

INSIGHTS REPORT

# Inclusive Travel

Understanding Traveler Values  
& Opportunities for Marketers



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# What is inclusive travel?

Travel—by its very nature—promotes a greater understanding of people from different walks of life. Yet while the travel industry has made some strides toward becoming more inclusive, diverse, and accessible, there's still work to be done.

Our company mission is to power global travel for everyone, everywhere. To help realize this vision, we started by looking inward to ensure we are reflecting the diversity of our travelers and modeling the inclusive mindsets that make travel a force for good.

At the same time, we understand the importance of not only practicing inclusion, but also empowering our partners—such as hotels, vacation rental platforms, airlines, cruises, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), and more—to do the same.



Empowerment often starts with understanding, which is why earlier this year we commissioned custom research to understand how consumers feel about more meaningful, conscientious travel, and how they believe the current travel landscape stacks up. Conducted with Wakefield Research, the study surveyed 11,000 representative consumers in 11 countries: Australia, Brazil,

Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, the UK, and the U.S.

We initially shared our findings about environmentally responsible travel in our [Sustainable Travel Study](#). Now we outline the findings on how people feel about inclusive travel, and the opportunities travel brands have to welcome all travelers equally. Because, as studies

show, people are more likely to make travel choices based on where they feel represented and choose brands that are authentically committed to making positive environmental and social impacts.



**Inclusion is the practice of allowing diversity and local cultures and communities to thrive, while ensuring equitable access to travel for all. It's also understanding intersectional identities and embracing everyone as complex individuals with unique experiences of discrimination and oppression.**



**Accessibility**

Ensuring destinations, lodging, transportation, and activities are accessible to all people, regardless of physical or intellectual limitations, disabilities, or age.

**Diversity**

Representing travelers of all abilities, ages, bodies, genders, gender identities, races, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses.

**Local culture & communities**

Respecting and engaging with local cultures and communities, understanding their traditions, and helping to improve the livelihoods of host communities.

# The current landscape

Our research reveals that people are increasingly seeking ways to have more meaningful and conscientious travel experiences, and they're paying attention to how inclusive (or not) current travel offerings are when looking and booking. Only 54% of our study respondents said they have seen options that are accessible to all abilities when booking a trip, while just 52% said they have seen options that are inclusive of all types of travelers.

Less than

**55%**

of people around the world have seen options that are accessible to all abilities or inclusive of all types of travelers.

So while industry intent is good—more than [85% of destination marketers say their organizations are committed to diversity and inclusion](#)—more than 70% feel that accessibility and inclusivity are actually not well represented on their websites, [according to the latest MMGY Global Destination Marketing Technology Survey](#).

Furthermore, 71% believe that their website underrepresents LGBTQIA+ travelers, 62% believe that their website underrepresents Hispanic/Latino travelers, and 56% believe that their website underrepresents Black travelers. Clearly there are opportunities to better connect intention and action.

A photograph of three hikers from behind, walking on a dirt trail in a grassy field under a blue sky with clouds. The hiker on the left is a woman with a brown backpack. The hiker in the middle is a woman with a prosthetic right leg. The hiker on the right is a man with a prosthetic right leg and a hat, using trekking poles. A large blue circle is overlaid on the top left of the image, containing text.

**92%**

of consumers think it's important for travel providers to meet the accessibility needs of all travelers.

# Accessibility in Travel

Our research shows that 92% of consumers think it's important for travel providers to meet the accessibility needs of all travelers. Overall, [one billion people](#), or 15% of the world's population, live with a disability, and have nearly [half a trillion dollars in disposable income](#). And they [spend \\$95 billion on travel alone each year](#).

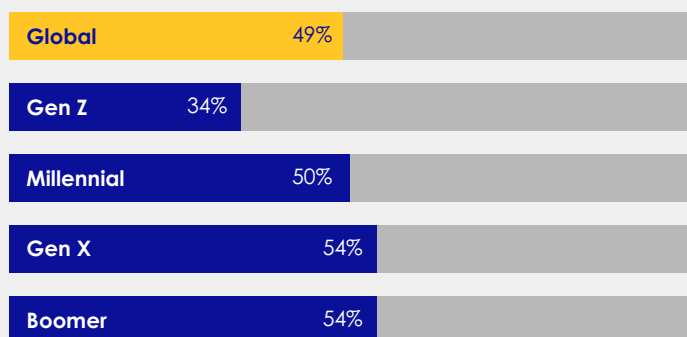


While a significant portion of the world's population lives with a disability and spends on travel, only [1% of travel marketing is representative of disabled travelers](#). This demonstrates opportunities for travel marketers to feature accessibility and ensure travel



**How important is it that a travel option meets the accessibility needs of all travelers?**

**A: [Very Important](#)**





experiences can accommodate people of all abilities. For instance, see how we partnered with [Visit Panamá](#) to showcase the wonders of the destination that can be experienced by diverse travelers, including with differing abilities.

And the older the generation, the more likely they are to believe that accessibility is very important to travel decisions (54% of Baby Boomers and Generation X compared to 49% of the general population).

In fact, Boomers increasingly identify as having a disability. According to [TravelAbility](#), 40% of Baby Boomers identify as having a disability after turning 65 years old.

This is noteworthy, as Baby Boomers are expected to be a growing traveler segment as more people in that generation retire and seek to travel, while also experiencing age-related health issues.

#### Campaign Spotlight



### Visit Panamá's "The Next Turn" Features Blind Adventurer

Visit Panamá partnered with Expedia Group Media Solutions and our award-winning creative team on a [new video series](#) called "The Next Turn" to promote the destination. One episode features Amar, a blind traveler, who experiences a rainforest, volcano hike, and coffee farm in Panamá through his sense of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. This campaign showcases how travelers with different abilities can immerse themselves in the amazing experiences Panamá offers.



**70%**

would make a travel choice that is more inclusive to all types of travelers, even if it's more expensive.

# Diversity in Travel

Inclusive travel doesn't just mean representing travelers of all abilities, but also all backgrounds and identities. Inclusion ensures better experiences for travelers – and is better for business.

Our research shows that 7 in 10 consumers would choose a destination, lodging, or transportation option that is more inclusive to all types of travelers, even if it's more expensive.

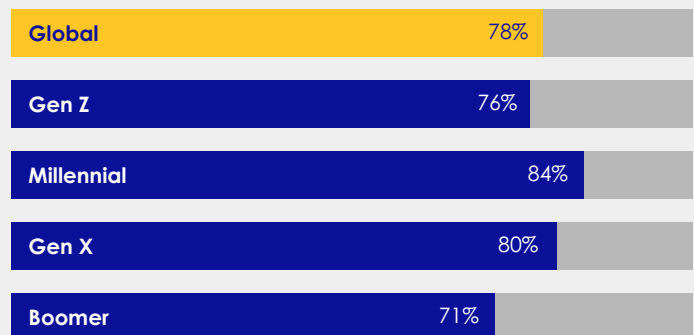


[The Equity Imperative study by Deloitte](#) says that the Black population is expected to grow 38% by 2060, and



**Have you ever made travel choices based on promotions or advertisements that you felt represented you through messaging or visuals?**

**A: Yes**



despite the wealth gap, [Black buying power is rising](#) – from \$320 billion in 1990 to \$1.6 trillion in 2020. The LGBTQIA+ market is also powerful, [worth an estimated \\$211 billion](#) to the travel industry.

Consumers are paying attention to travel brands' commitment to inclusion, diversity, and accessibility – and it's influencing their purchasing decisions.

Our own research aligns with this trend: 78% of survey respondents said they have made a travel choice based on promotions or ads they felt represented them through messaging or visuals. For Millennials that figure is even higher

– 84% have made a travel choice based on representation in travel advertising.

The importance for travel brands to consider inclusion will continue to grow, especially as younger generations are more diverse than ever before. According to [Pew Research](#), Gen Z is more racially and ethnically diverse than previous American generations, with 25% identifying as Hispanic/Latino, 14% as Black, 6% as Asian, and 5% as some other race or two or more races. With that, Gen Z is on track to be the first generation to be mostly non-White in the U.S. by 2026.

#### Campaign Spotlight

### All Inclusive Boston

The [All Inclusive Boston](#) campaign demonstrates how a destination can prove its commitment to welcome all people. Boston's tourism and hospitality sector employs people of all walks of life, and the city knows the importance of spotlighting this diversity. For example, the campaign's "Boston Accent" video features a mix of residents speaking not just in a Boston accent, but in different languages, too – including sign language.



**74%**

of consumers would choose a travel option that support local cultures and communities, even if it was more expensive.

# Local culture and community engagement

As the travel industry continues to rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic, there's growing demand for more authentic experiences. One way that travelers demonstrate this value is by seeking to engage with local culture and communities in the destinations they visit.

Our research shows that 64% of consumers are interested in learning more about travel options that support local cultures and communities. In fact, 42% of our survey respondents said they



**Which of the following sustainable travel resources, if any, would you most like to see when planning a trip?**



**43%**

Information on how to best engage with local cultures and communities at or near a destination



**42%**

Recommendations for destinations that support indigenous cultures and heritages



**34%**

Information on how to volunteer with or directly support local organizations at or near a destination

have purchased from local communities and or minority groups while traveling in the past two years, and 46% said they visited local cultural or historical sites during their travels.

Looking ahead, consumers are 12% more likely to volunteer at local community organizations on future trips than in previous travels – and for Millennials that is double.

While consumers are clearly already supporting local communities and plan to do more of this in the future, our research indicates that they want more information on how to get even more involved.

Consumers are also willing to pay more for options that support local communities and cultures.

Travel marketers therefore have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to supporting local organizations and share how travelers can get involved when they visit.

#### Campaign Spotlight



### Tourism Malaysia Promotes Local Culture

Tourism Malaysia knows the importance of promoting its local culture, which is why it worked with us to create a Travel Spotlight landing page. The [campaign](#) shows travelers how they can experience Malaysian culture by visiting historical sites such as Georgetown, Penang, a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to one of the largest collections of pre-war buildings in Southeast Asia; or by observing a different way of life in Sarawak, which has traditional longhouses housing communities of up to 100 families; or by visiting the indigenous communities of Kadazan and Dusuns, where visitors can shop an array of traditional handicrafts.

A person with long hair, wearing a light-colored knit beanie, a light-colored sweater, and a blue backpack, is sitting and looking out at a sunset over a forest. They are holding a laptop. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a dense forest of trees.

Expedia Group's mission is to power global travel for everyone, everywhere. As we challenge ourselves and our industry to realize this vision, we will set bold goals and drive innovation, because it takes big thinking to create even bigger change.

**Michael Davis Velasco**  
Chief People, Inclusion & Diversity Officer



# Our company commitment to inclusion

Expedia Group's mission is to power global travel for everyone, everywhere. That's why we are committed to promoting inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility across our brands and offerings, and are always looking for ways to improve the travel shopping experience for all travelers.

To help hold ourselves accountable, we release an annual [Inclusion & Diversity \(I&D\) Report](#), which details the progress achieved on key I&D initiatives around shifting our mindsets, building our skillsets, and redesigning tools with respect to inclusion.

We also just released our annual [Global Impact Report](#), which outlines our efforts to help the travel industry be more accessible, equitable, and sustainable, including how we lobbied in Washington, D.C., for more inclusive gender designations on passports.



Of course, we're continuously looking for ways to improve the travel shopping experiences across our sites. In addition to [helping LGBTQIA+ travelers find welcoming hotels](#) and empowering travel shoppers to report inappropriate content, we've also implemented updates to Expedia.com so that accessible rooms are presented accurately and improved the filter options so travelers can find properties with accessible amenities and services.



We are also working to extend inclusivity into property reviews. On Expedia.com and Vrbo, travelers in the U.S. can now recommend their reviews to travelers from a variety of underrepresented communities, such as travelers with disabilities, solo women travelers, and

members of Black, Hispanic/Latino, or Asian communities. This can help travelers gauge the inclusivity of properties before they book. Since the feature was launched in 2021, over 650,000 reviews have been collected.

While Expedia Group is actively working to prioritize inclusion and accessible travel, there is still work to be done, which is why we have partnered with organizations like Disability:IN and the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) to help us adhere to best practices that include everyone.

#### Campaign Spotlight

### Let LGBTQIA+ Travelers Know They're Welcome

One way travel brands can serve the LGBTQIA+ community is to ensure they can travel safely and with the freedom to be themselves. At Expedia Group, we've ensured they can find gay-friendly hotels on our travel sites. For example, both [Expedia.com](https://www.expedia.com) and [Hotels.com](https://www.hotels.com) have a dedicated page of curated properties that are committed to welcoming LGBTQIA+ travelers. We've also made it easy for our partners to indicate their property is designated LGBTQIA+-friendly in search results.

# Turning insights into actions

Travelers of all types want to feel welcomed and accepted, and representation matters to travelers when shopping for and booking their next trip. Here are a few ways your brand can consider being inclusive in your marketing.



**Acknowledge intersectionality and the overlap of identities and experiences.**



**If using video in your advertising, feature closed captioning and subtitles.**

**Diversity can include races, genders, ages, families, couples, abilities, activities, and more.**



**Be thoughtful in representing a variety of perspectives and assemble diverse imagery.**

**Avoid using stereotypes and consider whether a character portrayed is in a position of power.**



**Use inclusive, welcoming, and respectful language across all marketing and listings.**



**Call out amenities and accessibility for travelers of all backgrounds and all abilities.**



**Use legible fonts and contrasting colors to ensure content can be read by all.**

Travel marketers can draw from our [Inclusion & Diversity in Travel Advertising guidelines](#) for more practical tips and best practices on how to represent and cater to all people whenever possible, through diverse imagery, inclusive copy, and accessible interfaces.



To ensure authenticity with inclusive advertising, marketers should also draw from stories of real people in underrepresented groups. Using the unique lived experiences of people in these groups can help break past stereotypes and allow the message to ring more true.

We are here to help empower your brand on its journey toward creating more inclusive travel marketing. [Contact us](#) today to learn more.



Expedia Group Media Solutions is a global travel advertising platform that connects marketers with hundreds of millions of travelers across the Expedia Group brands. With our exclusive access to 70 petabytes of Expedia Group traveler search and booking data, we offer advertisers actionable insights, sophisticated targeting, and full-funnel results reporting. Our suite of solutions includes display, sponsored listings, audience extension, co-op campaigns, and custom creative campaigns – all designed for our branded sites globally to add value to our travel shoppers and deliver on the objectives of our advertising partners. We bring more than 20 years of travel and media experience to help our advertising partners inspire, engage, and convert travelers for meaningful results.

For more information, visit [www.advertising.expedia.com](http://www.advertising.expedia.com).

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