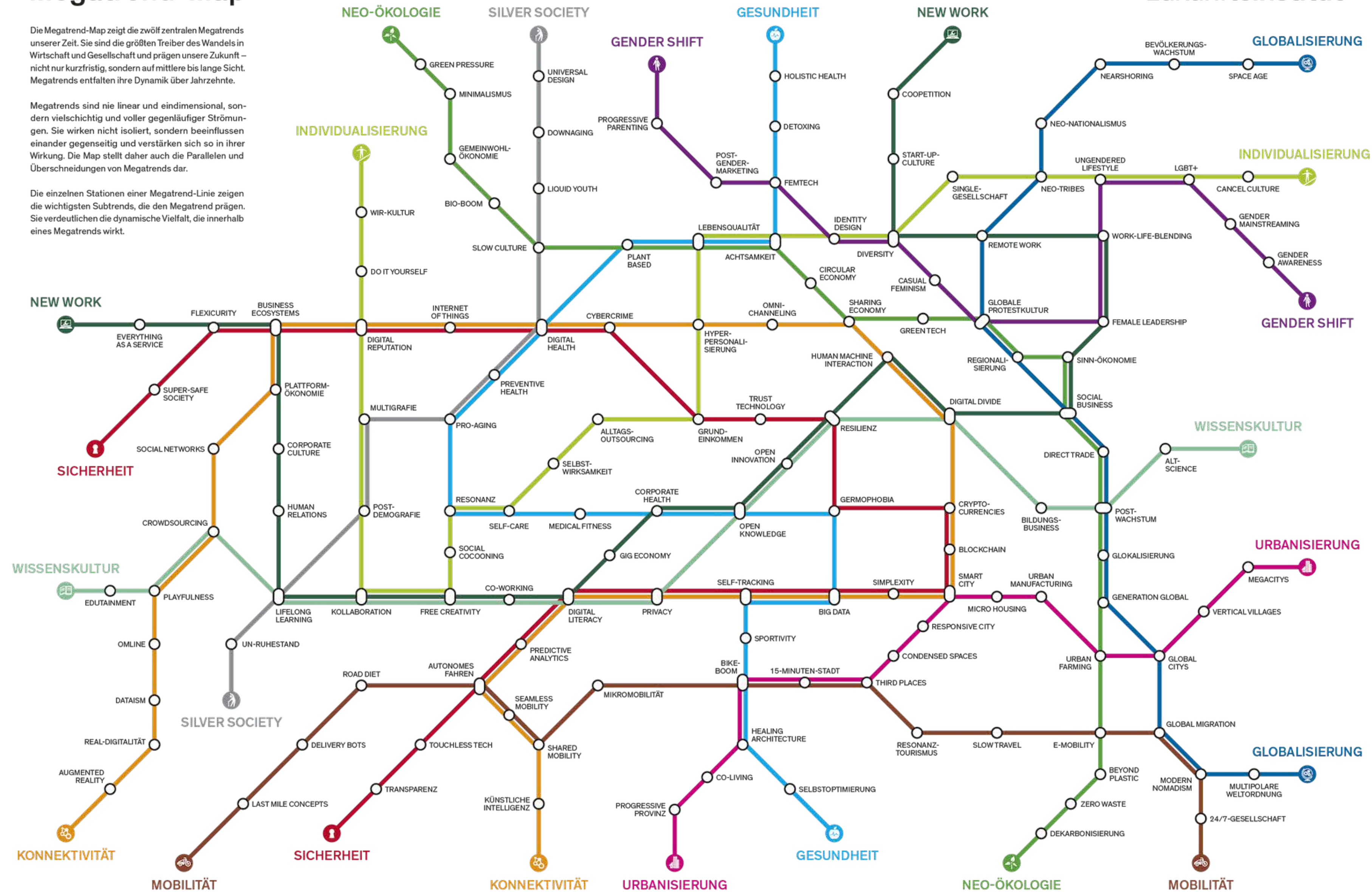
The evolution of inclusive communication

Megatrend-Map

Die Megatrend-Map zeigt die zwölf zentralen Megatrends unserer Zeit. Sie sind die größten Treiber des Wandels in Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft und prägen unsere Zukunft – nicht nur kurzfristig, sondern auf mittlere bis lange Sicht. Megatrends entfalten ihre Dynamik über Jahrzehnte.

Megatrends sind nie linear und eindimensional, sondern vielschichtig und voller gegenläufiger Strömungen. Sie wirken nicht isoliert, sondern beeinflussen einander gegenseitig und verstärken sich so in ihrer Wirkung. Die Map stellt daher auch die Parallelen und Überschneidungen von Megatrends dar.

Die einzelnen Stationen einer Megatrend-Linie zeigen die wichtigsten Subtrends, die den Megatrend prägen. Sie verdeutlichen die dynamische Vielfalt, die innerhalb eines Megatrends wirkt.



The evolution

- "Communication is a basic need and subjectively crucial for quality of life. It is an essential condition for social participation and self-determination and also an important basis for any development."
- Communication has always reflected the current „zeitgeist“ of society
- It is always reshaping itself (through social change, for example)
- Social expressions and language forms vary within groups and individuals
- Communication can include and/or exclude people and groups
(e.g. designation of people with disabilities: cripples -> invalids -> disabled people -> people with disabilities).
- Today's society is strongly sensitised to communicate in a mindful way

The trend

- Never before in the history of the world have so many people seen themselves as part of an international community
- This creates a new common horizon of experience, a space for the unifying in the unequal (Generation Global)
- Global migration will play an important role in the future
- The social roles ascribed to men and women in society are losing their social binding force
- Gender loses its importance and determines less about the development of individual biographies
- Changing role models and breaking down gender stereotypes are causing radical change in the economy and society (pluralism)
- People around the world are getting older and staying fit longer (Megatrend Silver Society)

Why is inclusive communication so important?

Language shapes opinions.
And opinions in turn shape behaviour.

Communication has a significant impact on our daily lives. It affects our attitudes, perceptions and behaviour and is a reflection of the world we want to live and work in.

It is not only about being politically correct

Inclusive communication is about something other than simply adhering to the rules of 'political correctness.' It is about **understanding, respecting, and valuing each other's perspectives**. The focus should be on recognizing, understanding, and responding to the wide range of identities in today's global society.

In fairness, it can be difficult for organizations to engage with all individuals within their communities. However, inclusive communication enables groups to receive messages and respond positively, leading to higher user satisfaction.

Inclusive communication involves listening to others with an **open mind** and being able to put yourself in their shoes. This means understanding **other people's experiences, thoughts, and feelings**.

An example – Airbnb

- Black guests have shared countless instances of being denied bookings based on their avatars, sparking the **#AirbnbWhileBlack** hashtag and multiple lawsuits
- A pro-Trump host refused a booking request because the guest was Asian
- Another denied lodging to a trans woman who supposedly made them “uncomfortable”
- North Africans have been turned away by French hosts
- Chinese hosts have openly refused requests from Uyghurs and Tibetans. The list goes on

An example – Airbnb

In 2016, Airbnb implemented a brief “**community commitment**” that all existing users would have to okay in order to continue making bookings or to set up a new account.

It's a pretty simple ask:

„I agree to treat everyone in the Airbnb community—regardless of their race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age—with respect, and without judgment or bias.“

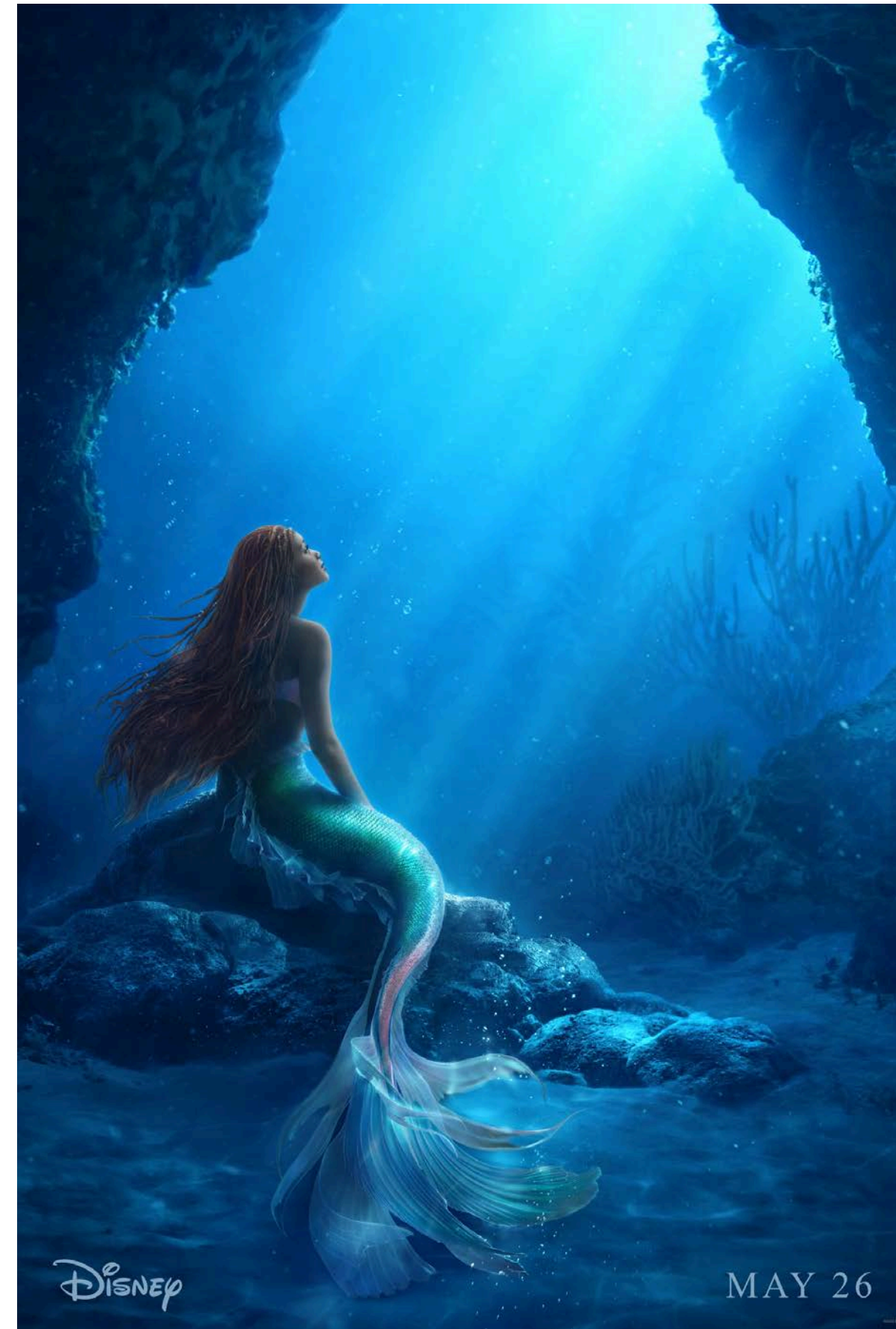
By agreeing to the community commitment, users—and most importantly, hosts—also must follow the nondiscrimination policy which enumerates prohibited acts. To name a few, the policy states hosts cannot: decline bookings or provide different hospitality conditions based on the aforementioned classes; post intimidating statements; or refuse to accommodate mobility devices or service animals.

Since the implementation over **1.4 million users have declined Airbnb’s Community Commitment** and as a result have been denied the ability to use Airbnb.

Another example – outside the industry



1989 version



2023 version

- Recently, Walt Disney Studios released the remake of Disney's The Little Mermaid
- The lead role of Ariel is played by Halle Bailey, a black actress
- Following the release of trailer, videos appeared all over social media from parents of young Black girls in awe and mesmerized seeing someone that looks like them on the screen
- "She's Brown like me!" one young girl exclaimed in a video on TikTok

Inclusive communication in the hotel industry

In words

POSITIONER

Avoid language barriers

An important basis for accessible texts are:

1. Pay attention to understandable words and simple formulations (For example, "MICE" should not be used).
2. Always be specific about what it is ("Enter the competition now" instead of "Enter now")
3. Work with examples and comparisons ("as big as two football fields")
4. Do not use phrases and clichés ("despite the disability")
5. Use consistent terms (when using the word „contacts“ always use this word and not for example "contact persons")
6. Avoid shortcuts (For example instead of e.g.)
7. Keep texts short and structured
8. Do not use long, boxy sentences (a sentence should consist of no more than 15 words and one subject)
9. Make text easy to read (always left-justify text, never use grouped style)
10. Clear and explicit headings
11. Appreciative choice of words instead of insults (use appreciative, value-neutral terms)

Gender-sensitive formulations

1. Linguistic tools for gender-equitable formulations (German)

1. Paarformen: Mitarbeiter und Mitarbeiterinnen
2. Geschlechtsunspezifische Nomen: Mitarbeitende
3. Kollektivbezeichnungen: Die Belegschaft/ die Angestellten
4. Umschreibung ohne Personenbezeichnung
5. Direkte Anrede

2. Additional possibilities (Sparschreibungen)

1. Schrägstrich: Mitarbeiter/-innen
2. Klammer: Mitarbeiter(innen)
3. Binnen-I: MitarbeiterInnen
4. Asterisk (Genderstern): Mitarbeiter*innen
5. Doppelpunkt: Mitarbeiter:innen
6. Unterstrich: Mitarbeiter_innen

Inclusive communication in the hotel industry

In pictures & videos

Inclusive image and video languages

Here is an overview of the most important recommendations for inclusive visual and video language:

1. **Equality instead of unequal treatment**
Communicate in such a way that all people are presented and addressed equally
2. **Visibility instead of exclusion**
Reflect the whole society
3. **Differentiation instead of stereotyping**
Reflect a differentiated image of the population
4. **Relevant description instead of emphasis on differences**
Mention only relevant criteria for differentiation
5. **Explanations instead of room for misinterpretation**
Explain and justify facts and contexts to prevent misinterpretation
6. **Use appreciative words instead of insults**
Use appreciative, value-neutral terms

Best Practices & Examples

Best Practices



The Dolder Grand Hotel, Zurich
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuaG7t5pI8>

POSITIONER

Best Practices



Beau-Rivage Genève, Geneva

POSITIONER

Best Practices



BELLEVUE PALACE, Bern - Valentine's Day promotion

POSITIONER

Best Practices




The Dolder Grand Hotel, Zurich
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_Lk15aiSms

POSITIONER

Best Practices

SUCHE HOTEL ZIMMER UND SUITEN THE DOLDER GRAND KULINARIK SPA EVENTS UND HOCHZEITEN DE



SWISS QUEER
WEDDING ASSOCIATION

BOOK NOW

**WIR SIND OFFIZIELLE PARTNER
DER SWISS QUEER WEDDING
ASSOCIATION**

Gemeinsam setzen wir uns für mehr Diversität ein!
Die SQWA und das Dolder Grand haben es sich zur Aufgabe gemacht, LGBTQ+ Paaren eine positive und unterstützende Erfahrung bei der Planung Ihrer Hochzeit zu ermöglichen.

The Dolder Grand Hotel, Zurich

POSITIONER

Best Practices – 25hours Hotels



Different ethnic groups



Different body shapes



Differentiated representation of queer people



Values are communicated



People with disabilities



Genderfluid People



Different age groups

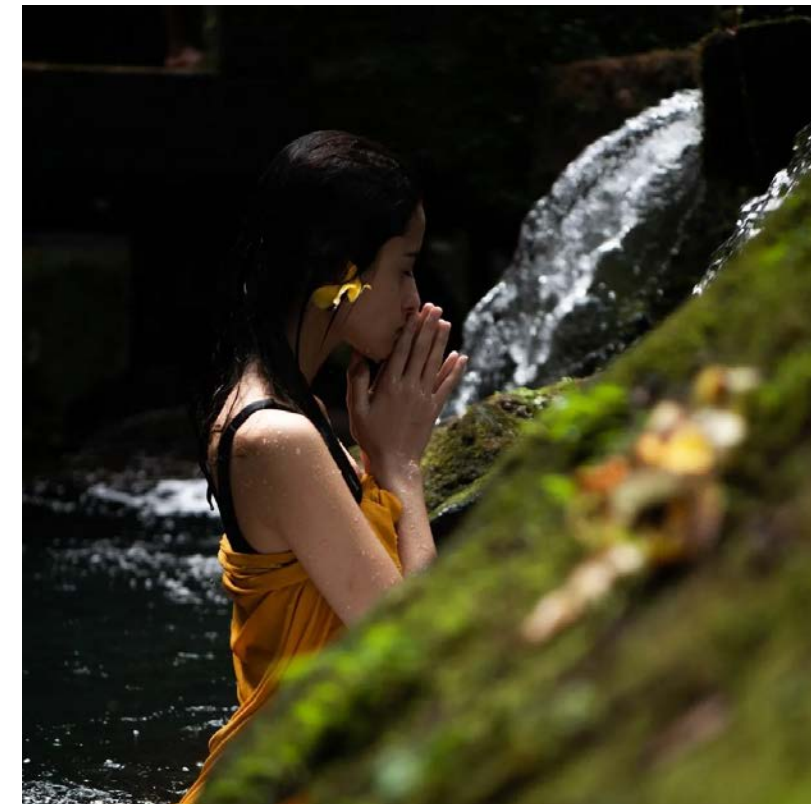


Different ethnic groups

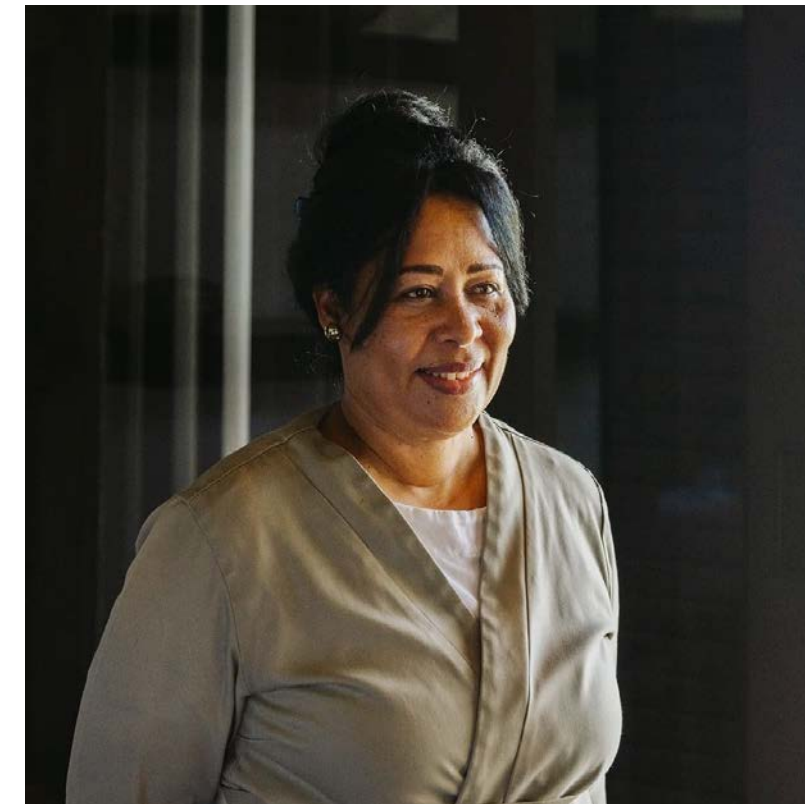
Best Practices – Aman Resorts



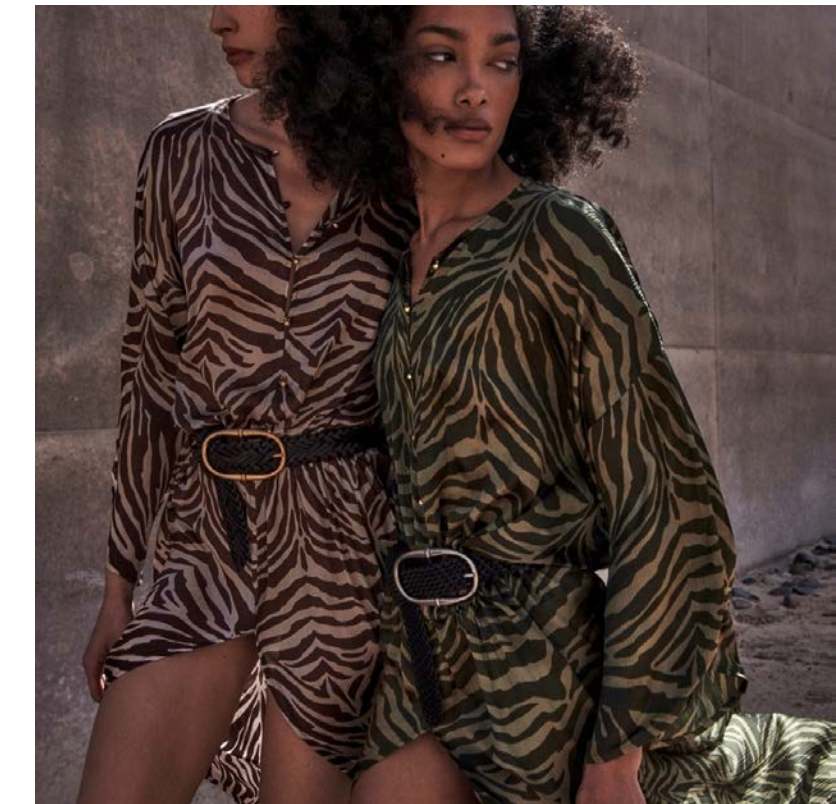
Religious clothing



Different ethnic groups



Different body shapes



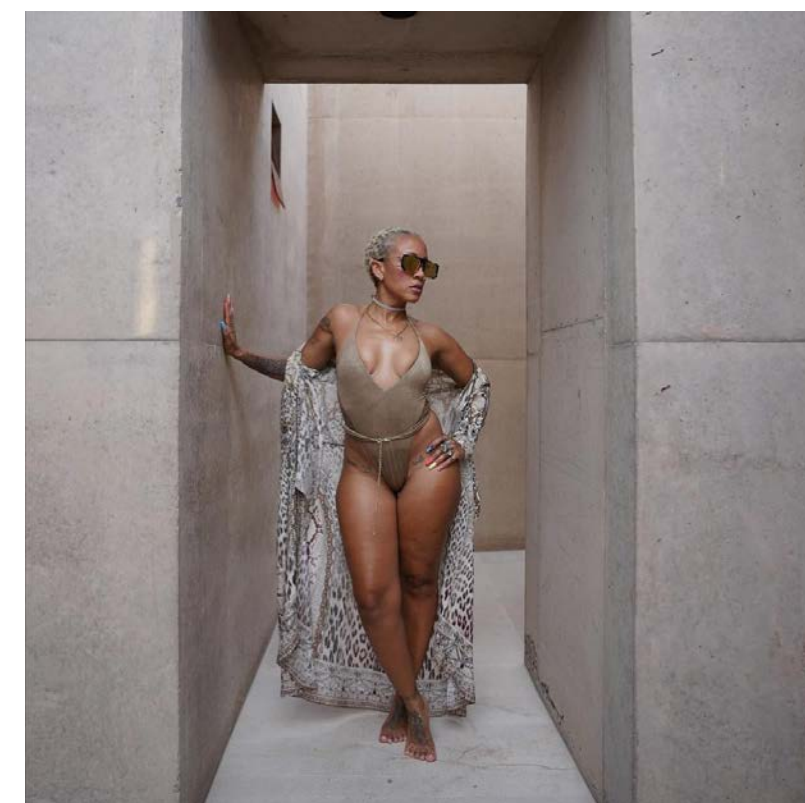
LGBTQIA+ representation (room for interpretation)



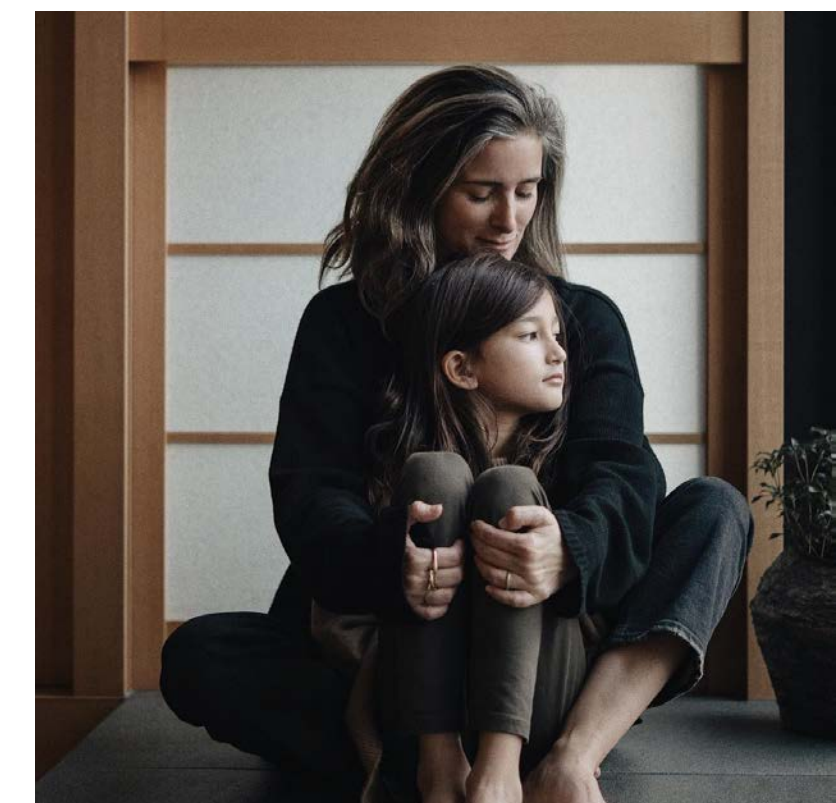
Breaking stereotypes, through a differentiated gender portrayal of professions



LGBTQIA+ representation (room for interpretation)



Different ethnic groups + body shapes



Different age groups

POSITIONER

Other areas to be considered

Other areas in the hotel

Uniforms / Grooming

- 65% of respondents in a study (Virgin Airlines) said that expressing their identity in the workplace had an impact on their well-being
- 21% also said that inclusion efforts by their employer increased their loyalty to the employer.

- Do you allow employees to decide for themselves whether or not to wear make-up? Are employees allowed to wear make-up at all?
- Do you require female employees to wear high heels?
- Are employees free to choose which uniform they will wear? (Example: trousers or skirt)
- Are the uniforms designed for different body shapes?
- Can people with disabilities wear these uniforms equally? (Example prostheses)
- Have religious garments been taken into account in the uniforms? (Hijab, kippa, etc.)
- Can employees have their own pronouns printed on the name badge?

POSITIONER





virgin atlantic 

OVER



Other areas in the hotel

Interior Design

- Are all public areas accessible without barriers?
- Are accessible rooms and suites really accessible?
- How are toilets labelled? Male/female only?
- What is the experience for guests with a disability?
- Have clear colours and tactile surfaces been used in the design to provide clear wayfinding?
- Is there a prayer room?

F&B and Service Offerings

- What religious considerations are taken into account in the services offered?
- What types of food can you offer guests?
- What experiences can people with a physical disability have with you? Are they prepared for this?
- Are staff members appropriately trained on how to communicate with certain groups of people?

HR

- Are job titles consistently gendered in your company?

POSITIONER

Self-reflection

Self-reflection

The following questions help you to reflect on your communication:

1. Who is the message basically addressed to? Who is it actually addressing?
2. Are all people treated equally?
3. Who is addressed?
4. Are those addressed represented?
5. Are those addressed portrayed accurately and in a differentiated way?
6. What message is being conveyed?
7. What information is used to understand the subject matter?
8. Are the differentiation criteria mentioned necessary and appropriate?
9. Is the message conveyed in a differentiated enough way? Or is there room for misinterpretation or misunderstanding?
10. What is the meaning of the terms used?

Checklists

Checklists for inclusive communication

This checklist is intended to be a support document for hotels. It covers written and visual communication as well as physical and virtual meetings, and can be used as a guide, a tool for self-reflection or just as a reminder before you press send. It will take you through the key principles of inclusive communication, with the purpose of ensuring we make conscious choices and consider inclusion, diversity and accessibility aspects when we communicate.

Different types of communication

Inclusive communication is about how we write and speak, how we work with images and videos, and how we act in our physical and virtual environments. This checklist covers three areas:

- Written communication
- Visual communication
- Verbal and physical communication

Checklists for inclusive communication

How do you start?

When we communicate, our own experiences and our perception of the world will affect our choices.

In images we tend to use people that look like us, and our words often reflect our own experiences and worldview. To be truly inclusive you need to reflect on your own background, privileges, and biases.

Are you a part of the existing norm? Are you privileged just by being you?

It's about making a conscious choice to consider people who are not like you in your communication, with the purpose of representing and including more perspectives. Something that is important to remember is that we can't be expected to know everything as individuals. But what we can do is to have an open mind, strive for diverse mix of people and ask people who are not like ourselves how they want to be represented. We want to emphasise that it is fine to not know everything, and to make mistakes. Don't be afraid of 'trial and error' or asking questions if you are insecure.

POSITIONER

Checklist – Written communication

Inclusive writing avoids biases, slang, or expressions that discriminate against groups of people based on race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Inclusive writing also takes visual and cognitive impairment in consideration by thinking about readability and plain language. Using an inclusive language allows you to resonate with more audiences, and communication that is accessible – and that people can identify with – will be more efficient.

- Are you writing about people or communities? Find out how the ones you are writing about prefer to be identified and use their preferences. For example, when writing about the LGBTQI+ community, research what terms are preferred.
- Is it necessary to mention gender? Strive for a gender-neutral language.
- Be equal in your descriptions of people. (For example, it is more common that women are described by their looks while men are described by their skills, and this is of course something to avoid.)
- Pay attention to your internal jargon. Can it be perceived as excluding to others?
- When sharing examples, choose a diverse set of names and characters in order to reflect the real-world diversity.
- Think plain language: use words that your readers will understand, even if they are not experts on the subject.
- Write important information early in your paragraphs, to make sure the message reaches out to as many people as possible.
- Define acronyms and abbreviations and explain technical or complicated words.
- Divide longer texts into shorter paragraphs for better readability.

Checklist – Visual communication

Images are powerful – what we see affects our perceptions and generates emotions. When we communicate through visuals it's important to reflect our diverse reality. If we tend to focus on representing only a small group of individuals, it's easy to create a false image of what the world looks like. If we are unaware of common stereotypes and how different compositions, body poses and facial expressions are interpreted, we might reinforce stereotypes. However, if we become conscious of what signals our images and videos send, and work actively with this area, we can achieve a greater sense of belonging and present role models for more people to identify with. Ask yourself: does the message of your image match the intention of the communication? And remember who you are trying to reach: would they feel included in your visual content, or have you excluded certain groups of people?

- Choose images with care and avoid images that reinforce stereotypes.
- Who is represented in your images? Think about aspects like: Gender, skin color, body shape, family constellations, age and/ or abilities/disabilities
- Does your image reinforce stereotypes? One common stereotype representation is showing smiling women in casual poses, and serious men posing in a powerful way. Another one is showing men in active or leading positions, and women in passive or assisting positions.
- How are people portrayed in your images – from what angles and in what surroundings? For example, women are often portrayed from above, which makes them look small, while men are more often photographed from below, making them look big and powerful.
- What are people doing in your images? For example, avoid portraying only young people with digital tools, and only women in natural or home environments.
- Add an alternative text to your images when applicable, to make sure people who use screen readers can take part of your content.
- When sharing images or videos with text content, make sure the contrast between text and background is good enough to ensure readability
- Always add subtitles to videos to make sure people with hearing impairment can take part of your content.
- Divide longer texts into shorter paragraphs for better readability.

POSITIONER

Checklist – Verbal and physical communication

An inclusive environment is a healthy environment. In hotels and also workspaces everyone should feel comfortable being who they are regardless of sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, skin color or religious belief. This applies to both physical and virtual environments, in formal as well as informal meetings and/ or gatherings.

- Always act and speak up if anyone around you is exposed to discrimination.
- Make sure all participants in a meeting or gathering knows that is expected from them and what is on the agenda for the day.
- Do not assume that everyone knows what you are talking about. If someone is new, make sure to give a background description to the topic you are talking about.
- Do all meeting participants have equal opportunities and time to speak? Try to ensure everyone has the same amount of space and listen actively regardless of who is speaking.
- Think twice before asking colleagues personal questions, such as questions about partners or children.
- Describe people in equal ways. For example, people without disabilities are often described as normal or healthy, whilst people with disabilities are described as abnormal or unhealthy – this is of course something to avoid.
- Speak in terms of individuals with different backgrounds, families, and religion. Don't assume that there is a unified we. One person does not represent a whole group of people.
- Try not to judge anyone by their looks or clothing. When recruiting or meeting new colleagues, recognise that talent comes in all shapes, sizes, color, ethnicities, and personalities.
- Welcome different perspectives. Be eager to learn from people who has different experiences than you do.
- In global contexts, remember that all countries have different cultures, holidays, seasons, and time zones. Take this into consideration when communicating.
- Ask your colleagues about their needs before digital meetings. Someone might prefer to ask questions verbally instead of writing them in a chat, and someone might have difficulties taking notes and would prefer to record the meeting.
- Take breaks in longer meetings.

POSITIONER



**MAKE UP IS
GENDERLESS**

Grazie.

Who

Fabian Messer

Email

fabian@positioner.com

Visit

positioner.com

POSITIONER