



THE

Experts in World Class Deaf Customer Experience

TERPTREE TIMES

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DEAF AWARENESS WEEK NEEDS A PRIDE REVAMP



Every year, Pride as a movement gets bigger - gaining more exposure as it does.

Last year saw big brands getting in on the action, from Volvo, Smirnoff and Tesco to British Airways. And even using slogans such as Bursting with Pride with the hashtag #PrideAtTesco and showcasing the famous Pride Rainbow with colourful collections of fruit and vegetables.

Smirnoff continues the message with the comment "labels are for bottles not for people".

All well themed, making the most of this topical time of year and as brands, sharing those all-important values with society.

As with many other events Pride has ongoing messaging which culminates in events at the same time every year.

It's fantastic to see these well-known businesses and brands using their profile and platform to support these key messages. As a result, this creates awareness and a more open relationship between the brands and its potential customers.

And it's fair to say that the same happens during Deaf Awareness Week. Deaf organisations and charities are promoting and campaigning throughout the year and Deaf Awareness Week in May every year is the time to build greater awareness.

But what we don't see currently is this message spreading throughout the corporate world. Even though 1 in 6 of the general population is either deaf or has a hearing loss, and this number is increasing due to a growing ageing population.

What would it say about your brand if it stood out, and embraced the opportunity of promoting Deaf Awareness Week in the same way others do during Pride? What would happen to your customer numbers? What would happen to your profile?

Answer: It would show you as inclusive employer and a business where a deaf person could have a fantastic customer experience with a brand who cares.



So why not follow in the footsteps of Pride and do something unique for Deaf Awareness Week next May? I can't wait to see what you come up with!

WHY SUBTITLING IS A MUST



Did you know that most TV adverts are not subtitled?

Probably not something you've noticed or even thought about. But, if this is YOUR business we are talking about, it means you are missing out on a crucial (and large) audience.

The UK's advertising industry is worth over £17 billion every year, so why it is that only a handful of businesses have subtitles on their adverts?

In the UK, more than 11 million people have hearing loss and 97% of people have a digital TV. This represents a significant opportunity for UK TV advertisers to reach deaf and hard of hearing audiences.

LET'S EXPLORE WHY YOU MAY WANT TO PUSH TO HAVE YOUR ADS SUBTITLED...

Research conducted by AdColony in 2017 analysed two versions of an advert, one with subtitles and one without. The adverts were from Bose, Disney, Sony Pictures and Volvo and when subtitled there was a 9.9 percentage point uplift when the KPI was brand awareness. When they looked at intent to purchase, some adverts achieved a 26% boost and one technology product campaign saw a 23% increase in communicating key product features using subtitles.

SUBTITLES ARE NOT JUST FOR DEAF PEOPLE

The Office of Communications (Ofcom), the regulatory body for UK television broadcasting conducted a study to see who exactly is using subtitles.

THEY FOUND THAT AUDIENCES USE SUBTITLES FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS:

- 1 Viewers for whom English is a second language benefit, because it's easier to follow a programme that has subtitles
- 2 When the dialogue is spoken very quickly; when listening to accents; and when a speaker is mumbling or there is background noise
- 3 To help understand content that mentions brand names or technical terminology
- 4 To help maintain concentration, providing a better experience for viewers with learning disabilities, ADHD or Autism
- 5 It allows viewers to watch videos in sound-sensitive environments, like an office and libraries

It is likely that if you are uploading video content to Facebook, that you are already subtitling this as Digiday states that 85% of Facebook videos are viewed without sound – and therefore subtitling is relevant for your wider audience.

But what about your television adverts?

As we can see, this not only directly benefits more than one in six of the population, it also improves brand awareness, intent to purchase and customers' understanding of key product features.

Are you subtitling your ads right now?

INSPIRING QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Teddy Roosevelt

"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."

Bill Gates

"Setting customer expectations at a level that is aligned with consistently deliverable levels of customer service requires that your whole staff, from product development to marketing, works in harmony with your brand image."

Richard Branson

VRS OR LIVE CHAT



Within the deaf community there are pockets of customers who have very varying needs.

In total, there are 11 million deaf people in the UK, but within that there are a group of 150,000 deaf people who have very specific needs. These are deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users.

Being a BSL user means that you use British Sign Language as your first or preferred language.

WHAT ARE VIDEO RELAY SERVICES?

Video relay services (or VRS) allow deaf people whose first or preferred language is British sign language to make telephone calls to hearing people using a fully qualified Interpreter.

There are a growing number of businesses now offering access to their frontline call centres via VRS, including insurance providers, banks, utilities, mobile phone providers and also local councils and government departments such as DWP.

VRS launched at a time when deaf people could not easily access call centres. It would have had to be through a family member or through type talk (now called Next Generation Text or NGT).

By offering contact options like the VRS service, you are addressing a need in this particular niche within the deaf community; namely BSL users. However, you need to remember that this service would not be accessible for those deaf people who do not use sign language.

WHAT ABOUT LIVE CHAT?

There are other options such as live chat which offers the opportunity to access someone right there and then, the same as

VRS but via the written word. And again, it's removing the barrier to a call centre that is present for deaf people.

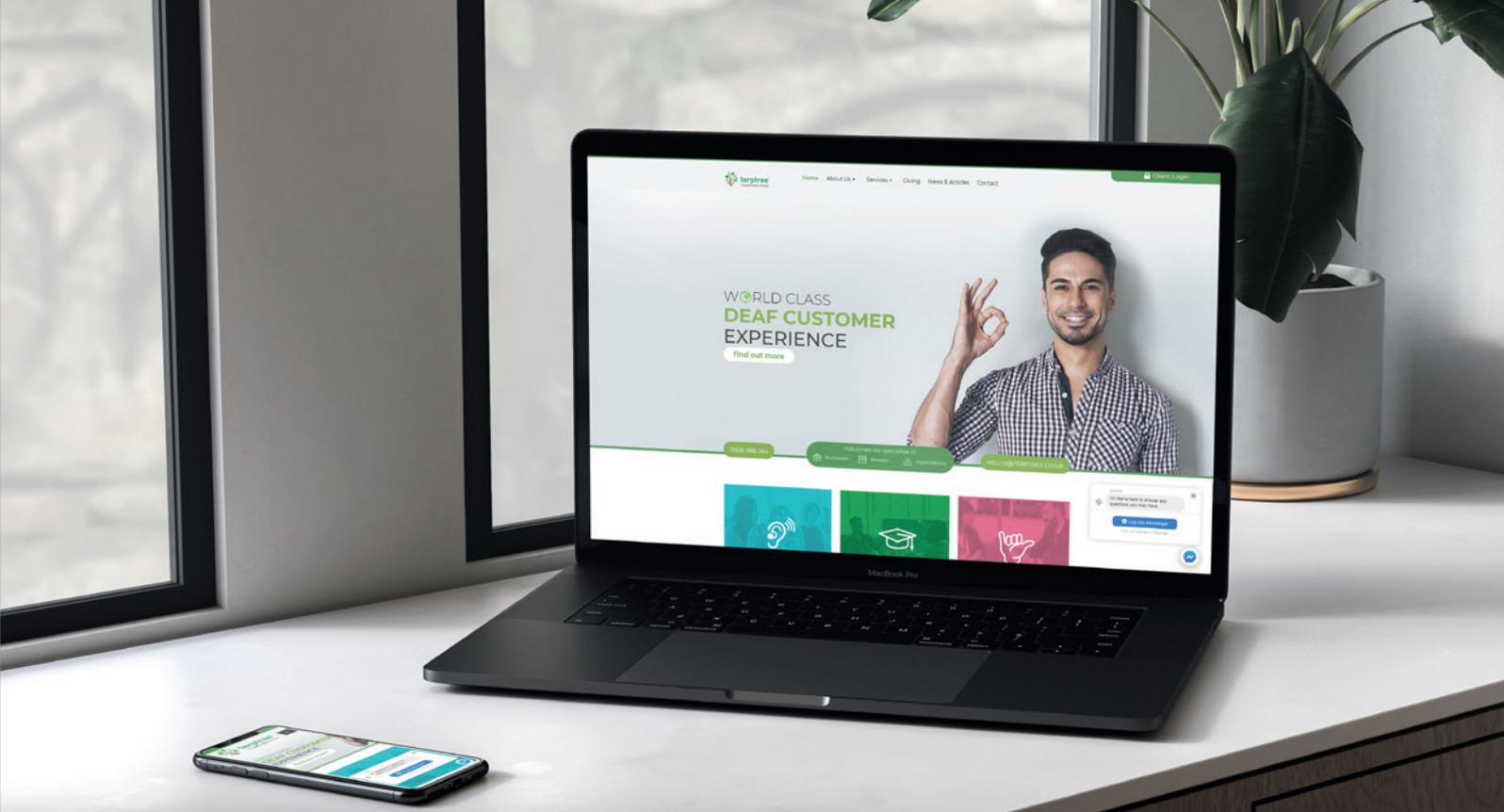
Deaf BSL users, would also happily use live chat because it's still an option for your customers to access representatives in a way that doesn't involve contacting the call centre.

It's an excellent opportunity to offer access to your team and for the customers to ask the questions they would ordinarily have to put to a call centre.

SO, SHOULD YOU PROVIDE VRS AND LIVE CHAT?

Despite live chat also being accessible for deaf BSL users, it's still beneficial to provide VRS services; as for this group of people English is their second language, not their first.

You see, British sign language has a different grammatical structure and word order compared to English. So, when looking at the question 'What's your name?' in British Sign Language it would be signed YOUR - NAME - WHAT. As you can see, the word order has altered when moving from one language to another, and this would mean that there is still the potential for language on live chat to be misinterpreted.



This means that for the deaf BSL users it's difficult to access English in a written form. It would be much easier accessing sign language, as it's their first language.

We would always recommend that if you can provide both these communication solutions then you should, as your customers within the deaf community have very differing needs.

WILL AI GIVE US THE ANSWER TO THIS IN THE FUTURE?

I believe what we will start to see in the near future is the emergence of AI solutions that specifically answer the challenges when accessing businesses that this group of customers have.

There is a range of exciting new apps like Pedius, which transforms what you write into an artificial voice and the response is transcribed into real-time text. This provides the opportunity to make calls without a third-party intermediary. The downside of this service currently, in my opinion, is that the deaf customer has to pay for the call bundles - which is not offering an equal experience for all.

Although solutions like these are very much in the early stages of development at the moment, technological advances mean they are evolving quickly.

TO SUMMARISE

As with anything, there is always more than one way to achieve these things.

I firmly believe the best way is to take it back to the basics of; Market, Message, Media. Although this concept is primarily focused on marketing activity, it also serves as a valuable lesson: *always* put the market you are serving first and foremost.

We first need to understand the market we are serving on a deeper level. How do they prefer to access our business and other like-minded businesses? What do they want to communicate with you about? And, what are the current challenges and barriers for this group of customers?

It's only when we consider the answer to these questions, that we can design customer-centric products and services. We can then align those with the right solutions and create a customer care environment that works for our more diverse groups of customers.

When you start putting the thinking and the understanding of customers behind decisions you are in a better position to make the best choices.

HEARING DOGS FOR DEAF PEOPLE

The Charity, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is now 36 years old. Over this time, they have provided hearing dogs to thousands of deaf people. Currently, they are working with around 950 hearing dog partnerships across the UK and are looking forward to this continuing to grow.

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People professionally train each dog in the behaviours and skills needed to become an assistance dog. They are trained to be a part of the recipient's everyday life and provide confidence, independence and companionship.

Andrew James, who has been the Partnership Operations Manager at Hearing Dogs for Deaf People for seven years, manages the teams that look after their clients; including applicants and recipients with their hearing dog.

Andrew explained that, "With a goal of creating 200 new working partnerships a year by the year 2020, it is an exciting time in the Charity which is focused on using the kind and generous support we receive to directly help as many deaf people as possible".

terptree are privileged to be working with Hearing Dogs for Deaf People since 2010 and Andrew explained how that relationship has grown over the years.

"With our Charity growing quickly, we need efficient solutions for our organisation's needs. In order to provide the best service we can, we use a variety of communication support including British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters, Speech to Text Reporters and Lipspeakers. Hearing Dogs staff are trained in BSL however we use communication support for our partnership visits that include sensitive or complex information and the highest quality communication support is vital. We also have communication support at fundraising and our community

events. We needed a supplier that would give us everything in one place".

When choosing their supplier, Andrew explained that Hearing Dogs for Deaf People have strong family values and terptree stood out because they share those values. He said "We wanted to work with a business that operates on a personal level, where we could build a relationship with the staff and work together to meet the needs of deaf people – basically we didn't want a call centre. What we realised with Victoria Williams (Founder of terptree) is that she is passionate and truly cares about the deaf community. Because of this, she has built a team of personable staff who understand our needs. terptree are a professional organisation, who maintain a family feel."

He continued "Our relationship with terptree is such that we have regular meetings to share insights and discuss current and future needs".

When asked if he would recommend terptree, Andrew gave a resounding "Yes I would, and do. As a charity, it is important we make sure our funds are being used carefully and wisely and I have never felt the need to move our business away from terptree. They always meet our needs".

Andrew concluded "The main reason I recommend terptree, is their 'why'. Most businesses have commercial answers to the questions of 'why' they exist and 'why' they do what they do. terptree's answers are deeply personal and their passion and dedication to helping deaf people are clearly seen in their actions. We have developed trust and understanding and for these reasons we foresee working with terptree for the long-term future".



A STORY FROM VICTORIA: DEER IN THE HEADLIGHTS



A couple of years ago, we went on holiday with some deaf friends to Somerset and while we were there we visited Dunster Castle, located in one of the most perfectly preserved medieval villages in England.

The husbands went off to sort out the parking, while we went inside to start taking a look around. Immediately on entering this 11th-century castle, a guide approached and asked if we would like to learn more about the Castle, to which my friend said "yes". At this time, I was already walking and looking around the room. I checked in with her, to see if she needed any support with communication and she said she was fine to go ahead.

Some time had passed and when I looked over she was nodding interestingly at the guide so I continued to look around.

A short while later the guide had, by this point, shared a lot of facts; talking in detail about the items in the kitchen and what all of the utensils did. And things had suddenly gone quiet. He had asked her a question and she was staring blankly and was simply nodding at him.



It had become clear that she did not understand what was being said. I walked over to them both and discreetly asked her if she understood to which she just stared at me like a deer in the headlights!

I guess she just didn't know what to say to the poor guide who had been waxing lyrical about the castle's history for the past 10 minutes, with her not understanding a word!

You see, he had a beard which made him very difficult to lipread. You may ask why she was nodding and did not ask him to repeat what he had said – but this would have been breaking the conventions of communication. At no point in the start of the conversation did she mention that she was deaf. Had she asking for clarification at the beginning that would have been socially acceptable, but asked at the end would have appeared strange. We are taught at a very young age to be polite, to take interest, not to interrupt, and nod to show that we are listening.

The situation was all sorted in the end, with me explaining that she is deaf and missed the question he had asked. But it goes to show that just because someone is nodding or agreeing with what you have said – it doesn't mean they have understood.



TERPTREE IS CHANGING THE WORLD FOR DEAF PEOPLE, FIND OUT HOW...

With a mission to Change the World for Deaf People, terptree supports some of the largest global brands and public services affecting change by creating a world-class deaf customer experience.

BSL/ENGLISH INTERPRETING:



An interpreter ensures that deaf and hearing people can communicate with one another. This could be for team meetings, a job interview or to provide a deaf person access to a service. If you need highly skilled Sign Language Interpreters, our team are on hand to find the most suitable Interpreter for your needs; making it easy for both you and the deaf person you are working with.

AUDIT:



We will work with you collaboratively to analyse how you serve deaf customers and those with a hearing loss across your business.

We look at current practice; conducting a gap analysis and making recommendations for future strategic direction. Once we have undertaken this thorough audit process, you receive a detailed report

An implementation plan will support you in making the small changes that will have a considerable impact. You will also receive recommendations for how you can take things to the next level.

DEAF AWARENESS TRAINING



Whether you have a deaf team member, or you would like to make what you offer to your deaf customers a much more inclusive experience, face-to-face or online deaf awareness training from terptree is the perfect solution.

Our team will work with you to identify the learning outcomes and create a schedule for deaf awareness training within your business or organisation.

CONSULTANCY:



Whether you are looking to ensure consistency in deaf customer experience across the business, create a winning marketing strategy to target deaf customers specifically; or help with positioning in the deaf community; terptree can help! We work with key members of your team to focus on identified projects. With any of the work we undertake, we leave your business with a comprehensive implementation plan for your team to action as well as the expert knowledge and accompanying guidance that is needed.

INTERESTED IN ATTRACTING MORE DEAF CUSTOMERS?
CONTACT VICTORIA TODAY TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN
CREATE A WORLD CLASS DEAF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE:



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