

Inclusive advertising – a podcast by the *bluenotes on air* production team with Dylan Alcott.

Female voice over: Welcome to *bluenotes on air*. Join us as we chat with experts, analysts and commentators from the Asian region about business, culture and economics.

Dylan Alcott: When I was a kid I played tennis and I looked up to a guy called Pat Rafter. I had this epiphany where I thought "Man, I can actually never be Pat Rafter because I can't run." And for the first time ever, in particular during the tennis, when I turned on the TV I saw someone like me even though it happened to be me.

Female voice over: Today, Australian Open and Paralympics champion Dylan Alcott talks to a range of experts including Carly Findlay, Catia Malaquias and Graeme Innes about the importance of inclusive advertising. We hope you enjoy the discussion.

* "Oh Yeah" by Yello plays, crowd cheers *

Female voiceover: It feels good to get on top of your game... and your money.

Dylan Alcott: Hi my name is Dylan Alcott. You might have seen my face a lot this summer while I competed in, and won, my fourth consecutive Australian Open title. You may have also seen me (and maybe got a little bit sick of me!) in my ANZ advertising campaign talking about being on top of my game. This was a really proud moment for me because to have a massive brand like ANZ put someone with a disability at the front of their brand meant a lot to me and a lot of people within our community. Today we'll be talking to a range of respected voices in the area of disability and inclusion and about why it's so important for organisations to be diverse in their advertising.

Carly Findlay: We are living really varied, full lives. We are in society and in the economy - participating in the economy.

Dylan Alcott: Carly Findlay is a writer, speaker and disability activists with a huge following both off and online - a bigger following than me actually! Here's what she had to say.

Carly Findlay: I think there's so much shame that comes with having a disability - particularly for parents - and for them to see people like Dylan and I embracing disability and also really embracing life as a whole is really important.

Dylan Alcott: When I was a little kid, I remember vividly asking my parents why I never see anybody like me on TV. When I was a kid I played tennis and I looked up to a guy called Pat Rafter who was my favourite tennis player. And I remember sitting there one day I had this epiphany where I thought "Man I can actually never be Pat Rafter because I can't run". And then I thought "Who can I be?" And I didn't know anybody with a disability - I was the only person at my school, I knew a couple of kids from when I was in hospital that I'd lost contact with and for the first time ever during the tennis, when I turned on the TV I saw someone like me even though it happened to be me.

Catia Malaquias: It really came out of my own desire to disrupt that bubble.

Dylan Alcott: The voice you just heard from was Catia Malaquias - a proud mum and strong voice for diverse casting practices particularly with children.

Catia Malaquias: When it comes to disability particularly there is a long history of exclusion - of people being kept out of sight, being institutionalised and being denied participation. So the word inclusion has strong and particular relevance. There's been a struggle for the rights of people with disability so in that sense it's also about trying to disrupt that thinking that still exists in our society very significantly which is this expectation that people with disabilities are someone else - special people in special places. Inclusive advertising is different, it's really about representing disabled people inclusively and incidentally. Dylan was just a customer going into a cafe or a bank and using the products like everyone else. He was still demonstrating the accessibility features of those products which is important.

Dylan Alcott: You, your staff and your clients are a snapshot of the community - agree? No matter what your target market is - 20 per cent of that snapshot has a disability. It's not embarrassing to say "Oh we did it because it was a good business decision. We didn't do it just to make Dylan feel good." It was a good business decision to do it and that's what all organisations should be saying. You can make a profit but as a byproduct of that you're also doing the right thing and as a byproduct of that you are making people with a disability more independent, helping them get

out, live their lives, see things that they want to see - shop, bank, travel - do all these things and I think it's important for people to realise that.

Carly Findlay: I'm into fashion and when I post things on Instagram about what I'm wearing people say "Oh I saw you wearing that, I went out and bought that" which is great but then when I've spoken to designers, store owners and agencies they say "Oh we don't know where to start to look for disabled representation." And I say "aren't you looking on Instagram? That's where we are." We're posting what we're wearing, we're posting what we're buying - just look and if you're not seeing us you're not looking hard enough.

Dylan Alcott: Yeah the worst thing is they go "Oh, we tried to find someone in a wheelchair for an ad but couldn't find anyone so we just got a wheelchair put in an abled body person in it". And I just want to punch on when I hear that! It's like well you didn't look very hard because there's 4.5 million Australians with a disability! Turn it up that you couldn't find anyone! And that's why it was frustrating in the past but you know it's a start with things like "Starting with Julius" having people with down syndrome in ads for Kmart and other brands. It's awesome, I saw it on a bus station and I was so pumped because that little kid or that little kid's friends would see that and go "Oh we're not going to bully that kid at school because he's in the bloody commercial and I'm not in a commercial."

Shayne Elliott: The great thing about Dylan is that you just see past the wheelchair - it's just about him as a personality. Whether he's in the wheelchair or not he is magnetic, he's got a great story and he really just stands for everything we want our brand to be associated with.

Dylan Alcott: That was ANZ CEO Shayne Elliott talking about my role in the campaign.

Carly Findlay: Visibility is so important because so much of the media we see around disability is the tragic, the pitiful narrative. Every time I see a person with Ichthyosis - my skin condition - in the media it's awful and I commented the other day the only time I ever see good media written about Ichthyosis is when I do it myself. I think it's really great with social media for disabled people to lead the way in how we want to be represented because so much of the time it's made by non-disabled people. And while ANZ and other companies are great and they're employing more disabled people, it's really important that we also lead the way with how we want to be seen and we can really shape that. When I see other people doing stuff on different TV shows I'm like "This is amazing, this representation is finally happening."

Graeme Innes: We cannot be what we cannot see. Society is representative of the whole of society not just people with disabilities, but if we're not seeing role models or people with disabilities in society then people don't imagine or consider people with disabilities in those particular roles.

Dylan Alcott: Former Australian Disability Discrimination Commissioner Graeme Innes there. He is currently chairperson of the Attitude Foundation - a group who have this issue close to their heart.

Graeme Innes: People with disabilities are pictured in in two ways - either as heroes, amazing people who've overcome these incredible challenges or as victims, people who as a result of our disability won't be able to participate and contribute. We just want to be agents of our own destiny, getting on with our lives - getting home loans, using a bank overdraft to build a business - doing all the things that everyone else in the community does.

Catia Malaquias: When you start ensuring that your ads are inclusive of people with disability and represents them as community members and customers you are putting out a message of who you perceive those customers to be and who you value as customers. It really does alert others to a deficit in their own thinking. From a corporate perspective, there are opportunities because people with a disability have been overlooked quite significantly both in terms of creating products that actually serve that very significant group. So we're talking about one in five Australians - we're talking about a global market that is equivalent to China - and that's not even counting people who have got strong connections with disabled people like family members. So there is a lot of good business strategy that also aligns with being more inclusive.

Graeme Innes: Most people are limited by what I describe as the soft bigotry of low expectations. So if you set the expectation bar low most people won't rise above that bar. What we need to do is raise the expectations bar so that people with disabilities think "Yes, I can go out and do all the stuff that Dylan Alcott or Graeme Innes or other people with disabilities are doing. I am able to do that - there's an example of doing that." But companies in the representation of people with disabilities and governments in representation in advertising can make a big difference to that by actually role modelling those people and showing examples of people doing it.

Catia Malaquias: I think within companies themselves there is a need to understand inclusive advertising. Not only just as an issue a matter for marketing but also part of building trust within the company about its own inclusion and diversity approaches. So it does present an opportunity for marketing, speaking not only to customers, but also to people who work for you which represents that you value and recognize people with disability.

Dylan Alcott: If I hear one more person say - even the places that I've worked in media - and they go "Oh yeah diversity - race, religion, gender, sexual orientation. Full stop." I'm like "What's the biggest one out of all of them? You're not even saying it - it's disability!"

Carly Findlay: Because they're uncomfortable with the word. Yet you're 90 percent likely to develop a disability into old age.

Dylan Alcott: Correct. It's going to affect everyone - accessibility. Why would you not talk about that? So let's make it sexy and fun and hot and humorous and emotional and get rid of the Zimmer frame, dusty, 1970s approach and get with the new age and give it a crack because it'll work.

Dylan Alcott: That's all we have time for today. I hope you enjoyed hearing everyone's thoughts - I know I did. My name is Dylan Alcott and you've been listening to "bluenotes on air".

Female voiceover: Thank you for listening to *bluenotes on air*. *bluenotes on air* was produced by the *bluenotes* editorial team with music by Kevin McLeod.