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مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والجذب السياحي
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

VENDOR TALK – OCTOBER 2022

MAKING WAVES FOR ALL

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

Article by: **EPICSURF**

Making waves for all

According to the World Health Organization, 15% of the world's population (or about 1.2 billion people) live with some form of disability, and as the surfing industry continues to rapidly expand and evolve worldwide, empowering this population is essential – and the right thing to do!

This is an opportunity for attractions to become a champion for inclusion and to provide greater access to waves for a wider audience, especially for those that do not live near the ocean or prefer a more controlled surfing experience.

Whether your business is surf-centric or about delivering another type of experience, there's value in distinguishing the objectives towards elevating and expanding the guest experience. "Accessibility" is the outcome of addressing specific needs of individuals who are differently abled. Over time, this concept has expanded to "inclusion" and helping a larger audience regardless of specific circumstances. Therefore, we can say that accessibility and inclusion work hand in hand and have the potential to drive innovation while benefiting a larger audience.



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A sport that unites the world

Surfing is one of the most popular and timeless sports on the planet and continues to grow and evolve. After decades of anticipation, surfing made its debut at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Post-Games, it was revealed that surfing's inclusion (along with skateboarding, sport climbing and karate) was a catalyst in gaining attention from millennials. A successful strategy that led to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) designating surfing as a “**permanent sport**” in February 2022, therein opening the gates to more funding, spotlighting other disciplines of surfing and diversifying the sport.



Currently, the IOC is appraising para surfing, an adapted form of surfing that allows people with physical disabilities to ride waves on a surfboard, for the Los Angeles Games in 2028. Olympic inclusion of para surfing will inspire new athletes, create awareness and change the perception about what it means to be different and still enjoy sports.





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In terms of geography, surfing's Olympic inclusion is a motivational force towards many countries, not typically known for surfing, developing and recruiting wave-riding athletes. The International Surfing Association (ISA) is surfing's world governing authority recognised by the IOC. The association now spans 5 continents, and includes 111 member countries, 5 of which are landlocked: Afghanistan, Mongolia, Nepal, Hungary and Switzerland. Many of the member nations have joined the ISA to attract and support future generations of surfers and create a pathway to world-class Olympic surfing. In the process, surfing is generating positive energy and change related to age, gender, culture, ability and so much more.



Earlier this year, the Saudi Surfing Federation became the 110th nation to join the global network, and is led by female CEO, Nouf Al Nasser. "Our goal is to see young female and male Saudis take up surfing, SUP and wake surf with the long-term ambition to nurture Saudi athletes so they can compete at future Olympic Games," Al Nasser asserted.

In August, Egypt became the 111th nation to join the ISA, bringing membership within Africa to 17 countries, driving the expansion

across the continent and validating surfing's universal appeal. In addition to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, other MENA countries focused on developing surfing programmes include Israel, Iran, Oman, UAE, Lebanon, Morocco and Turkey.

The Surfing Revolution and the Onset of Manmade Waves

Courtesy of Olympic fanfare, popular lifestyle brands and social media, the global surfing market (mostly equipment) is currently valued at \$3.8 billion, according to Grandview Research. Surfing tourism is estimated to be worth \$9.5 billion and projected to nearly double in the next 10 years, according to Statista.

No doubt, surfing is a booming multibillion-dollar industry, yet the numbers and popularity are incommensurate with the number of people who have regular access to ocean waves.





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With innovation and multiple manufacturers and developers entering the industry, reliable man-made waves are revolutionising surfing, making waves beyond the ocean. For those that prefer a safe and controlled environment, these technology-based waves are breaking down barriers and delivering this extraordinary sport to more people.



Progressive Waves



Stationary Waves

Manmade Waves Mimic Nature and Fall into Two Main Categories of Non- Ocean Waves:



Sheet Waves

Progressive Wave = large lagoon-type wave that emulates the ocean

Stationary Wave = smaller footprint with less water that mimics a rapid river wave

Sheet-Wave = subclass of the stationary wave, made by projecting a thin layer of water at highspeed over trampoline-type surface

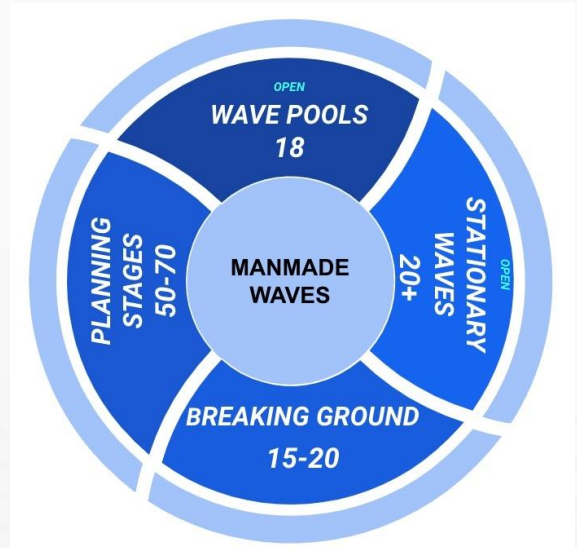
According to Wave Pool Magazine, there are close to 40 manmade waves open for surfing around the world and 75+ breaking ground or in some stage of development. The quest for waves continues to swell and is expected to drive demand and availability of inland surfing for years to come.

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Conclusion

Surfing is truly a common denominator, capable of bringing people together and generating positive impact and change. At ADG, from design to commercialization, our vision was to create an authentic surfing experience to be enjoyed by ALL abilities.

Many of the actionable practices we learned along the way can be adapted for the entertainment, amusement, and leisure industry. Join us in the movement toward creating accessible and inclusive experiences and making fun for everyone!



Best practices to democratise epic experiences

Assemble an expert advisory panel: Create a network of experts by selecting specialists who practice, research, assist, teach and represent individuals with disabilities, national service members or underserved communities. Invite the panel to take in your experience and then use their feedback and suggestions in shaping or improving your product or experience.

Connect, Create Community: Achieving inclusivity requires listening to people with a wide range of perspectives and abilities. Learn about the organisations in your community and people they support. Invite them to checkout your experience and learn from their visit.





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Explore the benefits of experience: To better serve and attract guests with sensory differences consider becoming a “certified autism centre.” Learn more about certification at IBCCES [International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards]. Reach out to a local youth club or contact the YMCA. The YMCA operates in 120 countries and is always looking for new partnerships and powerful experiences.

Develop programming: Organisations and advocacy groups are always thrilled to find immersive experiences that help participants discover strengths and build confidence. Discuss ideas for programming with your network of advisors.

(Pro-tip: Specialised programming can generate revenue during off peak hours).

Collaborate with a non-profit organisation: Make an impact and bring purpose to your brand by collaborating with a non-profit organisation. Find one that aligns with your organisational values and work together.

Give back: Host an event that showcases your non-profit partner(s). Create awareness for their mission and the people they serve. Include them on event signage, social media and press release.

Learn more: For more information about ADG’s efforts to create an accessible and inclusive surfing experience, visit [Epic Events](#).





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EpicSurf® is the first deep-water stationary wave manufactured in the US, making real surfing possible anytime, anywhere – offering a customised surfing experience for ALL abilities. For more information, visit www.epic.surf

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