

[Music] [Narelle] Hello good morning and welcome to The Digital Access Show where we actually do really focus on communication, digital accessibility and everything around community, improving, improving communication for everyone. Today's, guest is a digital marketing guru who has just been involved in a wonderful project that really does make life easier for people with vision impairment. Kathleen Casford from ByNinjas, thank you for being on here. [Kathleen] Thank you for having me, Narelle. [Narelle] Well anytime, love your work, Kathleen. Kathleen, can you tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into this project? [Kathleen] Yeah of course. So I am the creative overlord slash founder of ByNinja. So we're a full service brand studio and we're based in Brisbane. We're fully, I guess, industry agnostic in terms of the types of businesses we work with. But we do do a lot of work in the beauty space and working with founders all around the world on really interesting projects. Particularly with beauty focused on packaging and those, I guess, general experiences around products and getting products, you know, in front of people, you know, through the mail, on shelf. All of those kinds of experiences. So, I guess in terms of like getting into this project in particular, you know, I've been working with Wilde for some time. About, I think we've been working together for like three or four years now. Yeah, and ahm, I guess a bit of a serendipitous meeting of yourself. So, you know, obviously Matt does the guide running with you at Achilles and I came along. I think it was towards the end of 2022 to help out. So I think they needed some extra hands and that's where you and I first met and got chatting. And, yeah, I guess I was really interested in your role around digital accessibility. And how that might influence I guess my work from a digital perspective that I was doing with brands and so, you know, we obviously got chatting and caught up and through that process you sort of shared some of your experiences with me around, I guess, those product based experiences and what it's like for you to a shop and be, then use those products in your home. And, yeah, I guess that honestly is really what inspired this project for me. And seeing that need. So yeah. [Narelle] Tell everyone about the project. I have to admit I'm a big fan of the project. Yeah I was, sort of you, your test bunny. But I love doing. I love being involved in this project. So Kathleen, please tell us exactly what you've done. [Kathleen] Yeah. So we have used, essentially, 3D raised printing technique to integrate Braille into hair care packaging. And so we were able to do that in a way that was really cost effective for the brand, Wilde. And what it means is we're also able to adapt that Braille to pretty much any product in the range. And so the Braille was also extended to the box as well. So, obviously, that would provide that independence for people who are able to read Braille to shop for themselves. And then the Braille on the actual bottles and tubes to then make distinguishing those products in the home really easy. And then next step was, obviously, making sure those products are in different packaging shapes. So for people who may not be able to read Braille, are able to differentiate between shampoo in a bottle and conditioner in a tube. [Narelle] Yeah, yeah. I have to admit I'm really impressed with what you've done. What was, when you first approached Wilde with, you wanted to include Braille what was their response? [Kathleen] Look Oscar, it was just an immediate yes. There was not really any consideration beyond that once I sort of spoke to him about it and shared your experiences with him. He was really keen to investigate it and see if it was something that we could actually make work for the brand. [Narelle] Yeah. And for those that aren't aware, people with severe vision impairment, obviously shampoo bottles, conditioner bottles. It could be body lotions, whatever in the shower. They're all the same shape, generally. Sometimes they're not. But the

same shape if you're using products from within one range. They're all the same colour. So it becomes really hard for a person with a vision impairment to distinguish between them. And yes, I have washed my hair with body lotion before. I've been known to use shampoo or conditioner as body lotion. Because they are the same shape. Generally the same size and with no distinguishing features. And of course, for me when I have to go and buy the product. Again, we're looking same shape, the same size. It makes a really big problem for us to try and get what we want. If you want shampoo and you buy conditioner. Suddenly you've got two bottles of conditioner. No shampoo. You've got to go back and buy shampoo. It becomes more expensive as well for it. And it just makes such a huge difference. My trick used to be putting rubber band around the shampoo bottle. Rubber bands do break. They have a habit of breaking. So what you've done Kathleen, it's really changed the way we can manage at home. So it's really impressive. And being able to shop for ourselves, because, you know, those use braille can distinguish it. What has the, what was the process to finding a cost effective means of doing braille?

[Kathleen] Yeah I guess it was initially, I guess, a little bit of a lengthy process in a sense of, obviously, research and development. So, I guess the typical way of incorporating braille into a product. And probably one of the main reasons that it's not really done widely is that basically, the typical way is to integrate it into the mold of the product. Which, you know, can cost a brand as little, I say as little as 5,000 US dollars per mold. Upwards of 45,000 US dollars. And it really, obviously, depends on the complexity of the packaging and whether or not it's a custom mold as well. And the capabilities of the factory that they're working with as well. So obviously that's quite, quite investment and then also when you're looking at molding as well you would then need a mold for every single skew or every single product. So, you know, you're saying before, for example, like if for a range where you might have three different shampoos because they have different purposes. Maybe one for blonde hair, one for moisturizing and one for brunettes let's say. You typically try and use the same mold so you provide some cost effectiveness to a business. Because then it's just a matter of obviously printing or labeling. So you're not changing that main cost component. If you mold then, obviously, you need a mold per every single product. Which then, obviously, becomes a big management storage process as well for the factory. Which, yeah you then double, likely being charged storage fees for those molds because they're unique to you. And you would need one for every product. And if you think about, you know, massive brands, you know, they would have upwards of like 40 odd products in their range. So, you know, it's quite a significant investment from that perspective. So, you know obviously, not viable for, you know, a smaller Australian brand. And whilst Wilde is still a significant brand in size compared to some of those local brands, you know the their quantities are still growing. So, for start ups and smaller scale brands. We were able to actually find this technique which we've coincidentally, actually used previously but in a slightly different way. So we'd actually used it as an aesthetic kind of element on their, the art series for the styling and prepping and finishing line for Wilde. So we'd printed these raised textures on the caps of the bottles to create this really interesting kind of tactile experience with the product. And I guess, you know, after sort of talking with you I just had this kind of thought. I was like this is a raised kind of printing technique. It was quite textural and so I thought, I wonder if this is something that you would be able to actually feel and distinguish and, and, you know, so I think I've got you to kind of test those for me and see if you could feel the textures and feel the patterns and so while you could, it wasn't, I think, distinguishable enough.

Because the patterns were quite abstract. So basically then it was like, okay, can we get, use this technique in a way to print the Braille on the packaging and do it to the correct specs. So that was obviously working with yourself and Mark Muscat as well. And obviously Braille House to determine what those specifications and requirements were. And then we were able to work with the factory to then actually do some prototypes. Obviously testing with yourself, testing with Mark and other members of the vision impaired community who can read Braille as well. To then actually get that right and also obviously, be embossing on the box as well. To make sure it's raised enough so that you can feel it despite the protective coating. So, yeah, I guess that's kind of like the process that we sort of went through and in the end that that 3D raised kind of like printing technique is actually what we've ended up running with. And it's worked fantastically because we can colour match it to the colour of the bottle and the packaging. So that to a vision aiding person it's just kind of like this interesting texture and for people who can read Braille, it tells them exactly what's in the packaging. [Narelle] How cost effective was that? I'm very sorry, it worked out to be less than 5 cents a unit. [Narelle] Oh my gosh. You're kidding! [Kathleen] Yeah. [Narelle] So it is that simple to do. [Kathleen] Yep. [Narelle] Could that process be applied to any product then? [Kathleen] Pretty much, yes. Long story short, yes. So, there are some compatibility requirements in terms of the plastic that that 3D printing goes on in material. So, there are certain materials and certain plastics that it can adhere to. So, for example, with the shampoo and conditioner, because they're in our sort of squeeze bottle and tube you can't print that onto the the squeeze components of it because it will kind of crack off and it won't adhere properly. So you always have to adhere it to something that's rigid. So, like, really firm. So, that's why on those ones, we actually did it around. We were able to do it around the cap which solved that problem. And then, I guess, the next step was saying, you know, probably the one step too far with this. But, you know, like we needed to make sure the cap was integrated in the use of the product. So you won't have to take it off to use it, the product because then you obviously run the risk of losing the cap. Which has got the identifiable component on it. So, [Narelle] Yeah. It's just it's just incredible what you've done and what you're saying, it can apply to a tomato sauce bottle or can it apply to a tin or glass? [Kathleen] Yeah. It can essentially, apply to anything that's rigid. So, potentially a tomato sauce bottle would probably have to find a element on it that it could adhere to cause, they're like, typically squeeze in some way. To make sure that you do it around the remove the lid or something like that. [Narelle] It's just such a simple solution that you found, which has so many practical elements to you. What's the response been? [Kathleen] I think so far the response has been overwhelmingly great. I mean, obviously, seeing you experience it for the first time was amazing. [Narelle] That was exciting. [Kathleen] Yeah. So I think that's just wonderful and I think seeing the excitement of some of the members of the vision impaired community, who obviously, you know, engaged with it so far has been just amazing. And then I think, in general, it's just been a nice response. You know people seem I think, really interested in the fact that a, it's something that a brand is invested in doing. And I think it's just sort of opened conversation around it. Because I guess like me, a lot of people just hadn't really thought about it as something that needed to happen in the industry. So, yeah I think it's been good. It's creating a conversation, which I think is the most important element of it. [Narelle] Yeah it has. It's definitely has. Kathleen, for the people that want to actually see the product. Where can they find the product? [Kathleen] So the product,

[Narelle] See and experience the product themselves. [Kathleen] Oh yep. So, if you'd like to experience it in store it's available for sale in Oscar Oscar salons all around Australia. So I think they've got salons in Sydney, Melbourne, Gold Coast and Brisbane. Or you can purchase online from Wilde's website which I think is wilde.hair. [Narelle] Excellent. Kathleen, considering everything you've done to make this accessible and no, it's not digital content. But you're using techniques that can really apply to so many different things. And actually make life easier for a lot of people. What are the takeaways that you would give to everyone, participant, business? Can you give us a couple of takeaways? [Kathleen] Yeah, I think accessibility is a very complex topic. And I think we often get caught up in trying to do everything. And you know it is very clear that this product is, obviously it's very focused on solving one unique problem to one very specific group of people. And I think if we can all, you know, look at trying to focus on doing something really well and making sure that we're solving you know, one kind of problem or one challenge at a time I think together, it will eventually kind of, create a more accessible future and something that creates independence for everyone. And I think, you know, opens up those experiences so everybody gets to enjoy the things that they want to. And I think, the other thing for me is really, I think it, just this experience really highlighted to me that I've been operating, I suppose, in a bubble of familiarity and I think, you know, putting yourselves in scenarios and surrounding yourselves with people that are going to challenge your perspectives and your everyday experiences, so that you are actually creating things and solutions and products and designs that are inclusive. And are for more people. [Narelle] Kathleen, thank you. Thank you for doing this project. Thank you for Oscar Callinan from Oscar Oscar for saying yes. Because hopefully, it's going to show the way for a lot more people in business to understand. But I thought, yeah, you had to do a bit of playing. But it is a simple cost effective solution to a problem which you know, a lot of people as they get older, are going to experience. It just an eight, part of aging as well. I've got it a lot earlier than a many. But, hey, you know, I can deal with those issues a lot earlier. And a lot of people will deal with them later on. So Kathleen how can people contact you? [Kathleen] Oh, yes. So if you'd like to get in touch, you can, probably the easiest way to reach out via our website which is www.bininja.com.au [Narelle] Excellent. Thanks again Kathleen. It's always wonderful to talk to you. And that's another episode of The Digital, The Digital Access Show. Gosh I had a brain drain there for a minute. And if you like what we're doing, please like, review, subscribe. Google review. You name it. We'd love to hear your comments and your thoughts. And we'll see you next time on The Digital Access Show. See you then. [Music]