

TRBusiness D&I webinar champions accessible and inclusive TR initiatives

**The TRBusiness Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) in Travel Retail webinar took place on Wednesday 29 June, with an inspirational panel of experts sharing their views on ways to make the travel retail experience more accessible and inclusive for disabled people.**

The 90-minute, free-to-attend webinar, highlighted important considerations for brands, airports and retailers in the channel when it comes to educating the workforce and improving the travel experience for the 15% of the world's population – around 1 billion people – who live with disabilities\*.

“Diversity and inclusion should be cornerstones of all responsible businesses,” said TRBusiness Managing Editor Luke Barras-Hill, who co-moderated the event alongside the company's Head of CSR and Events, Michael Barrett.

“The goal of this webinar is to break down barriers to discrimination and galvanise conversation around this important topic today.”

***Click below to watch the session. The webinar is also available to view on demand via the TRBusiness YouTube channel.***



**TRBusiness Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) in Travel Retail webinar, 29 June 2022.**

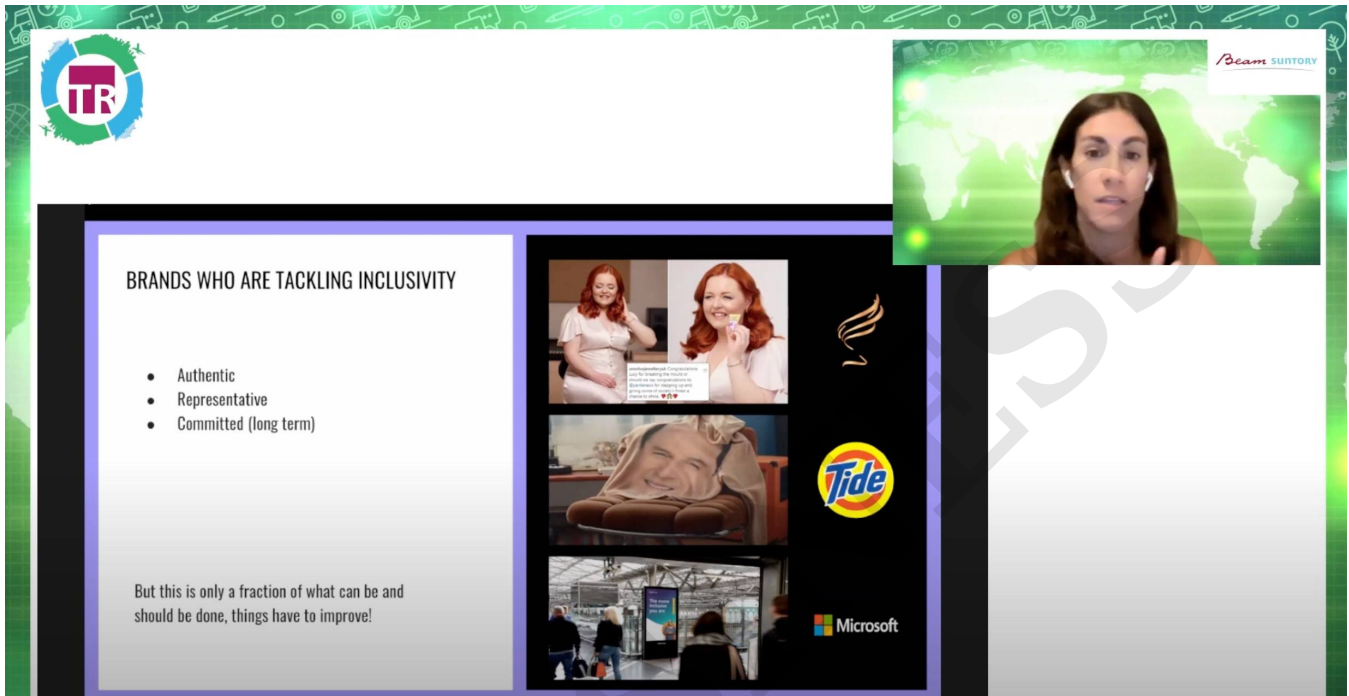
Cat Agostinho, Co-Founder of Imagen Insights, discussed some of the insights gleaned from her work crowdsourcing qualitative and quantitative feedback from the global Gen Z community for agencies and brands.

She set the scene by relaying that: “In the UK there are over 14.6 million people with a limiting long-term illness, impairment, or disability – that's 22% or almost a quarter of the UK population.”

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On the feedback she had received from disabled communities on how brands market themselves to consumers, she said: “They don’t feel represented within the outside world and the media and what they are seeing day-to-day.

“They are saying they want to be heard, but that they also want to see themselves out there. They don’t feel as if they are fully represented.”



The image shows a presentation slide with a green border. In the top left corner is the TR logo. The main content area is titled "BRANDS WHO ARE TACKLING INCLUSIVITY" and lists three bullet points: "Authentic", "Representative", and "Committed (long term)". Below the list, it says "But this is only a fraction of what can be and should be done, things have to improve!". To the right of the text are three images: two women, a man in a wheelchair, and the Tide logo. Below these is a Microsoft logo. In the top right corner of the slide is a video feed of a woman, Cat Agostinho, with the Beam Suntory logo in the top right corner of her video.

**Cat Agostinho, Co-Founder of Imagen Insights.**

On the ‘massive challenge’ in improving representation she has the following advice: “We urge brands to listen, ask questions, have a dialogue and to be open to what people have to say.

“Ask your consumer or the people you want to have a dialogue with what it is they think and feel, what they see challenges with and what they are passionate about – all these things will help you to have that conversation.

“Ultimately, you have to make change off the back of that as there’s no point having a conversation with young people and then not doing anything. You need to act on the feedback.

She went on to reveal how technology has helped Imagen Insights to ‘diversify and granulise’ its research with communities in order to procure more qualitative data that’s richer in detail that delivers the ‘brutally honest insights’ the company is known for.

Linked to this is the ability to level up its platform to offer a diverse range of communities, from those with a registered disability to individuals with learning difficulties, a platform to share their voice.

Diversity is also reflected in the company’s inclusive hiring policy, which Agostinho said is a crucial component: “We champion diversity and you only get that if you have different people in the room.”

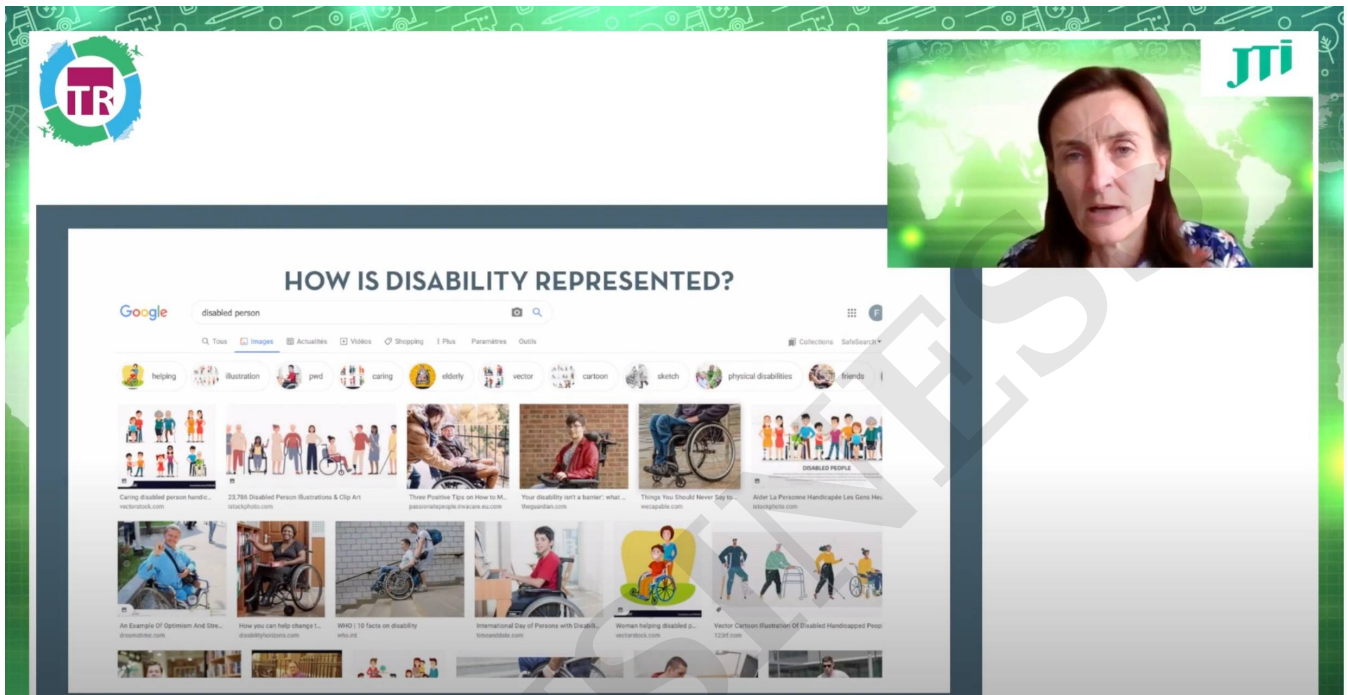
Agostinho name-checked a selection of brands that she viewed as tackling inclusivity well, including Pantene, which works with blind disability activist Lucy Edwards as a brand ambassador, as well as Tide

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Detergent, which featured a descriptive video for its Super Bowl advertisement, thus making it inclusive for the blind and visually impaired community.

She also mentioned Microsoft for its digital billboard campaign featuring British Sign Language (BSL).

“Brands have to step in and step up to create more campaigns and projects that include more people from a different background whatever their circumstance,” she summarised.



**Fabienne Raynaud, Founder of Goods To Know.**

Next to take the floor was Fabienne Raynaud, Founder of Goods To Know, which offers consultancy and training services for companies with the overall aim of helping create a more inclusive society.

She discussed the ways in which disability is represented currently and how there is a need for broader representation.

To drive home her point, she played a guessing game with webinar attendees, talking the audience through the talents and disabilities of celebrities to highlight how people can have a ‘disability or be in a situation of disability’.

“Around 45% of disabilities are related to a disabling illness,” she said. “Furthermore, 80% of disabilities are ‘invisible’, making them difficult to show.”

Add to this that “the average age of disability onset is 47 years old and one in two people will experience a disability in their lifetime.”

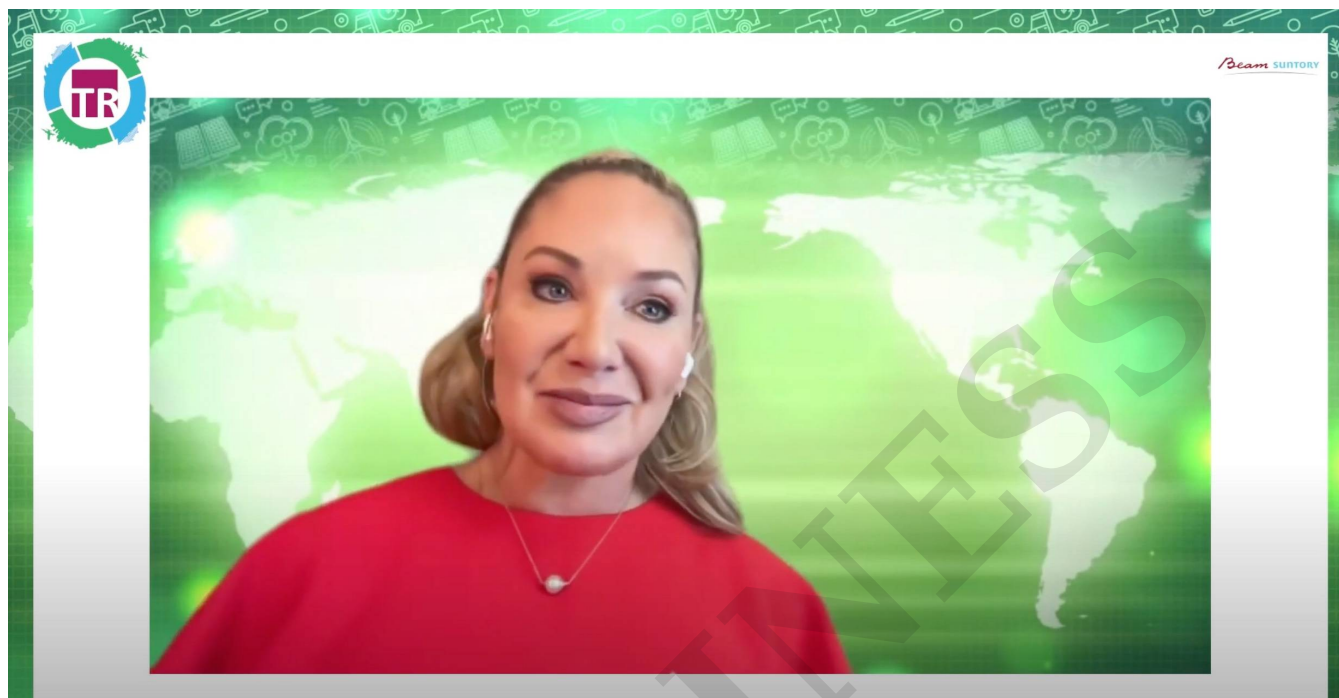
She stressed how “skills and disability are compatible”.

## **THE VALUE OF THE HUMAN TOUCH**

Stephenie Rodriguez, Founder, JOZU for Women Inc. – Wandersafe, winner of ‘Best Travel Accessory’ in the global consumer-voted Travel Retail Awards 2019, shared her own experiences as a limb different bilateral

TRBusiness D&I webinar champions accessible and inclusive TR initiatives amputee.

“I think there is a misconception about people living with long term illness and those with disability. They are not one and the same,” she commented.



**Stephanie Rodriguez, Founder, JOZU for Women Inc. - Wandersafe, winner of ‘Best travel accessory’ in the Global Travel Retail Awards 2019.**

Drawing on her recent round-the-world trip as an example, she offered an insight into how she was treated at different airports, including the opportunities available to her to experience the amenities.

“My disability is related to limb difference and my lack of feet means I cannot walk long distances,” she explained. I am met at the check-in to be escorted to the gate, as it’s too far to walk and I cannot stand in the queues. However, on the walk I am never asked if I would like to stop and buy something on the way to the gate.

“The perception is that I am disinterested,” she continued. “I had one lady take me straight to the gate instead of asking me what my wishes were in those golden hours before catching an international flight.

“The perception that people who are mobility challenged are not beauty consumers, don’t like make-up or fashion and the surprise and delight of the travel retail experience – that’s complete rubbish. The lack of exposure to those things is really unfortunate and it is incredibly novel to experience.”

She relayed how when she made her own way to the boutiques on one occasion, she could have benefitted from simple help from sales assistants, such as reaching items on the shelves.

“My inability to reach higher shelves was frustrating for me when travelling unattended,” she explained. Having culturally and socially aware staff who might see someone *[with a disability]* and ask if there’s anything they can help them to reach is so subtle and so powerful.”

## **INCLUSIVE TRAVEL AT ISTANBUL AIRPORT**

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Hilal Kahraman, Passenger Experience Design Chief at IGA Istanbul Airport, gave a comprehensive overview of how the airport has adapted to become accessible to all, with a roster of carefully crafted initiatives.

“Accessible travel is possible at Istanbul Airport,” she said. “A disabled person can experience the airport with a companion or with an assistant provided by the airlines, who can take you for lunch or shopping and is trained in sign language and first aid. “Everyone can experience the airport independently.”

She said that airports wishing to implement similar strategies should define their approach and allow the services to shift accordingly.

“We welcome all our guests, focusing on themselves, not their differences, with Turkish hospitality,” she said.

The slide features the TR logo in the top left corner. The main title is "Behind the idea Airport for Everybody". Below the title, it states "A disabled person can experience the airport". Three icons represent different accessibility levels: "with a companion" (two people icon), "with an assistant and wheelchair (provided by the airlines)" (wheelchair icon), and "INDEPENDENTLY" (checkered flag icon). A list of bullet points is provided for the "INDEPENDENTLY" category: "Wait for your flight in a waiting zone", "Need someone to meet their basic needs", and "Can not experience all the airport facilities". A video inset in the top right shows Hilal Kahraman speaking, with the "DIAGEO" logo in the corner. The background of the slide shows a blurred airport terminal.

### **Hilal Kahraman, Passenger Experience Design Chief at IGA Istanbul Airport.**

Among the initiatives at Istanbul Airport include: accessible transport options, accessible parking spaces, priority entrances, assigned seats, calm check-in zones, quiet rooms, dedicated rooms offering comfort for those who need to rest or remove prostheses before take-off, accessible routes with tactile paving through the domestic departure journey (which Kahraman said is the first of its kind in the world) and step-by-step indoor navigation with voiced instructions, plus much more.

“We met with different NGOs working with individuals with different disabilities so we experienced the airport journey with them starting from the entrance through to the fly gate,” said Kahraman.

“We work with people with visual impairments, wheelchair users and cerebral palsy and other disabilities and we looked at touchpoints and how to provide a better experience.

“We started to design with solutions under the name of IGA Cares.”

Site visits with disabled people take place regularly, allowing the airport to constantly check for ways to

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**TR** ■ **Our Journey: IGA Cares Solutions**

**Sunflower Lanyard**  
*Makes invisible visible*

- For hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia or anxiety
- Recognized in more than 100 airports
- First in Turkey

Istanbul Airport

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**Hilal Kahraman, Passenger Experience Design Chief at IGA Istanbul Airport spoke of the globally recognised Sunflower Lanyard.**

Passengers can wear the Sunflower Lanyard to signal hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia and anxiety, which is recognised by employees at Istanbul Airport as well as more than 100 airports around the world.

“The human touch is the most influential factor in the experience,” she explained. “We have interactive online training and face-to-face training for all our employees so they have a chance to hear directly from disabled people on what their needs are.”

Due to illness, her colleague Seben Ayşe Dayı, Customer Service Specialist at İGA İstanbul Airport was unable to join the discussion on the day.

In response to the presentation, Rodriguez shared her praise for the Istanbul Airport programme.

“I would like to see more airports adopt this point of view,” she said.

“It’s exiting to see an airport adopt such a holistic strategy – not just for the wheelchair user but also for sight impaired and hearing impaired people. Hats off to Istanbul Airport and Hilal for this programme. It’s sensational.”

## **CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE**

When asked to summarise their thoughts on the topic, Agostinho underscored the importance of “asking questions” and “making change off the back of it”.

Rodriguez recommended that airports can look at the fundamental needs of disabled people and work from there.

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“Ask ‘Is there is anything I can do to improve your journey today? That’s a fully open-ended question and a very powerful one.”

Kahraman added to ‘work with disabled people directly’.

“Observe them while experiencing your service or products - it’s the key,” she advised.

The webinar, part of the TRBusiness-curated Sustainability Forum, was hosted in association with Kounter, a BlueDog Group company, which is the exclusive production and streaming partner for the event.

The session was kindly sponsored by Beam Suntory, Diageo and JTI.

*\*Source: WHO.*

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