



Reaching Out to the Blind Community

*How to Make a
Meaningful Difference at
Your Restaurant in 24 Hours*

Purpose

In this report you'll find information that your restaurant can act on within 24 hours, to make a real and meaningful difference today.

This includes: a list of pain points for customers with blindness, training suggestions, getting menus in alternative formats, and even marketing suggestions for restaurants who truly want to make a difference.

Braille Works has been helping businesses reach out to the visually impaired community since 1994. Our goal with this report is to help restaurants connect with their guests who are visually impaired or who have loved ones who are living with blindness.

Feel free to reach out to us directly:

1-800-258-7544

info@brailleworks.com

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Understanding the Sources of Your Customer's Pain



It's long been held that if you want to understand someone truly, you need to walk a mile in their shoes.

So keep reading if you'd like to walk a proverbial mile in the shoes of someone with a visual disability and we'll go over a typical restaurant experience, oh and don't forget to bring a white cane!



Imagine you're headed out for a night of fun with some of your friends, just like every other night it takes what seems like forever to agree where to eat. At this point you know there's only a couple of places you'll agree on, even though all your friends say "we can go wherever," you know they're lying- because someone's far too picky for that! But tonight, someone's feeling adventurous and you all decide on a new place that you've never been before.

You and your friends all load up into a car and head to the restaurant. Your friend is driving, but from the way they're doing it while just chit-chatting alone, you're really hoping they don't also decide to get a drink while you're out. You arrive at the restaurant and while walking into the lounge and then getting seated, you can't help but wonder how anyone gets around in those tiny aisles, let alone people with low vision who may be swinging a white cane in front of them.

The restaurant is loud, the place is hopping, on top of that you've been seated near the bar and apparently there's a big game on tonight. On your table you find an array of cardboard cutouts and laminated plastics sheets all sticking out of the center piece, nice pieces of marketing and advertising that were likely very expensive and time consuming, all of which are completely worthless to you. After shoving those to the side of the table as best as you can, your friends all start talking about what look's good on the menu.

The server shows up take drink orders and you ask if they've got a Braille menu that you could read. He informs your friend (and not you) that they don't have any Braille menus available, that he knows of, but he could read the specials out loud if that would help. You tell the server that would help, but instead ask if they just have a chicken sandwich and fries. You did that so everyone at your table won't have to listen to the server yell out details about their Deluxe Jumbo-Wumbo Beefy Burger and new Banana Fries, or the million other things that are on the menu that no one wants to hear read aloud for the next 15 minutes.

While the food is getting prepared in the kitchen, you decide to wash up in the restroom. Now, I'm not going into the details here but if you've ever walked around in a public restroom with your eyes closed, most people would agree that it's not much of an experience to write about. Suffice to say there are a few things about that whole experience that could be far more accessible and hygienic for everyone.

When you get back to your table, you realize that your drink's been refilled, which is great. However, in refilling it your server also moved it from where you left it and you almost spilled the drink while trying to find where they moved it to. When your food arrives, for whatever reason the server talks only to your friend again about your food and hands the person sitting to your right your set of silverware. You decide not to make a big deal out of it so you won't ruin the night out with friends, but can't help but think it's weird that people perceive your visual impairment has something to do with your hearing.

After your meal is finished, you ask your friend to tell you what the bill says you owe – and you offer to pay because you and your wife are celebrating having just moved your son out to college. You sign your own signature, begrudgingly leave a tip, and head back home after navigating an obstacle course of seating on your way out the door.

That's just one example of the kinds of experiences that people who are blind or visually impaired might experience at a restaurant. It's not like this for every person or every restaurant, in fact many restaurants are very accommodating and considerate towards all of their guests, regardless of sight levels. But in general, it's easy to see there's a lot of room for improvement. If the dining experience is hard for your customers, then it's going to be a problem for your restaurant.



7 Things We Wish Restaurants Knew About Serving Guests with Blindness



Having someone in our family who is blind isn't a big deal to us. Life goes on just like it does for every family.

Unfortunately, it's the rest of the world that struggles to cope.

We get out and do mobility training, we memorize routes to get to places we want to visit, and we do things that can be scary or overwhelming for us all the time. We don't even normally ask for special treatment because we don't really want that. What we really want, what anyone really wants is to experience everything and live life to the fullest.

When we go out and have a special night with our loved ones, it's great to be able to go out to eat together. Here are 7 Things We Wish Restaurants Knew, about serving those of us with blindness in our lives and how they can help us feel more included.

Dear Restaurants

1. We really, really want to be there. We love going out together as a family and we even love your restaurant. But just like getting picked last in baseball, it hurts to feel left out and excluded from having a good time.
2. If my father is blind, you don't have to ask me what he wants to eat. He's a picky guy, his order is weird- he hates peas and likes ranch on the side- ask him. His ears work just as well as mine do and the moment he starts cracking jokes you'll know that his mouth works the same as well.
3. It's nice that the wait staff will sometimes offer to read out the entire menu to my father. But come on, how realistic is that really? It's awkward for everyone, it takes a long time, everyone at the table has to sit and listen, it's insanely loud in most restaurants already, and sometimes it becomes very obvious that the wait staff doesn't want to do it. Honestly, we don't blame them one bit- there's better ways to handle it and they are busy serving other guests as well.
4. Thanks for being attentive and getting us refills or more bread, but please let my Dad know that you're moving things on him. Doing things quietly might be respectful or seen as polite for those of us that can see, but if you're like my Dad, he'd appreciate a heads-up about what's coming and going from the table.



SERVERS

Communicating the position of food items on a customer's plate is a great way to go the extra mile in making sure people with blindness enjoy their experience at your restaurant. You can use clock positions as a reference so people will know ahead of time that the main course is on the right at 4 o'clock and the sides are on the left at 8 and 10 o'clock. This may not seem like a big deal but it truly helps and shows customers you truly care.



CHEFS

Every experienced Chef knows "presentation in everything" in the restaurant business. It can make or break the reputation you're trying to build with your local customer base. This golden rule holds true whether your customers are sighted or not so it's important to ensure your dishes are presented properly and professionally.

5. If your manager comes by, have them stay a while and talk to my father. Let them build an honest connection together, which is why they come by the table anyway, right? They can discuss any details about how the experience was and what could be better; and if he/she wants to follow up later, leaving a business card in Braille would really show they care.
6. Does anybody really like using public restrooms? Imagine being blind; now you've got to fumble around and feel all those things that nobody wants to touch.
7. We understand that catering to everyone's needs at the same time can be tough, we get that. However, if you make the effort to help all of our family feel included, then you won't just win the sale from one person. My whole family will keep coming back, our friends will come with us, our co-workers will try your restaurant, we'll even recommend you to people we meet who are just looking for a place they'll fit in as well.



QUALITY IS KEY

Successful restaurants pride themselves on using only the most fresh, high quality food items and ingredients in their recipes. Modern consumers can easily tell the difference between a quality meal and something else that's just plain average. The same can be said for accessible menu options like Braille and large print. It doesn't take long for someone with blindness to tell if a Braille menu is average or hard to read, so make sure to insist on having only the best.



We really, really want to be there. We love going out together as a family and we even love your restaurant.

But just like getting picked last in baseball, it hurts to feel left out and excluded from having a good time.



Suggestions on Training Team Members for Better Accessibility

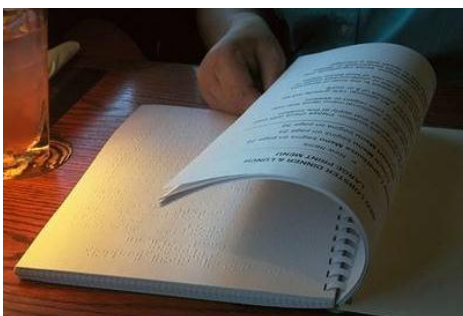


Let's go through those pain points we talked about earlier and highlight ways that a restaurant owner or manager could have gotten these moments "Right."

People want to feel like they belong and you go through a lot of work to make your guests feel like family when they're at your restaurant. An easy way to extend this feeling to your guests who are visually impaired is to follow one simple guideline "Put the person before the disability."

To put the person first means acknowledging the person before trying to help accommodate them. Try these things today with this guideline always in mind:

1. Teaching your staff that they can always talk directly to anyone is a great place to start. Greet the person directly, not those that are with them. Make no assumptions, treat everyone the same, and then ask the person what you can do to help them today. If they need help then someone will step in pretty quickly anyway.



2. Try out signage in your store that says you have Braille and large print menus. It might seem counter intuitive, but people take notice and will tell those who can't read it for themselves. This is also a great way to communicate to everyone in general that you care.
3. Train wait staff and greeters to know what accessibility options your store has available beforehand. As they work to memorize your regular menus, have demos that show off your accessible menus as well. Teaching them what Braille is and what customers it's for can save your whole team from embarrassment down the road.
4. Just like with your sighted guests, most people would prefer to be able to read the menu for themselves.

They can still do this with your menu if you get copies in alternative formats (i.e. Braille, Large Print, or even an accessible digital format such as PDF or Microsoft Word).

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires restaurants to have ways to be accessible to those with a visual impairment. Sometimes this means being willing to read a full menu out loud so that someone can hear what you have to offer. It's a good idea to walk through this "reading" with your staff; it makes the real thing much easier.



5. Imagine being blind. If you're sitting at a table, you're going to set things in places that you can remember. If a server comes along and moves them, or takes them away without your knowledge- this can be a frustrating experience. Announcing aloud what you're doing and why when you come to the table will help extend your courteous service in a way that everyone can appreciate equally.

6. Did you know that you can schedule on-site sensitivity training for your staff? Although it's not a service we offer, you can easily reach out to many disability advocacy groups and schedule a sensitivity class for your team.

Courses provide a wealth of information about how to offer stellar customer service and how to avoid awkward situations. The courses cover a range of training resources, so in addition to understanding how to help people who are visually impaired, your team will likely gain insight on how to better serve customers with disabilities in general. Do a quick Google search for "disability awareness training" to get started.

7. Public restrooms can be tough places for those who are visually impaired. This isn't a point that we have a clear answer on but a little more understanding can help make it easier on your guests.

There is no standard layout from one to the next and unfortunately this can lead to an uncomfortable discovery process.

Having clear Braille signage is a great place to start.

Ensuring that everything is kept clean and stocked also helps tremendously. Including the Braille signage, no one wants to run their finger along Braille that's potentially covered with germs.

8. Reach out to advocacy groups and welcome them on social media.

People readily latch onto organizations that make efforts to help everyone feel included.

This could lead to a whole new source of revenue for your store.

When someone from the blind community is included and treated well, they'll keep coming back- next time with their friends, family or co-workers.

Marketing Templates



Reach Out to the Community



We promised ideas you can use in the next 24 hours...

So with that spirit in mind we have included some ideas and templates that you can use in your marketing strategies today.

First we'll give you some ideas based on what other restaurants have gotten right. Then we'll provide you with social media posts and updates that you can copy out and use to help drive traffic from the community to your stores. Finally, we'll set you up with some display ad templates that you can brand and use in your online advertising and pay-per-click networks like Google Adwords or Bing Ads.



BRaille & LARGE PRINT MENUS AVAILABLE

Ideas for the Host Stand

Show off your accessibility! Put placards and signs in obvious places that people who are both sighted and non-sighted will easily be able to read, a great place for this is at the host stand. Greeting people with the knowledge that your restaurant has accessible menus will benefit you in tremendous ways. It helps remind staff that these materials are available to help them, it tells customers you really care, and it helps people feel included and welcome. Here are some examples to spark your imagination:



Braille + Large Print Menus Now Available



Inviting Everyone to Dinner Tonight

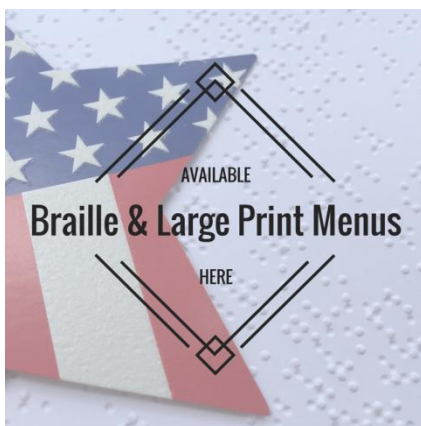


Social Media Outreach Posts & Strategy Ideas

Your social media strategy can help spread the word about your company's accessibility.

There are huge followings of people who are visually impaired on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and yes, even Instagram. Shocked? Don't be! It's not as complicated as it sounds, with a few easy tips and tricks, your social game can stay strong and more accessible. Here's some pointers:

- Always put person before the disability.
- Use popular hashtags (it's okay to mention the disability, like #blind).
- If the social media site doesn't have Alt Text, you can use some of the post's text to describe the photo.
- Feel free to save these social media templates as images and use them any way you'd like, we've left plenty of space for you to overlay your branding.



Ad Templates

Copy, edit, change- or don't! It's up to you, these ad templates are yours free to use however you'd like.

Text Ads for PPC outlets like Google AdWords and Bing Ads:

1. Headline: [Your Brand] Now Has Braille Menus
Body Line #1: Inviting more people to dine with us tonight.
Body Line #2: Come by for dinner!
2. Headline: [Your Brand] White Canes Welcome Here
Body Line #1: Braille and Large Print Menus Available.
Body Line #2: Everyone's welcome at our table.
3. Headline: Braille and Large Print Menus at [Your Brand]
Body Line #1: Accessible menus and caring staff.
Body Line #2: Dinner done right. [Or your slogan]

Social Media Ads

Don't forget to use relevant hashtags (#) to get your posts in front of the right audiences. Try #braille, #accessibility, #blindness, #disability, #ability, or better yet- read up on the conversations around these online and get some hashtags in real time!

Body Copy/Lead-in: [Your Brand] now has Braille and Large Print Menus! In trying to better serve our customers who are living with blindness and low vision, we're making our stores more accessible. We work everyday to connect with our community through great service and great food [Or use your slogan] and we're happy we've found a way to extend this to more people. Inviting everyone out to eat tonight, come join us!

Body Copy/Lead-in: White Canes Welcome Here. If you or someone you care about is blind or has low-vision, you know that it can be hard to find a place to eat that truly makes you feel welcome. That's why we're introducing Braille and Large Print Menus at our restaurants nationwide starting today. We want everyone to be welcome here and we'll continue to innovate and find ways to do just that. Accessibility is a tough thing to do right, so please let us know what we can do to help. Our team really does care about welcoming everyone to our table, so if this is important to you too, please share this message and let others know.

Flip the Page

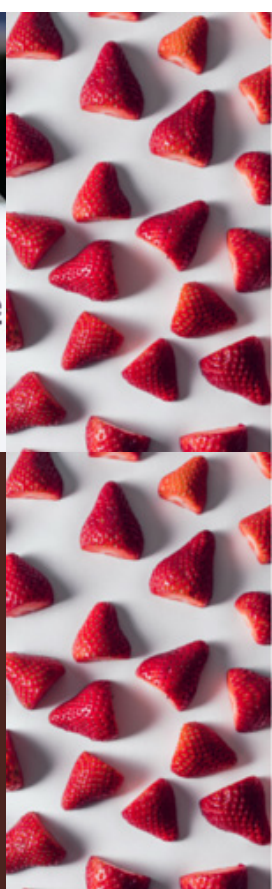
For some great examples of ads that show off how accessible your restaurant is!

Copy & Paste

Brand and Go!

Display Ad Templates

Copy, edit, change- or don't! It's up to you, these ad templates are yours free to use however you'd like.



Accessible Training Materials for Staff Members

If you come from a large corporate team, it's likely that your company has internal documents that have to be accessible to meet legal compliance. Including everyone in your restaurant means including your team members with disabilities too. Need a quote for documents that are more than just menus? We provide free quotes on all our services.



Braille Thank You Cards and Table Displays

Sometimes you want to respond to customers who have gone the extra mile and given you a great review; or maybe you just want to say “thank you” to your most loyal fans. Reaching out with a personal letter or thank you card is a great way to do that, remember to make it accessible if that fan also happens to have a disability.

Although we haven't seen this yet in America, putting braille on a tabletop promotional display would help you to share your marketing with a whole new audience. In addition to the benefits of accessibility, this would make you an industry leader in accessible marketing!

Things You Can Buy
that Show Others
You Care



Quality Assured Braille Menus



When reputation matters, only the best will do.

Providing your guests who are visually impaired with the same experience as your sighted guests is the ultimate goal. Sometimes it's important to share your exact message, exactly your way – we help you do that in Braille.

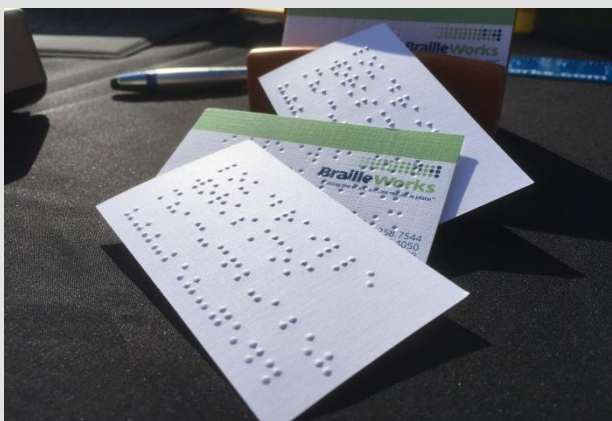
When you have a reputation to maintain, only complete control and high quality Braille menus will do. With an extensive quality assurance and proof reading process, your message will be shared with the blind and visually impaired community exactly as you'd want it to.

Accurate, On-Time, Every Time.

Capable of handling even the high-volume needs of the largest brands in the hospitality industry, you'll have a dedicated team and campus full of the highest quality, state of the art Braille embossing machinery at your command. We create and produce your menus in-house, unlike some other companies who outsource or hire third-party vendors. This helps assure your Braille menus are delivered:

Accurate. On Time. Every Time.

If you need a solution you can rely on to present your brand in the best possible way to your customers with disabilities, put your trust in the people who will get it right the first time. We strive to make meaningful connections between brands and the blind community; at restaurants that just happens to be through Braille Restaurant Menus.



Leave Better Impressions with Braille Business Cards

1 or 2 sided cards in color or black ink, the choice is yours. We also offer graphic design services if you need your business card artwork created.

Braille Business Cards for Your Managers

We print and emboss Braille business cards from scratch without the use of labels, leaving you with stylish, professional business cards that can be read by anyone, sighted or not.

The majority of the time your business card is the only thing a customer takes away from meeting you, so make yours unforgettable by adding Braille!

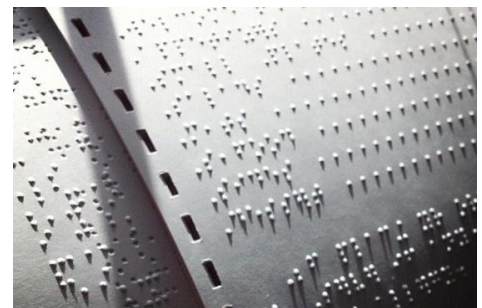
Inviting Everyone to Eat at Your Table, No Matter the Size of the Table.

Not forgetting our roots, we're proud to extend our services to include everyone. From the big name brands and chain restaurants, to the one-off orders from the mom and pop diner around the corner; we help you invite everyone to eat at your table.

Designed for Real People. Built for Ease of Reading.

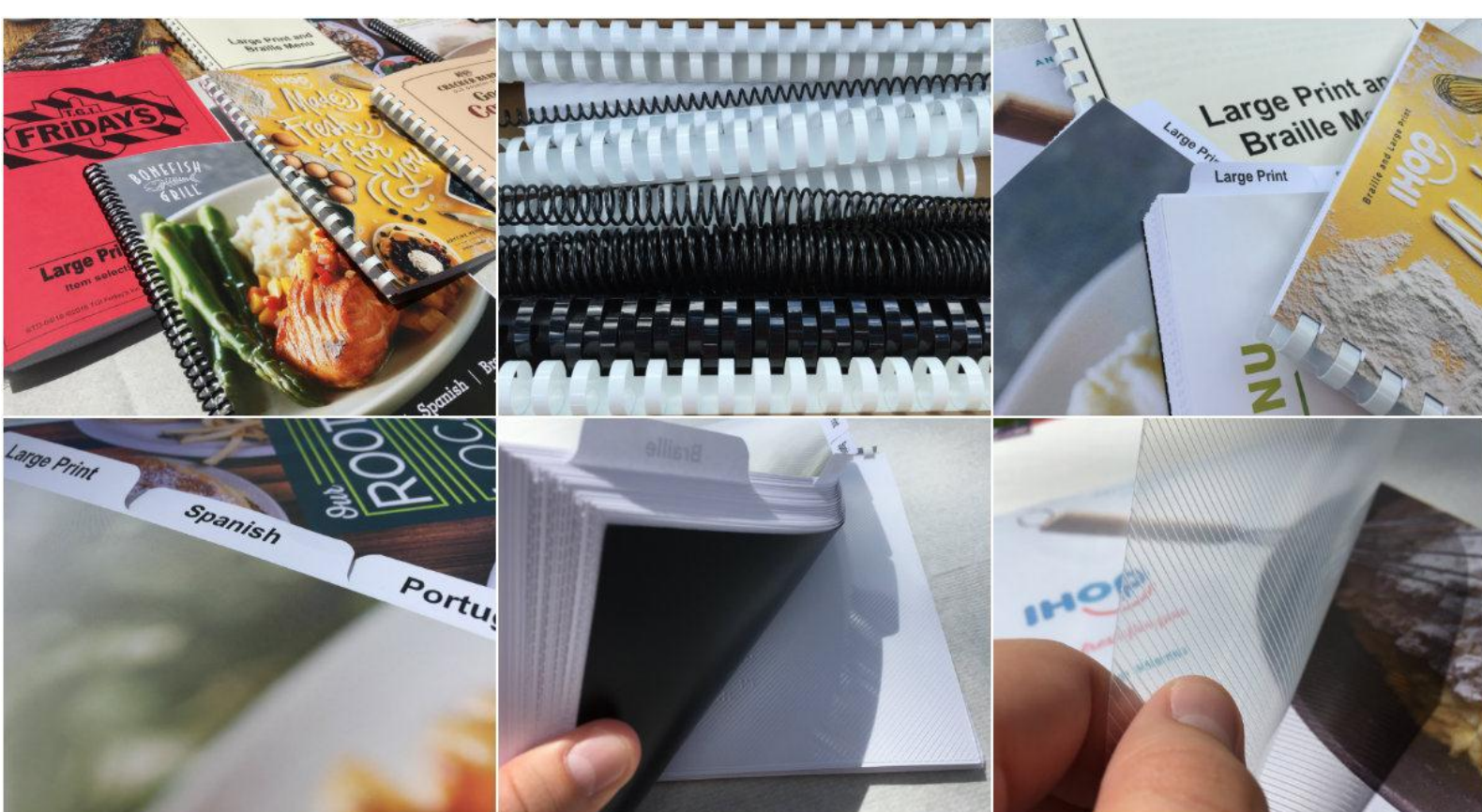
Traditional Braille copies were notoriously confusing; created for utility and only made to avoid lawsuits; we've reimagined what it means to create a Braille Restaurant Menu. Taking feedback from the people who are reading your menus, your customers who are blind and visually impaired, we've designed Braille Menus with a whole new approach.

Since the very creation of our company, the driving force behind everything we do is to make useable documents for people who are living with blindness; we call those alternative format documents. Our goal was to add meaningful features and intentional accessibility to restaurant menus. We accomplish this redesign through useful Braille tables of contents, numbered pages, curated section and line breaks, compact menu sizes, and double sided printing.



Accessibility Without Compromise

Putting your brand's message at the forefront and guiding readers in the same way that someone with sight might browse a menu, we've added the same elements you've grown to expect from traditional restaurant menus. Accessibility and design without compromise. We'd be happy to send over a sample pack of restaurant menu options at your request, so that you can see, hold, read, or otherwise find out for yourself what makes us different .



More than Just Braille

Building connections and community at your restaurant helps you keep customers coming back time and time again. With this in mind we work to include special features designed to fit your brand's specific needs and the special needs of your community.

Spanish sections or menu translations in other languages, large print versions for readers with varying types of visual impairments, and electronically accessible documents (that adhere to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), are all options available upon request.

[Contact us](#) for a customized quote, free of charge.

Join the Accessibility Movement. Start Today.

For over 22 years we've been working with restaurants all across America, towards the mission of "Making the World a More Readable Place™." Here are some of their stories and the humbling things they've said about us:

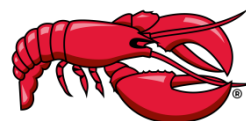
"Supplying Braille and large print menus to over 1,800 restaurants with differing menus is not the easiest task. With the excellent customer service provided by Braille Works, my job is much easier. I've worked with Braille Works since 1994 and they have proven to be the best in supplying Braille and large print menus to our customers. I've never had a complaint on the menus, only glowing thanks. You can't go wrong with Braille Works!"

- Applebee's



"Working with Braille Works has been an absolute pleasure. Everyone is so personable and professional, and the turn around time on our Braille menus is amazing. We continue to rely on them year after year, not only for their reliability, but their continued dedication to providing the best possible service; and their commitment to getting the job done right."

- Red Lobster



**Put your brand's best foot forward
and invite everyone to the table
at your restaurant.**

1-800-258-7544

BrailleWorks.com



Conclusions

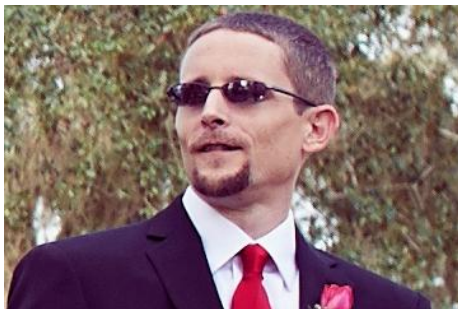
- Always put people first. It's the person and then their disability.
- Get copies of your menus in Braille and Large Print.
- Reach out to the blind community through actions.
- Extend your hospitality to everyone.
- Help everyone to get in on the fun and feel included.
- Reach out to advocacy groups and individual people through social media and let them know they're welcome.

Additional Resources

- [Braille Works – Our Story](#)
- [Braille and Large Print Menu Samples](#)
- [Braille Business Cards](#)

About the Authors

We've been connecting businesses to the visually impaired community since 1994. Charged with the mission of "Making the World a More Readable Place™," and a belief that life is better when you include everyone; we've put together this resource for things you can do today to make a difference in your restaurant. Like anything worthwhile in life, accessibility can be a difficult process- but we think you'll find including everyone will definitely be worth it in the end. Give us a call, we can help make it easier.



Jeff Frcho

Jeff is a part of what you can call the "accessible marketing team" here at Braille Works. His commitment to accessibility in all that we do is charting new waters and breaking down barriers in a traditionally visually-dominated field. Tasked with being the Digital Marketing Manager, he serves as our brand ambassador and diligently works every day to find ways to honestly connect with people and tell our story. [Connect with Jeff on LinkedIn.](#)



Paul Scherffius

Paul is our resident storyteller and digital-everything enthusiast on the team. Tasked with being our Digital Marketing Strategist, he spends his days imagining, creating, sharing, and reflecting on how we can meaningfully connect with our community. "Being a part of a marketing department that focuses on helping the visually impaired community has it's share of challenges, but being part of such a supportive team with such a powerful mission has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my career so far."

[Connect with Paul on LinkedIn.](#)



BrailleWorks

Together, we can all
help to make the world
a more readable
place!



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