

Challenges in the Beauty Industry: Disability Inclusive Design
Casey Badal
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Summary by Christina Germino

The beauty industry has long struggled with disability inclusion, despite the fact that a significant portion of the population faces various mobility and accessibility challenges. Casey Badal explained that 11.1% of the population experience mobility issues, while 6.4% experience difficulty with independent living. Additionally, 3.0% experience difficulty dressing and bathing, and 4.9% struggle with blindness or diminished sight, even with glasses or contacts. In light of these statistics, Casey notes a significant lack of products for people with disabilities.

One of the major barriers to disability inclusion in the beauty industry is attitude, particularly in terms of stereotyping and stigma. These challenges arise due to a high level of uncertainty and instability in the beauty industry, where certain looks are deemed more acceptable or desirable than others. Societal norms and beauty standards also play a role in perpetuating this issue, which further ostracizes individuals with disabilities. Casey stated that disability inclusivity is also lacking in the beauty industry in terms of representation and designing products that meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Tokenism is also a concern, where individuals with disabilities are included only for the sake of representation rather than being valued as consumers and contributors to the industry.

Badal described how inclusive design in the beauty industry is not only important for those with disabilities, but also for the aging population and anyone who values accessibility and functionality. By addressing the barriers faced by people with disabilities, companies can create more innovative and efficient products that appeal to a wider range of consumers. The design process must be thorough, exploring the issues, creating innovative solutions, evaluating their effectiveness, and managing the process to ensure that resources are not wasted. It is also essential to have people with disabilities in decision-making positions to ensure that their needs are being met and to promote diversity and inclusion in the industry.

Inclusive design in the beauty industry can have lasting positive effects, such as improving self-esteem and body satisfaction for those with disabilities and increasing the availability of products for people with disabilities and the aging population. In addition, it can also increase profits and expand the consumer market by appealing to a wider range of people. Casey reiterated that it is crucial to prioritize the needs of people with disabilities and promote inclusion and diversity in the industry. By doing so, we can create a more equitable and accessible world for everyone.