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Thanks for joining this webinar entitled "Four Accessibility Tips for Online Fitness Classes."

SAULD:

Today, we'll be covering the following topics-- how to create an inclusive online environment in fitness, followed by tips for video accessibility and fitness, why it's essential to make your online fitness class accessible, benefits of incorporating accessibility into your business, who 3Play Media is, and then finally we'll finish off with a Q&A at the end.

So given the current circumstances, many gyms and fitness centers around the world are closing their doors to limit the spread of COVID-19, otherwise known as the coronavirus. And with the government mandate to limit social interaction, businesses have been shifting their strategy on how to interact with consumers. Many businesses have been leveraging the internet in order to do so. So for some, this transition has been seamless. And for others, it's been an adjustment. But regardless of if you're new or familiar with the online space in fitness, we'll give you the tools needed to make it accessible to everyone.

And although the current climate is a new phenomenon for all of us, as we navigate our new reality, more people are looking to online brands to deliver engaging content. And this shift has inspired many fitness brands to be more creative and flexible since they can't rely on their physical locations and on-site staff. The good news, though, is that fitness brands have already been doing this, so there's no need to reinvent the wheel. Many brands have successfully achieved remote fitness, and these four tips will make your online fitness videos both engaging and accessible.

So let's move on to the tips. The first tip is to add captions to live and pre-recorded classes. So what are captions? Closed captions are time-synchronized text that can be read while watching a video and are usually noted with a CC icon. Captions originated as an FCC mandate in the 1980s, but the use has since expanded to online video and internet applications.

Captions assume the viewer can't hear, so they include relevant sound effects, speaker identifications, and other non-speech elements to make it easier for the viewer to understand who's speaking. So the example on the next slide, it shows the relevant sound effects, which, in this case, is upbeat music playing, speaker identifications, which is the instructor, and as well as what the instructor is saying.

So while closed captions are used for a pre-recorded video, live captioning is for events

happening in real time-- for example, this webinar or a live fitness class. Live captions ensure that all your life events are accessible to deaf or hard of hearing individuals, as well as making your content more engaging. So live captions are usually created by a live automatic captioning solution or by a stenographer. And in this webinar, we're using a live stenographer. So there might be slight delays in live captioning as the computer is processing the words or the stenographer is typing. For a pre-recorded class, you have a little bit more options. You can either DIY your captions using ASR software, or you can hire a captioning vendor. And when choosing which option works best for you, be sure to keep time and accuracy in mind.

So it's important to distinguish between captions, subtitles, and transcripts, as they all mean something different. Captions assume the viewer can't hear the audio. They are time-synchronized. And they include relevant sound effects. You can spot if a video has captions when you can see the CC icon. Subtitles, on the other hand, assume the viewer can hear but can't understand the audio. Their purpose is to translate the audio. Like captions, they're also time-synchronized. Transcripts are a plain text version of the audio, and it's not time-synchronized, and it's good for audio-only content. In the US, the distinction between captions and subtitles is important, but in other countries, like countries in Europe, these items are used synonymously.

So how do you create closed captions? So there are a few ways to create captions. You can either do it yourself using Automatic Speech Recognition, or ASR, software, or you can use a captioning vendor. So one way, if you have the time, is to manually transcribe the video yourself. And you'll need plenty of time, because this method can take five to six times longer than the length of the actual video. And this doesn't include the time it takes to add non-speech elements. Additionally, this method could be very costly at scale.

The second way to caption your video is starting with ASR. Some people use YouTube's automatic captioning generator to create captions. And with this option, it's important to keep accuracy in mind. When relying solely on ASR technology, the accuracy rates are pretty abysmal. So captioning is much more complicated than many other applications of ASR.

Captioning is primarily characterized by long-form content, and it's critical to transcribe every spoken word. So when it comes to captioning, some of the most common causes of ASR errors include speaker labels, punctuation, grammar, multiple speakers, or overlapping speech, background noise, and much more. In cases of perfect audio conditions, we've seen

ASR technology produce around 80% accurate captions at best. Perfect audio conditions, however, are rare.

Technology just doesn't have the same capability that humans do to understand nuances or discern unclear words from contexts. Additionally, automated captions don't comply with the ADA, or the Americans with Disabilities Act. In the lawsuit, the National Association of the Deaf v. Harvard and MIT, the universities were sued for failing to caption and for having unintelligible captions.

This was the first time that accuracy had been considered in legal ramifications for closed captioning, and these were YouTube captions. So this lawsuit represents a violation of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and has extended the requirements to the internet. And we'll dive more into the ADA in a few more slides.

So lastly, you can outsource to a captioning vendor. So at 3Play Media, our process combines technology with human labor in a really careful and strategic way so that we sort of have the best of both worlds. So first, a file will go through ASR, which produces a rough transcript. And then one of our professional editors will go in there and just correct the file. And then we have a third round of QA review. And a QA manager will conduct a final review of the transcript and captions to ensure that we meet our guaranteed 99% accuracy rate.

So when it comes to captioning, it's important to follow the best practices for captioning quality. The industry standard for spelling is a 99% accuracy rate. 99% accuracy, though it's close to perfection, means that there's still a 1% chance of error. So in a 10-minute file of 1,500 words, this leniency allows for 15 errors total. So for fitness videos, a clean read is preferable, meaning you'll want to eliminate the filler words like um's and the uh's.

And now, each caption frame should be around one to three lines with 32 characters per line. The best font to use is non serif. You should also ensure they are time-synchronized and last a minimum of a second on the screen so it gives viewers enough time to read.

Another key thing to keep in mind is caption placement. Typically, captions are placed at the lower center of the screen, but they should be moved when they're in the way of important text or elements in the video, like an instructor on the video. And as for silent bits, you want to make sure that the captions go away when there's a pause or a silence so that they don't confuse the viewer or hang on for too long.

So now let's talk a little bit about WCAG. So WCAG is the international set of guidelines making digital content accessible for all users, specifically users with disabilities. It outlines best practices for making web content universally perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

So WCAG has three different levels of compliance. Level A is the easiest to maintain. And then we have level AA, which is what most people are aiming for. And this is the mid-level of standards. And then finally, we have level AAA, which is the most comprehensive high accessibility standard. So most laws and lawsuits mention WCAG 2.0 compliance. So for now, that's what's legally required. Only if a law explicitly states that web developers have to adapt to the newest WCAG do you need to make your content WCAG 2.1-compliant.. So for fitness videos to be compliant with WCAG, you're required to caption prerecorded video for Level A compliance and caption live video for Level AA compliance.

So most live captioning accuracy is over 90% accurate, but noise level, accents, or connectivity issues can affect the accuracy. So much of the same quality standards for closed captioning apply to live captioning. For the best accuracy in live captioning, you'll want to have a strong connection, a good audio quality, little to no background noise, a single speaker, and clear speech and pronunciation.

So there are about 466 million people worldwide with some form of hearing loss. And without captions, millions of people are denied access to your fitness content. In fact, 71% of people with disabilities leave a website immediately if it's inaccessible. So when fitness brands make their content accessible, their videos are able to reach a wider audience. Especially now that physical gyms are closed, captioned videos are great to connect with everyone, regardless of ability.

Many people, not just the deaf and hard of hearing, rely on captions for their viewing preferences. So actually, 80% of people who watch videos with closed captions don't have hearing loss. And when brands make deliberate choices to make the user experience as seamless as possible, it increases user engagement. And captioning on-demand fitness video keeps users engaged and focused, because when there's difficult language, poor audio quality, or complex information, captions help with clarification.

So aside from this accessibility, captions help viewers in sound-sensitive environments understand the auditory information of the video without the need for sound or headphones. Sometimes, people work out in environments that are noisy and need an option for when the sound is unclear. In contrast, some people work out in quiet environments and don't have headphones. For example, there may be a parent who wants to work out with a sleeping child present.

And many people even like to listen to their own music when they work out. So captions allow members to mute their devices and work out to music of their choice. 41% of videos are incomprehensible without sound or captions, which means that if someone doesn't have headphones or access to captions, they won't be able to watch your video.

Now, you may be wondering, are people even watching videos with the sound off? Well, Facebook uncovered that 85% of Facebook videos are watched with the sound off. So if your video relies heavily on sound, a lot of people are probably scrolling past them.

In addition, captions have a ton of SEO benefits. Search engines aren't able to watch videos. They can only read text. When you include a transcript and captions with your video, search engines can crawl the text to find relevant keywords. This will help your video rank higher in search engine result pages. And according to Facebook, videos with captions have 135% greater organic search traffic.

Captions increase video viewership. And a study by Facebook also found captions increase video views by 12%. And a research study from the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* also found that captions improved brand recall, verbal memory, and behavioral intent.

And lastly, we live in a really globalized world where it's really easy to connect with people who live in different countries. In addition, videos can be viewed anywhere, as long as there's an internet connection. Brands can no longer limit themselves to a specific country or a specific region, since the users from all around the world can access your content. Your content should be accessible to the millions of international viewers as well. And if you have captions, it's much easier to create translations in other languages and help your content reach a wider audience.

So there's a rising trend of companies being sued for having inaccessible websites. Online brands like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon have all been sued for violating the Americans with

Disabilities Act. The ADA was enacted in 1990 to protect disabled citizens from discrimination. At the time, the internet wasn't as widespread as it is today. So the law didn't specify online businesses.

As of today, many brands can learn from recent lawsuits that accessibility is important. A web accessibility strategy should be put in place to accommodate viewers who may have a disability. So Title III of the ADA protects citizens with disabilities from discrimination, specifically in places of public accommodation. This applies to commercial businesses like hotels and restaurants, museums, and retail stores. And although it does not specify online businesses, based on recent lawsuits, it can be interpreted that the ADA applies to the internet. Captioning on-demand fitness video should be a priority and not an afterthought. This can protect your brand from potential lawsuits and make your content visible to the many people who want to engage with your brand.

So now let's move on to tip number two. The second tip is to use an accessible video platform. So whether you decide to stream live classes, publish pre-recorded sessions, or use a combination of both, it's imperative that you use an accessible platform. Brands should strive to be as inclusive as possible, and that means providing an equal viewing experience for all of your participants.

So an accessible video platform supports closed captioning, audio description, and transcripts. It should be screen reader and keyboard accessible. An accessible video platform helps to improve the user experience for your audience. For video streaming platforms, it should include keyboard accessibility, voice recognition, and captioning support. And on the other hand, an accessible video player should include keyboard accessibility, voice recognition, captioning support, and audio description support.

So if you don't work with a video player that supports captions, there are some workarounds available. So for livestream events, you can use an embed code or an iframe. And for pre-recorded videos, you can link to a transcript.

So the third tip is very similar to the first one, but we wanted to make this its own section, and we'll dive into why in the next few slides. So tip number three is to caption social media videos. So in tip number one, like I mentioned, we covered the importance of captioning live or pre-recorded videos, but captioning social media videos is just as important. Social media video

consumption has increased over the years, and many companies are developing apps for more video. So you can think of Facebook Watch, Instagram's IGTV, or the latest sensation, TikTok.

According to Word Stream, videos on social media get shared 1,200% more than text and images combined. And that just goes to show that social videos are incredibly popular, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down any time soon. So internet users are constantly seeking entertaining and engaging content, especially during these times. So fitness brands who are looking to keep viewers engaged should be captioning their social media videos.

Facebook also uncovered that 80% of users react negatively to video ads playing with sound. And as a result, they now autoplay videos on mute. But then another issue occurred, so Facebook uncovered that 41% of videos are incomprehensible without sound or captions. To combat this, videos should be captioned. And many social media platforms may not support captions on their video players, but for those that do, like Facebook, you can upload a sidecar file. And for those that don't, you'll need to use open captions, which are captions that are burned into the video.

To create open captions for social media videos, you can either create them yourself or hire a professional captioning vendor. When you start captioning social media videos, you'll notice how many more views it can garner. According to Ply Media, 80% of people are likely to watch an entire video when captions are available.

So on to our fourth and final tip. Tip number four is to invest in high-quality audio equipment. Accessible videos should be clear, comprehensible, and readable. The purpose is to provide all viewers with an equal viewing experience, regardless of how they choose to consume your content.

A video's audio quality boils down to the type of microphone used. A microphone can make or break the sound. So if you invest in a good mic, your audio will come out clearly, and it makes it easier to transcribe your content more accurately. There are plenty of microphone options available, but for the purposes of fitness videos, you'll need something that's unobtrusive, yet still has the power to capture quality sound. So a good mic should be able to handle loud volumes like background music. It needs to be able to clearly and accurately pick up the voice of the instructor and provide a high-quality output. And it's less sensitive to background noise.

So that's it for tips. Now, a little bit about who we are at 3Play. So we are a video accessibility company that spun out of MIT in 2007 and are currently based in Boston, Massachusetts. So we started out offering captioning, transcription, and subtitling service, and we also offer audio description. And we recently released a live automatic captioning solution as well.

We have over 2,500 customers, including many fitness brands. Our goal is really to just make the whole captioning and video accessibility process much easier. We also have a number of turnaround and workflow options to choose from.

So our number one goal is to make accessible video easy. And we'll do that in a number of ways. We have an easy-to-use online account system where you can manage everything easily from one place. We have a number of different options for turnaround, anywhere from a couple of hours to over a week-- whatever really fits your needs.

We have different video search plugins integrations for captioning to really just help simplify the process of creating accessible video. And really, we just want to be a video accessibility partner as a whole.

So that wraps up our presentation. Now we can begin the Q&A. If you have any questions, feel free to type in the Q&A window. Great.

So the first question is, are there quality standards for how captions should look? Yes. So with accuracy, the FCC states that captions must match the spoken words in the audio to the fullest extent. So this includes preserving any slang or accents in the content and adding the non-speech elements. For live captioning, some leniency may apply there.

So captions have to be synchronized. They must align with the audio track. And each caption frame should be presented at a readable speed. So that's about three to seven seconds, which I mentioned in slide before.

Completeness is also important. So captions must run from the beginning to the end of the program and not drop off in any place.

Captions must also be placed so that they don't block other important visual information.

OK. So the second question is how does 3Play's live captioning process work? Yeah, that's a great question. So first, you would create a live event on any of our integrated livestream video platforms. And then you could schedule the live automatic captioning in 3Play for your corresponding live event. And then next, you just stream your live event, and your captions will display directly in the video player or through an embed code. And then finally, you can download, edit, or upgrade your live recording for a transcript. And you can access the final transcript for editing or even order more services as well.

The next question is, how does the 3Play work with fitness brands? So we work with many fitness brands to ensure that the videos are accessible, from streaming to publishing. And we work with them to prioritize deadlines, offer 99% accuracy regardless of difficulty, and work with brands to integrate their video players and make their publishing workflows a lot easier.

And then we have one final question, which says, does your live captioning service integrate with any video platforms? Yes. So we integrate with top livestreaming video and meeting platforms such as YouTube, Zoom, Bright Cove, and JW Player. And Facebook will be coming out soon.