Accessibility Upskilling

What is upskilling?

The global marketplace is evolving and the transition toward customer centric products is the most striking change. An important part of that change is recognizing that Avaya must make software products that are usable by persons with disabilities. People with visual, hearing, physical, or cognitive impairments must be able to easily use everything that we sell.

Since they don't teach accessibility in school, we need to educate our people accordingly. Upskilling refers to advancing skills and organizational growth regarding accessibility. It aids the Avayans by building a more capable workforce and improves the career prospects of employees.

👁 Awareness

Avaya personnel need to be made aware that accessibility is part of our culture and part of their job. More customers are asking about Avaya's level of compliance. Laws worldwide require companies to only purchase the most accessible solutions and pass over those less compliant.

Failure to purchase compliant software can lead to substantial fines and potential loss of business for the customer. There is also the potential to attract new customers to the Avaya brand if we are compliant.

Accessibility changes start at the top with senior management buy-in. This results in clearer priorities to direct reports who, in turn, pass the message to their project teams.

〰👂 Education

Now that people know the work that needs to be done, they must be trained in it. Building accessible products does require some extra attention and time, and this includes training.

Avaya has the Neo Design System and a UX/UI Team to aid in this effort. Neo is a collection of components and guidelines to help create not only accessible designs more easily, but to encourage a more consistent design to all Avaya products. The UX/UI team can provide complete designs and workflows that are accessible and intuitive for all users.

Avaya provides many ways to expand your skills. Whether you prefer LinkedIn Learning, Blue Ocean Brain, or oreilly.com, there is a suitable path available.

Education comes in several forms:

Online courses available through Deque University
They have a wide variety of courses available providing everything from an introduction to accessibility, to the things that managers, developers, designers and testers need to know.

In-house training
We offer in-house training for more specific needs. Our accessibility consultant holds sessions for individual teams to help them work through particularly difficult issues or to aid their understanding of a requirement.

Avaya has an in-house accessibility team available to answer any questions you may have. If they don't have the answer, they can find it for you or direct you to the proper resource.

Using Neo
Training on how to use the Neo Design System, either directly or by adapting it into other development platforms, can also be arranged.

Execution

Finally, we need to execute on the awareness and education initiatives and build accessibility into our product development lifecycle from the start.

It begins with the creation of the requirements at the start of every project. Accessibility must be a consideration throughout the process.

The design teams must build accessibility into their designs. Compliant and intuitive UIs don't just happen, they are created deliberately and thoughtfully by trained teams.

Developers take the polished designs and turn them into saleable products, testing for accessibility as they go.

Before a product is released, it needs to be tested by the accessibility team. A Gap report is provided to the development teams so that any deficiencies can be corrected before we ship it out the door.

Once ready, a VPAT is produced and published on Avaya.com. This provides vendors and customers with a clear report on the product's accessibility. Adherence to regulations can significantly influence purchasing decisions, highlighting Avaya's commitment to accessibility and potentially attracting more customers.

There are many free automated tools that provide insight into a design's current state. We can help direct you to the most common ones and provide guidance on how to effectively add them to your workflow.

Conclusion

Avaya is currently facing accessibility challenges that need to be addressed. As customer inquiries about accessibility increase, it's crucial to provide positive and proactive responses. By positioning Avaya as the industry leader in customer experience (CX) and accessibility, we can drive business growth and enhance our market reputation.

Helpful links

For a deeper dive into accessibility at Avaya, go to this links page in Confluence: Accessibility and Avaya.

Have any questions?

If you have any questions on VPATs or accessibility, please contact the Avaya team at: accessibility@avaya.com.

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