



Case Study: Trainyard General Store

Located in downtown Dartmouth, NS, Trainyard General Store, led by owner Erin Ferguson, has become a community hub promoting inclusivity and accessibility. The store features products predominantly made in Canada, with an effort to represent diverse artists.

Actions and Implementation

Product Diversity: The store prioritizes stocking products made by diverse artisans, such as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People or Colour) and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Physical Accessibility: The storefront is equipped with a sloped entry to accommodate individuals with mobility devices, and aisles are kept intentionally wide.

Flexible Pricing: A "pay what you can" wall allows customers to choose their price for certain items, making products more accessible to a broader audience.

Gender-Neutral Greetings: Staff use gender-neutral language when greeting customers to create a welcoming atmosphere for all.

Practical Changes and Innovations

Creative, Quiet Space: A designated area in the store offers a quiet space where visitors can engage in creative activities for free.

Social Media Inclusivity: Online, they use detailed image descriptions for those with low vision, ensuring that their digital content is as inclusive as their physical space.

Results and Impact

The inclusive practices at Trainyard General Store have fostered a strong community connection, with frequent positive feedback from customers who feel represented and valued. The store's commitment to diversity and accessibility has increased customer loyalty but has also sparked important conversations about inclusion.

Community Engagement and Social Impact

Trainyard has a commitment to community engagement and donates 5% of its profits to local social justice initiatives.

Lessons Learned and Advice

Erin Ferguson emphasizes the importance of listening to and addressing the needs of marginalized communities. She advises other business owners to focus on making incremental changes that, while seemingly small, can significantly impact inclusivity and accessibility. From product selection to store design and customer interactions, Trainyard demonstrates that inclusivity is not only the right thing to do, but also a viable business strategy that enhances customer engagement and loyalty.

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