Blue Trunk Foundation

Menu Accessibility Guide

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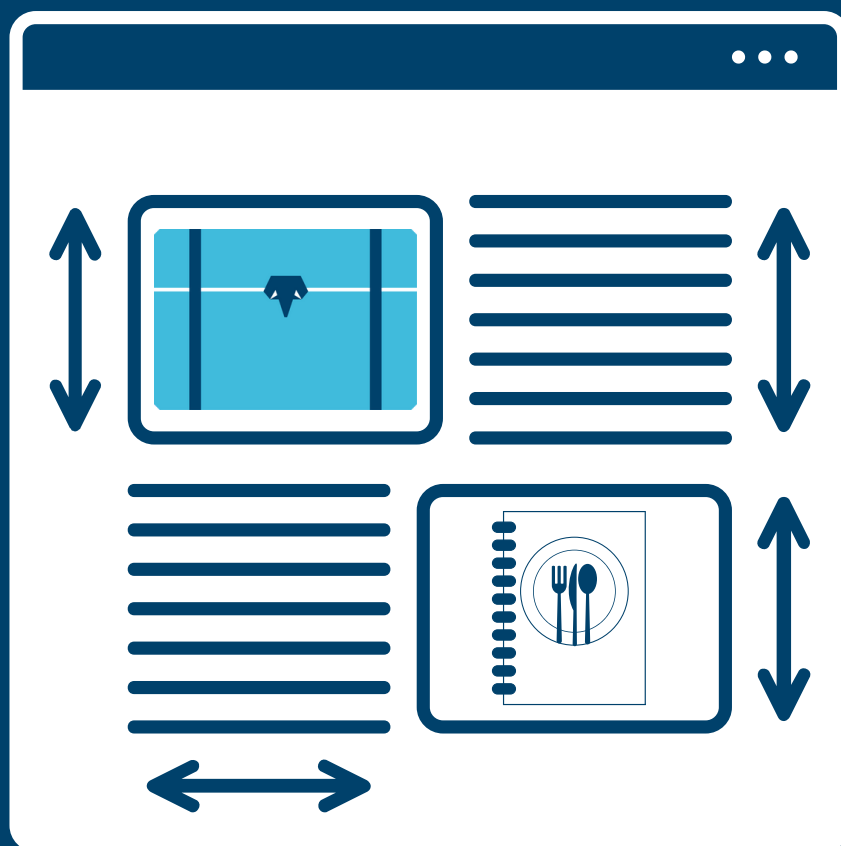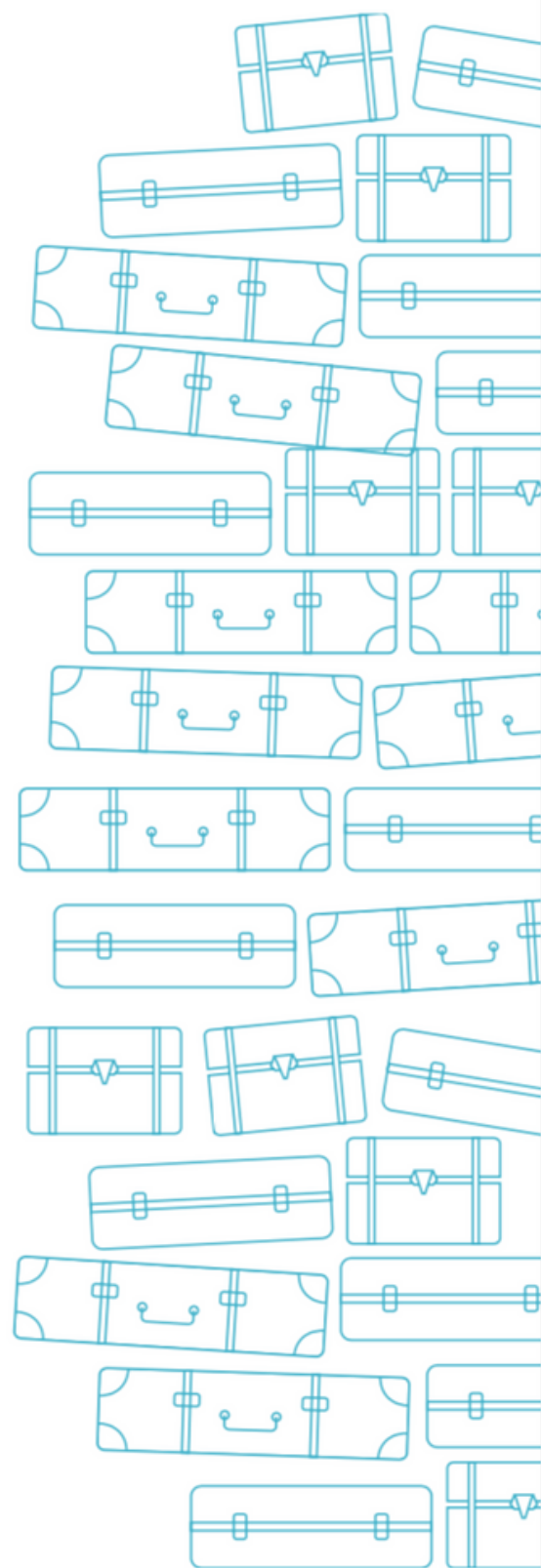
Table of Contents

Introduction

Accessibility is important in all the ways a customer engages with your business, including your food and beverage menus. We have put this guide together to help you make your menus more accessible. If you would like to make any suggestions or additions please contact us at info@BlueTrunk.Org

Text Suggestions

Contrast

When choosing your text and paper color for your menu it is important to keep contrast in mind. We recommend using an online contrast checker tool, such as [this tool from WebAim](#) or [this tool from Monsido](#). To use these tools you will need to know your color codes.

You should be able to find the color code in the software you use to make the graphic by using the color selection tool. The commonly used color codes are Hex codes (# followed by 6 characters) or RGB codes (a number value for each R, G, and B). If you have a pre-designed image and aren't sure of the colors you can use a color picker/color checker tool online such as [Image Color Picker](#). With this tool you can upload an image and then identify the colors.

For the contrast tool, check to see if your tool differentiates between regular and large text, as the contrast minimums are different depending on text size. Checking contrast is particularly important for text over images or colorful backgrounds.

Font Size

Large print is 16 to 18 point. If your menu has a smaller font you can make a separate large print menu available.

Font Style

The font style you use on your menu make a big impact on its readability. When selecting a font note that certain styles are harder to read, such as:

- All capital lettering
    - THIS IS HARD TO READ
- Cursive or script
    - *This is hard to read*
- Lightweight/thin letters
    - This is hard to read

Fonts that are considered to be more accessible include Arial, Helvetica, Calibri, Tahoma, and Times New Roman.

Format Suggestions

Digital Menus

It is helpful to have a digital version of your menu, especially to make it readable for patrons with low vision or blindness.

A picture is not an accessible version of your menu. Instead post a file such as a PDF so that the text is readable.

 Photo of menu

 PDF file of menu

Also make it clear where to find the digital version ofmenu. This can include having a clear link on your social media or webpage as well as having QR codes on tables.

Braille Menus

Braille menus are another option to improve accessibility for patrons who are blind. However, if your menu changes frequently this may be difficult. This is part of why having a digital menu, as discussed above, is a great option.

Wall Menus

A wall menu, such as a chalkboard menu or a wall mounted menu, can be difficult for some people to read. You should have a paper menu and a digital version as alternative options for your patrons.

Menu Binding

Menus in large binding, like a leather folio, can be heavy and difficult to lift. You can have some extra copies without the binding for patrons who would like a lighter weight option.

Menu Design

In addition to the font suggestions earlier in this guide, two other ways to make your menu accessible are:
- Include some white space to break up text.
- Don't use only color to convey information.

❌ Don't

● Vegetarian

● Nuts

✅ Do

Vegetarian

Nuts

Content Suggestions

Allergens

Clearly mark common food allergens. This can be on the main menu or you can provide a separate allergen menu.

- Major food allergens identified in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union include:
  - milk
  - eggs
  - fish
  - shellfish
  - tree nuts
  - peanuts
  - wheat and gluten
  - soybeans
  - sesame
  - celery
  - lupin
  - mustard
  - sulphur dioxide and sulphites

FOOD ALLERGENS

It is also important to make it clear if allergen-free items are still prepared in the same area or if there is an allergen-free cooking area.

In addition to listing allergens you should list all ingredients on the main menu, an alternative menu, or have a list for waitstaff to check.

Lastly, note allergens on specials.

- Note: It is helpful to provide specials in a written format and not just verbally and to clearly indicate what allergens are present.

Detailed Information

Carbohydrate information:

- Make carb counts available. This is helpful for people with Diabetes who take mealtime insulin.

Modifications:

- Make it clear what modifications can be made. This can include if allergens be left out or substituted.

Soft and blended foods:

- Note any menu items that are soft or blended (or if they can be modified to be soft or blended).

Other Considerations

In addition to the information about the actual menu, there are some more things you can do to make your dining experience more accessible. Our suggestions include:

- If your restaurant/bar/cafe is dark have some small handheld lights for patrons to use.
- Have magnifying glasses and/or spare reading glasses available for patron use.
- If patrons place their orders at the counter make sure they can easily access the menu before getting to the counter. For example have printouts available by the entrance or have a QR code to scan to access a digital version of the menu.
- Consider the menu height on window/display.
  - Can someone at a lower eye level read the menu? Place the menu at a medium height or have multiple menu displays.
- Have your staff be willing to read menu to patrons who request assistance.

Contact Us

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