



## Good communication is good business!

### Take our quiz and rate the communication accessibility of your business

There are a few simple things you can do to improve the way your business interacts with customers who have communication difficulties or those who speak English as a second language. Take our quiz to see how your business scores when it comes to interacting with people who may have communication difficulties.

Score yourself and then read our tips to see how you can improve your communication accessibility.

#### Take the quiz!



**Q1. Do you talk directly to your customer - not the person they are with?**

Yes / No

**Q2. Do you provide your customers with enough time to communicate with you?**

Yes / No

**Q3. Does your signage include pictures for people who have difficulty reading?  
For example, do you include pictures or photos in your pamphlets or menus?**

Yes / No

**Q4. Do you have easy to read signage or displays that tell people what services your business provides?**

Yes / No

**Q5. Do you communicate with individuals using their preferred communication method such as a communication board?**

Yes / No

## How did you score?

Count how many times you answered yes to a question.

**0/5 – You have some work to do!** Read our tips below for some simple ways to improve your customer interactions.

**1/5 – There's room for improvement!** Read our suggestions below and see what small changes you can make to improve your communication access.

**2/5 – You're making a good start!** You are thinking about the different ways people can communicate with your business, but there are a few other things you can do. Implement some suggestions below and take the quiz again!

**3/5 – Not bad - more than 50%!** This is a great start but there are some other things you could improve on without too much work. Read our tips!

**4/5 – Well done!** Your business demonstrates great communication accessibility. Find out where you could improve below.

**5/5 - Gold star for you!** Communication access is clearly a priority for your business! Have you considered being accredited to display the Communication Access Symbol?

## How to improve communication access in your business

It can be daunting communicating with someone who has difficulty understanding you or who has trouble getting their message across. Our tips below are just a few ways you can improve interactions between your staff and customers.

### **Tip 1 Always talk directly to the individual instead of the person with them.**

After all, the individual is your customer. By smiling, saying hello or shaking hands (if appropriate), you can put a person at ease. This also creates a more positive experience. Customers are more likely to return to a business or service that is welcoming and friendly.

### **Tip 2 Always give customers enough time to understand you and respond in their own time.**

It often takes longer for a person with a communication disability to get their message across. Some people with a communication disability also have difficulty understanding speech. It is important to provide these customers with adequate time to communicate effectively with you.

### **Tip 3 Be patient, polite and remain calm.**

Particularly if it takes someone a little longer to get their message across. Check that you have understood the person correctly and make sure that they have no more questions or comments to add.

### **Tip 4 Provide information with photos or pictures for people who have difficulty reading.**

Eye-catching and visually attractive pamphlets and menus are often easier to understand and stand out more prominently. Simple information written as clearly as possible is useful for people who have difficulty understanding print. Consider placing written information on plain white paper, or increasing the size of the font.

**Tip 5 Use gestures (such as pointing to items), show pictures or write the information down.**

This will help people understand your messages. Some people may need the written information read aloud to them if they have difficulty reading.

**Tip 6 Place your written information, signs and displays in a place that's easy to see.**

Be mindful of people who use a wheelchair or who may not see over the counter.

**Tip 7 Provide a pen and paper so a customer can write or draw their message.**

Or if you need to write or draw your message.

**Tip 8 Clearly display important information such as your price list so people can find the information without having to ask.**

Prices should be clearly displayed and easy to read. If a person cannot understand when you say how much something is, it's important for them to be able to see how much to pay. For example, display item costs on your cash register. Place service desk signs and items at eye level where customers who use a wheelchair or scooter can see and point to them.

**Tip 9 Clearly display your business name and/or the services you offer on the front of the building.**

**Tip 10 Use maps and signs to help people find their way around your business.**

Signs can be used to show the toilets, exits, public telephone, information desks and where to pay. Make sure your signs are large, easy to read and use contrasting colours. Use symbols as well as words where possible.

**Tip 11 Communicate with customers the way they ask or show you.**

Individuals with communication disabilities may have cards explaining their preferred method of communication. Alternatively they may be able to tell you or show you how to best communicate with them.

**Tip 12 If your business is noisy, turn down any music and come out from behind the counter.**

Loud places can make it difficult to talk to and understand people who have difficulty communicating, particularly if they use an electronic communication device to get their message across. Consider taking the customer somewhere more private if you think the area is too noisy.

**Need more help to improve your communication accessibility?**

Northcott's Communication Access Team can assist your business to improve its communication access through assessments, training and resource development. We are the only approved assessor of communication accessibility in NSW.

Contact us today to find out how you can become more accessible, welcoming and inclusive for people with communication difficulties.



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