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Accessibility by Any Other Name Is ...**Usability**

Accessible design maximizes the number of potential customers who can readily use a product, said Michael Paciello (Digital Equipment Corporation), as he addressed EIA Fall Conference attendees in the session, "Expanding Product Sales through Accessible Design."

Making products easy to use can increase market share by enabling people with disabilities and functional limitations to enjoy consumer electronic products. According to Paciello, usability is product design containing five specific attributes:

- Learn ability (easy to learn)
- Efficiency (promoting productivity)
- Memorability (easy to remember)
- Low Rate of Errors
- Satisfaction (users like product)

Paciello claims usability marketing is on the rise, particularly among computer companies. Among the companies marketing usability, Paciello cited his own Digital Equipment Corporation, Microsoft, Lotus, and IBM.

What is Accessible?

According to Paciello, accessible design is simply product design that meets human functional needs. To maximize the number of users for each product, companies should consider the needs of consumers with visual impairment, including those who are blind; hearing impairment, include those who are deaf, mobility and speech impairment.

Stressing the fact that design features are not added features, Paciello discussed several ways to make consumer products accessible:

- use of built-in controls, labels, displays and other features;
- use of add-on options such as braille overlays, raised buttons, indicators or special computer utilities;
- use of separate assistive devices in conjunction with main product;
- use of voice output;
- use of audio/visual alarms;
- inclusion of accessible installation instructions.

Paciello pointed out that EIA/CEG can be proud of several "accessibility selling success stories." He cited the:

- CaptionVision (CC) campaign which promoted awareness and use of built-in closed captioning features on TVs;
- The "Extend Their Reach" pamphlet describing assistive devices for people with disabilities; and
- "General Guidelines for Operating Instruction Manuals", a general use booklet to help manufacturers design user- friendly manuals for their products.

Paciello also cited WGBH's Descriptive Video Services, a public broadcasting service whereby the action, setting, etc. of a TV program or video are described for the benefit of blind or visually impaired viewers during breaks in the program's dialogue.