

AT Banter Podcast Episode 285 - Izzy Camilleri and Adaptive ...

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adaptive, clothing, people, pants, fashion, izzy, wheelchair user, ryan, magnets, velcro, garment, disabilities, design, milani, started, clothes, find, breakaway, mainstream, wear

SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Lis Malone, Izzy Camilleri, Ryan Fleury

- R** Rob Mineault 00:00

Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter. Hey, this is of course the podcast where we talked about advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey my name is Rob Mineault, and joining me today Mr. Fashionista himself, Mr. Ryan Fleury.
- R** Ryan Fleury 03:00

Hello everybody.
- R** Rob Mineault 03:03

Hey, and look who it is back for a triumphant return once again. The man who is bringing bell bottoms back, Mr. Steve Barclay.
- S** Steve Barclay 03:13

Banter, banter.
- R** Rob Mineault 03:15

And hey, we couldn't do this without of course, joining us as well. Lis Malone.
- L** Lis Malone 03:24

Feeling groovy

S

Steve Barclay 03:25

you know, given that we did a few 100 episodes before Lis joined us, I think we've actually proven we can do it without her.

R

Rob Mineault 03:33

Don't tell her that.

S

Steve Barclay 03:34

All right. All right.

R

Rob Mineault 03:36

Don't mention that - we told her we're starting from scratch. This is episode 50.

L

Lis Malone 03:45

Check me out. Carrying this whole show. You guys are gonna last for years now that I'm here.

R

Rob Mineault 03:54

Yeah, speaking of which, Steve we did miss you for the anniversary show. You were here in spirit though.

S

Steve Barclay 03:59

Oh, thanks.

R

Rob Mineault 04:01

I mean spirits. I mean me and Lis drank while we did it.

S

Steve Barclay 04:06

That's the spirit

R Rob Mineault 04:08
I thought you would approve. Hey, so Ryan?

R Ryan Fleury 04:13
Yes?

R Rob Mineault 04:15
Could you tell the fine folks at home just what the heck we are doing this week.

R Ryan Fleury 04:20
This week we are talking all about adaptive clothing. And our guest this week is from IZ Adaptive, who I first heard about on AMI show Fashion Dis, our guest is Izzy Camilleri. Welcome, Izzy.

I Izzy Camilleri 04:37
Hi.

R Rob Mineault 04:39
Hello. Oh my god, it's so great to talk to you. I, like Ryan, totally got addicted to Fashion Dis. We had our address on a few months ago and what a great it was it was just a great show. And so we knew that we just had to reach out and talk to you You as well, because we love the work that you're doing. So why don't we just start off with maybe just give us a little bit of a snapshot about you? And just about sort of your your career in a nutshell.

I Izzy Camilleri 05:14
All right, well, I've had a very long career, so I'll try to keep it a walnut. Ah, I started, I started a business of fashion, designing fashion when I was 19 years old, straight out of fashion college. I was doing like regular fashion and started building a name for myself in the Canadian fashion industry. And you know, kind of, you know, kept going, it's, you know, tough being Canadian doing fashion, because Canada's not really known for, for fashion design, there's really not a, you know, globally. So I struggled along. And then in 2005, I met a woman named Barbara Turnbull, who was a wheelchair user. And she was quadriplegic from a very horrific incident that happened. And she, after she, you know, kind of got her life back together. She was, she became a journalist for the Toronto Star. And she asked the fashion editor at the star where she could, or who she would recommend to get some custom clothing done. That would work for her while she was in her chair. And I was recommended. And so I started working with Barb,

and my eyes were just open to the challenges she had with clothing. And I had no idea that challenges even existed. And so it was through working with her that I started really wrapping my head around the whole issue and the whole lack of clothing. And this was back in 2005. I don't know if I said that before. But yeah, so I started working with her, and a few years after I opened IZ Adaptive. And, and I was, you know, pioneering this category, the only thing that was available at that time was clothing for the elderly, or for people living in long term care facilities.

R

Rob Mineault 07:20

And I do want to talk about about that about sort of the the adaptive clothing industry and sort of some of the changes that have happened since 2005. I'm sure they're quite big. But before we do that, I guess I want to just step back a little bit. And in case for those people in the audience that maybe don't really know what we're talking about when we talk about adaptive clothing, can you kind of give us sort of an overview of what we what we're talking about when we talk about adaptive clothing, and maybe some examples?

I

Izzy Camilleri 07:51

Sure. So adaptive clothing is clothing that is easier to get on, if you let's say, lack dexterity, or if you have just physical challenges to get clothing on independently. Sometimes, you know, Felco can be replaced for buttons or zippers. Magnets can also replace buttons or zippers. Sometimes there's, you know, like, like a zipper pull, so you can stick your finger in it to move your zipper up and down. clothes that fit the line of a seated person. So when you're sitting, you know, often our jeans, let's say, you know, kind of cut into our gut or right down at the back. So these clothes are cut, so that they don't do that. And they're more comfortable while sitting. So it's just basically accommodations, to make clothes work better for people that live with a physical disability.

R

Ryan Fleury 08:48

So I'm assuming that when you went to fashion school, they weren't teaching anything about adaptive fashion back then, were they?

I

Izzy Camilleri 08:55

No, I didn't even know the word existed.

R

Ryan Fleury 08:58

Yeah. And are there now?

I

Izzy Camilleri 09:01

They are. And I don't know, to what extent. But I get a lot of people reaching out to me about it from universities and colleges or students who are doing a project and you know, are doing the research and they find me and want to pick my brain. But yeah, it's really opening up.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:25

Well, I know one of the things that you mentioned on Fashion Dis was that there seems to be more and more people developing adaptive clothing. So we're getting actual choice in the marketplace. How have you seen that growth?

I

Izzy Camilleri 09:40

I would say in the last few years, um, one of the biggest brands and early entry brands would be Tommy Hilfiger. And he actually started with a children's line first and then maybe three or so years ago. Then he started with an adult line, and that seems to be progressing nicely. Nike has an adaptive shoe that's easy to slip on your foot. And so there's just you know, major brands are starting to offer adaptive options along with their other options.

R

Ryan Fleury 10:22

One, it's interesting, because after we watched Fashion Dis, Rob and I were kind of raving about, you know, dress shirts with magnets instead of buttons, just like this should be for everybody. It's ease of use. It's convenient. What a revelation. Why is this taking so long to happen?

I

Izzy Camilleri 10:39

Yeah, and, you know, when I, when I took this on professionally, and as a business back in 2009, I was kind of asking that question, like, it's 2009. Why hasn't anybody wrap their head around this? And I think, I think that it's just that, like, myself and other designers, like fashion designers, we never really knew a problem existed. And it's only unless, you know, either you're personally affected, or, you know, someone you know, in your circle. You know, every time I saw someone with a disability, they were dressed. And I just, you know, you just don't think well, how did they actually get dressed? Or what, you know, what challenges do they have? Like, you just never asked those questions. And I didn't know that it was a problem, quite frankly. And so, you know, often designers get accused of ignoring people with disabilities and ignoring this whole category. But I, I don't like when I hear that, because I was one of those designers and I wasn't ignoring, I just didn't know a problem existed, right. So now more and more, you know, companies are seeing the issue and the challenge that people have, and so more and more things are, you know, companies are starting to open up to it.

R

Rob Mineault 12:00

One, it's also interesting, too, because it seems to be coming at a time when the fashion industry is sort of embracing inclusion more and more, you know, we're seeing more and more models, say, with disabilities be becoming, you know, a lot higher profile. And now, do you sort

models, say, with disabilities be becoming, you know, a lot higher profile. And now, do you sort of see these, those two things sort of sort of going hand in hand in terms of, of growth?

I Izzy Camilleri 12:29

I do. But I think in some cases, it could be more of, you know, ticking a box. And, you know, it being more of a token. And I say that, because they may hire a model for their advertising. But in some cases, they're not adapting the clothes to accommodate that model. Right. So, I mean, but it is still all positive. And the thing about adaptive clothing is that you really have to do your research because you could, you could hurt someone. So, you know, seams could be in the wrong place, you can, you can cause a pressure sore. You know, lots of things that, you know, you got to do your homework, and it's not just like designing a regular collection. So, yeah, if they're gonna do it, they need to take it seriously and not, you know, just throw on a pair of pants with some back pockets on someone who's paralyzed that could cause a crisis or, you know, like, they need to know that.

R Ryan Fleury 13:34

So can you sort of walk us through the process then at IZ Adaptive, because it sounds to me like, you don't just have a room full of seamstress seamstresses, you have sewing clothing together, there must be some consultation with the community. Everybody has their own special needs, like what does that process like?

I Izzy Camilleri 13:55

The research that I did, has been done throughout the years. And yes, it was, you know, me having conversations with people me listening. Sometimes someone will tell me, you know, a hack that their grandmother always does on their pants or, you know, stuff like that, where where I learned we don't really do custom work. So, you know, I needed to develop a line with with common issues. For example, if someone is a wheelchair user, and they, let's say, have two different leg lengths, so I can provide you with the pants, that's going to accommodate a seated frame, but then you'll have to just go to your local tailor to just you know, make that one leg shorter, for example. So I can't be everything to everybody. But I can definitely, like the clothes have already been made to accommodate the seated frame. And so those adjustments have have already been done. And I've taken it as far as I can And then if there's any other accommodations somebody needs, and they're going to have to take it that step further.

L Lis Malone 15:07

Izzy, are there other standards in the fashion industry say for like maternity clothes, because I almost see maternity as being sort of that first generation of adaptive clothing. So, could that model of what those standards are sort of be rolled out or gradually implemented in that same fashion,

I Izzy Camilleri 15:30

It's kind of like apples and oranges. But in some ways, it's apples and apples. And I say that because so if you're trying to accommodate a pregnant body, it's kind of the same in a way of accommodating a seated frame, where you just need to see where you need to make the adjustments. To a typical pattern, let's say, it can be a coat or a pair of pants, or a top or whatever. So you just have to, you're, you're starting at, let's say, a standard place, but then it has to be manipulated to accommodate whatever changes you need to make to reach the end result that you're looking for. You know, it all comes down to problem solving.

R Rob Mineault 15:38
Right?

I Izzy Camilleri 15:40
Really, that's really all it is.

S Steve Barclay 16:25
I'm very curious, I flipped through your gallery and you have some some amazing and iconic pieces, showing there. You know, from the from Gord Downie's metallic suits, to stuff that you've done in film. And I'm curious, now that you've had this experience with dealing with adaptive clothing has any of that spilled over into the regular clothing that you're doing? Like, are you taking concepts that you've developed in the adaptive clothing and carrying them back into the fashion world?

I Izzy Camilleri 17:02
Well, I don't do a fashion line anymore, I haven't done one for a while, I still do film work. And I am I'm kind of hired on to help out and so I do a wide variety of things. But if anything, sometimes my pieces are purchased or a commercial or a film. Or I get asked to help out or consult on how to make wardrobe fit a wheelchair user. So that's kind of you know, where that crossover is.

L Lis Malone 17:39
For people who are shopping for adaptive clothing. Are there any other terms that are used out in the industry so that if you're if someone were to be looking for options, that there were certain there's other language that designers are using but referring to adaptive clothing.

I Izzy Camilleri 17:59
Um, so far adaptive clothing seems to be it. Which is kind of sad because adaptive clothing is not the sexiest you know, sounding word it sounds very medical. When you were speaking not a not maybe not you but earlier when we were talking about you know, when you were talking

about the magnets on the shirts and that you know, anybody can use that anybody you know whether you have a disability or not. So that kind of falls under the term universal and universal design. So coming up with pieces that you know, can fit and work for everybody is ideal. The only challenge for me is like clothes that are designed for a seated frame cannot really work on someone who's standing. It just doesn't I mean you can still wear it but it's just not going to look or fall the way that it's supposed to. So you know, and the only other thing that I can think of terminology wise is we have clothing that opens up in the back so that for people that and we call those like you know an open back t shirt I'll be back or even open back pants. So if you're someone who has trouble raising your arms for example, or even you know just getting on a t shirt, we have ones that you know look completely regular in the front. But then the opening the back so you can dress someone from front to back and then close it at the back. So it makes dressing a lot easier for for not only the the person wearing the garment but also for the dressers as well.

R

Rob Mineault 19:45

So How challenging is it because it seems like adaptive clothing really has to ride this line between functional and fashion. Is it a little bit more of a challenge when you're when you're when you've been approaching adaptive clothing in terms of, we've got to make this look right. But we've also got to make it function in a certain way. Is that is that more of a challenge with adaptive clothing? Or is it kind of the same with with non adaptive clothing?

I

Izzy Camilleri 20:21

Well, it is a challenge only with respect of deciding what kind of designs I'm going to do. And what I mean by that is like when I started in 2009, and I saw that there was like, literally nothing out there other than clothing for the elderly, or people living in long term care facilities. And which was very, you know, dated a lot of really bad uncomfortable polyester, which was used, because long term care facilities literally boil their clothes when they launder them, so they can kill any kind of bacteria. But, you know, again, in the early stages, when I was doing my research this. I'm gonna give a stat, which is a little bit skewed right now, because of the boomer population. But at that time, 84% of people that break their back and become paralyzed are between the ages of 18 and 34. And that's, that's because of car accidents and sports. And then the remaining 16% was the elderly. So right now, there's, the elderly numbers are a bit higher, just by sheer population. But you know, when you think about that, they're between the ages of 18 and 34, they don't want to want to be shopping at a place where, you know, the elderly are shopping. So, at that time, I just decided, okay, so like, there is like zero out there. So I'm just going to start with wardrobe basics. And I'm going to make it the most, you know, easy designs in a way, just so that it can kind of reach more people, you know, like we all wear jeans, our track pants, we all need dress pants, you know, you know, just basics that everybody we all have in our wardrobe. And I wanted it to be, you know, very not, you know, not trendy, and not kind of fashionable, but at the same time, you know, the kind of clothes that we still all wear every single day. So that's what the the line has really been based on. And I have kind of, you know, offered leather jackets sometimes or do some things that are a bit more fashionable. But at the end of the day, those are the things that are that don't sell the most, it's it's the jeans and the track pants that sell the most. So, you know, as a business, I need to do what's gonna sell. You know, and then that other stuff is just kind of, you know, where I could just play a little bit really,

R Ryan Fleury 23:06

I'm gonna ask this to everyone here today. I am a t shirt and jeans guy myself. But are we starting to see mainstream retail stores? Look at Adaptive Clothing and set aside some space for for that? Has anybody seen anything?

S Steve Barclay 23:28

I've certainly not seen it.

R Rob Mineault 23:29

Yeah, I haven't.

I Izzy Camilleri 23:30

I think it's early days. When I when I first started this line, I was so excited about it. And I, I had a friend who was the fashion director at the Hudson's Bay Company. And so she was in charge of all the fashion that was sold at the Bay at you know, at the top level. And I took my line for her to see and she loved it. But she didn't know what to do with it. And she just felt like, you know, she she didn't know how to fit it into the store. And she felt like she wouldn't have the right people to be selling it. And I just I just literally just started I probably had it I was running for like six months or something. So I couldn't even tell her, you know, these are my best sellers. Like this is what you need to do. And I was just too eager at the time. But I think that's the obstacle that that they just kind of don't know how to how to deal with it or work it and just sometimes two people say you know, I don't have people with disabilities don't come into my store. And it's like, well, it's because you have nothing to offer.

R Ryan Fleury 24:49

Right, chicken and egg.

I Izzy Camilleri 24:50

Yeah. Do you know a guy named Luke Anderson? Have you heard of Stop Gap?

R Ryan Fleury 24:59

No.

I Izzy Camilleri 25:02

Yeah, Luke is awesome. He, he's an engineer, and he broke his back from a mountain biking accident, and he has a fairly high level injury. And so when he, you know, started to go back to work and, you know, get back into living again, after being in the hospital, he was just finding all these barriers of like, you know, a step like three inches, four inches in his power chair, he couldn't get into a restaurant, he couldn't get into a store. So he developed these ramps that are wooden, and they're painted in bright colors. And I think, like, Home Depot is a partner, like a sponsor. And so he's been getting communities and neighborhoods to, you know, buy into these ramps, and I'm not even sure if they have to pay or whether they're even, like, donated and volunteers helped make them and because they're portable, they kind of, you know, there's a gray area with the the laws on having like this ramp coming out on the sidewalk, because it's a trip hazard. But because it's not permanent, he's been able to kind of make it work. And anyway, so I bring him up, because he had the same issue. And he was talking to retailers about getting a ramp in front of their store. And he'd be, you know, they'd say, Well, you know, I don't, I don't have people with disabilities coming into my store. And it's like, the ramp, you know, speaking of universal is good for women with strollers, or you know, guys that are pulling in a dolly with, you know, in boxes. And so it's not just for wheelchair user, it's good for other people as well,

R

Rob Mineault 26:51

Stories like that really amaze me too, because if there's such small little things that have such a huge impact downstream, once people actually pay attention and realize that there is this problem out there, and there there is this need. And I really feel like adaptive clothing, especially and I might be a little biased because you know, I just binge watched Fashion Dis but there, there is such a need out there. And there is such a huge impact, even just on little things. You know, when you when you're being able to provide this sense of fashion to people who've never had it before, because they've never been able to find the right clothing. It's huge. It's huge for a lot of people. So let me ask you this, what what's your experience now that you've, you've been in this industry for over 15 years now? Was it a really slow rolling start? Are you finding that you're really starting to gain traction? What's kind of what's your trajectory been like?

I

Izzy Camilleri 27:57

It's been a slow burn. Um, you know, it's been challenging. It's been good, you know, but it has definitely been a labor of love. There's a lot of people out there that don't want to wear adaptive clothing. They want to wear what everybody else is wearing. But once you know, once we can make that sale and have the person experience the clothes are comfortable, without lacking style. So once we you know, once we get a person to become a believer, you know, we've done our job but but it it takes time, but I'm my most recent pant, I'm not sure if you're aware I have a pant called the Game Changer. And it's a seamless back pant. So it's much safer for people to wear, especially if you're paralyzed and you're at risk of a pressure sore. Right. And this is something that since day one I've had people asking me to create a seamless backhand and in the beginning I didn't understand why they were asking me to do that because I didn't really I have no idea what a precious or was did not know how serious and the fact that it was that it's deadly, potentially. But then you know through the years I started understanding and then but I kept thinking well that seam at the back of a pant is so integral to creating a pant and it divides right left it divides front and back. It allows dimension between front and

back. And I really did not think it was possible to create like a fitted pant like a pair of jeans for example. You know you can see like harem pants and really baggy pants that maybe have no seam at the back. But then you're sitting on all these folds, which you know, again is not ideal and if you're risky, and then just before COVID, a guy called me and asked me the same question and then COVID came down, and I was sitting at home kind of, you know, staring at the wall, wondering what was going on and what was happening with the world. And I started thinking about this issue, and I decided to crack it. And so I started talking to health professionals, someone I know, nearly died from a pressure sore. So I used him actually, as a guinea pig. He's one of our models, and he's become a really good friend. And so I asked him if he could help me with the testing of the pants, and you know, to make sure they're comfortable, and they're kind of doing what they need to do. And so through the course of a few months, I figured it out and actually got a patent on it, because I realized the importance of these pants. And since I've been at it for so long, I've seen so many companies knock me off, too, which is really, you know, difficult to watch. Because I had, I couldn't protect myself in the past. And just as an FYI, once you put something out on the market for one year, it's not patentable. So anything I did in the past I couldn't protect. But then with this patent, because I realized how important and serious the design of these pants were, I, I went in, I took the steps to get them protected. And so there are best sellers now. And I actually don't even want to offer any pants with a seam in the back. Because it's dangerous, allowing this one guy the model, he for him, they allow him freedom, because he knows that he can spend more time in his pants than he could before in other pants. And because he's I think he can only be in a pair of pants for about three or four hours. And then he's got to he's got to change. But now he can spend more time in them. And he doesn't have to, you know, keep looking at his watch or, you know, checking his derriere to make sure there's no marks and things like that.

R

Rob Mineault 32:23

With different adaptive clothing, is the material itself, important as well, like, do you have to sort of stray from how you would design, say, a conventional pair of pants based on the material?

I

Izzy Camilleri 32:40

Well, no, not necessarily, like on the most part, you can really, you know, use a lot of the same fabrics, you do still want to think of comfort. And I always try to have, you know, pick a fabric that has a stretch in it. Because again, when we sit for example, our bodies spread out. So you know, you want to have that accommodation, you don't want fabrics that are too stiff or uncomfortable. So it's it's, it's there's nothing really specific is just keeping some things in mind. And for some people, they do have skin issues that they need to be aware of, too. So I do try to you know, just kind of keep all that stuff in the back of my head.

L

Lis Malone 33:30

Do you find that you face any manufacturing barriers with these these new designs?

I

Izzy Camilleri 33:38

Um, well, yes and no. No, because they're constructed in the same way that anything else would be so you know, even as a fashion designer doing the kind of ready to wear collection, you come up with new designs all the time and new, you know, silhouettes and things like that. And so when you give it to a sewist especially like the first person to sew a garment is called a Sample Sewist. So you give it to the sample sewist who's usually pretty open minded to begin with. And they'll you know, and you're you've given them all the instruction, and you know, the sketch and you know, technical details and whatever, and it's just sewn. So with adaptive clothing, the cuts might be different, but it's kind of no different than designing anything else that is so or has to so it's no different when we talk about assembly. But because I know with my stuff, a lot of manufacturers have never seen clothes kind of shaped in the way that that mine are, for example, and so it does kind of take a minute for them to kind of digest it. And sometimes they feel like they need to correct what looks wrong. But what's wrong is actually right. And if they correct it, then that's wrong. So then once they get it, and I just tell them, Okay, just follow my sample that we've produced in my studio, just follow the sample, like, don't change anything, it needs to be the way that I'm giving it to you. So and sometimes they think they're doing me a favor by correcting, it's like, no, just you know, what I've given you is correct.

L Lis Malone 35:25

In sourcing material, like creating these magnetic buttons, for example, and whatnot, are those things that are readily available are these sort of things that you kind of have to sort of do a little hunting and gathering to find the right types.

I Izzy Camilleri 35:42

They're, they're pretty much readily available. And sometimes their, their initial reason for being for example, was not to be a magnet on a shirt, but maybe a magnet on a wallet, or, you know, things like that. So sometimes, you know, there's, there's things out there that you can find that, you know, you can use for adaptive clothing, for example, but it was never meant for that. But not to say it can't be used for that. Just like a magnet on a purse.

L Lis Malone 36:19

I love this whole, like peeling back the curtain behind how garments are made. So, okay, so this is cup because sometimes my mind goes in the gutter, and I'm gonna apologize, right off the bat. So like when people who work in the adult industry when they kind of have like, like those breakaway garments on stage and stuff like everything, oh my gosh, like to rip all those buttons, everything others like magnets that they're using or Velcro or what do you what do you think's going on there?

I Izzy Camilleri 36:54

Um, it depends. Not that I you know, I have direct experience. I would say that it's Velcro. Um, and it could be magnets, but Velcro was a lot easier to work with. And magnets are a bit trickier because you need to be really precise where the magnets are going is when you have a right

because if it's not in the right spot, then the garment is going to pucker. But you know, with Velcro, you can just adjust it. It's quick. It's it's so I would assume that it's Velcro.

L Lis Malone 37:38

See, it's another great selling point for adaptive clothing. You can just kind of break out break like you know, for certain garments, right. Come on, Ryan. Yeah.

I Izzy Camilleri 37:48

And we have we have pants that also undo downsides just like a breakaway pant, but it's with a zipper. So the good thing about that so the the functionality of that is if you wear a leg bag, for example, it's a two ended zipper too, so you can unzip it from the bottom up to access your leg bag. Or if you need to access your crotch for example, there's zippers down both sides so you can you can unzip in the front of your pants open or it can serve as that breakaway pant for that stripper.

R Ryan Fleury 38:29

It may be a Husband, husband or wife wife or husband wife.

L Lis Malone 38:35

Hey, it doesn't matter where you're stripping.

S Steve Barclay 38:38

But when it comes right down to it though nobody wants Steve with breakaway pants

R Rob Mineault 38:45

True.

L Lis Malone 38:48

Or Ryan in chaps

S Steve Barclay 38:49

I would be I would be that guy in the office just walking through the Office going "Hey, check this out".

R

Rob Mineault 38:58

Yeah, and then the lawsuits begin. Okay, I've got an sort of an open ended question. Steering things back on in back from the weeds. Where do you and you may not be able to answer this Izzy, but I'm just curious. Where do you kind of see the barriers between this real breakthrough of adaptive clothing into sort of mainstream retailers? Or even just more awareness? Do we need more big clothing retailers jumping on board of this and giving some retail space to adaptive clothing or ... where do you kind of see the holdup?

I

Izzy Camilleri 39:46

Um, yes to what you just said like I think more and more brands jumping in is just going to shine a brighter light on it again people, and then that will also solve that other problem where people just don't want to wear adaptive clothing for lots of different reasons. Then again, you know, if it can be made cool, and it can be made, you know it, it looks like anybody else's clothing and the functionality of it is really hidden. And so it doesn't look any different. And you know, for some people, it might be a price barrier.

R

Rob Mineault 40:36

Actually, what, while you mentioned that, so what is sort of the the price point of adaptive clothing? And is, is that a barrier in your experience?

I

Izzy Camilleri 40:39

Well, it's not so much the work that goes in, like the preliminary work, it's not so much that it's about scale. So, you know, where are you producing? Are you producing in North America, or are you offshore? And if you're producing offshore, you need to be doing big volume. And so, if you're not doing big volume, you can't do it offshore. And so, on the most part, you know, it's not cheap. And sometimes, you know, people get pretty upset about that. And they just don't understand how it all works. And a lot of times, I get accused of taking advantage of people with disabilities, which could not be further from the truth. And, you know, there's no explaining and making people understand because all they know, is that they can buy a pair of jeans at Walmart for \$25 or \$30. Right? I'm not Walmart, and, you know, like, and so people just don't get it. They don't understand, well, why can Walmart do it and you can't? And so it's, it's hard, because I've given up so much for this. And I, you know, like, I've, it's been, it's been, you know, really hard, and, but people just don't, they don't see that. And all they know is that my prices are too expensive for them to afford. And they often say like nobody with disabilities can afford your stuff, which is not true, because we have a lot of customers who can't afford it. And it's just like mainstream fashion, there's people that can afford a high end, you know, a higher price point. And there's people that can't, but hopefully as I move on, and grow the company, I can start bringing my prices down. As you know, my numbers go up.

R

Rob Mineault 42:52

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, we you know, a lot of us here have experienced in the assistive technology field. And it's it's exactly the same. A lot of the devices, the equipment are all high price. But it comes down to manufacturing and just scale.

S Steve Barclay 43:09

Yeah, we hear the same thing about braille displays. Why can't a Braille display be cheap? Well, it's because they don't make a lot of braille displays.

R Rob Mineault 43:19

Yeah, that's right. Izzy, I want to thank you so much for taking some time out of your evening to come talk to us. Where, if people are interested, where can they find you online? Where can they get more information and check out your store?

I Izzy Camilleri 43:33

So they can find our online store at izadaptive.com. And our social channels are IZ Adaptive on Facebook, and Instagram and Twitter.

R Rob Mineault 43:45

Well, listen, I'm excited to see more of you hopefully on Fashion Dis season two if it happens. Certainly. Fingers crossed.

R Ryan Fleury 43:54

I hope so.

I Izzy Camilleri 43:55

Well, thank you so much for having me. It's been a lot of fun.

R Ryan Fleury 43:59

Thanks, Izzy.

L Lis Malone 44:00

Thank you.

R Rob Mineault 44:01
Oh, what a lovely lady.

L Lis Malone 44:03
Her name is Izzy, I mean, that's such a cool name. You got to you have to work in either music or fashion.

S Steve Barclay 44:10
Or assistive technology.

R Rob Mineault 44:12
We worked with was a lovely Scottish lady named Izzy for years.

L Lis Malone 44:18
Yeah, there you go. Yeah, but yeah, but music and fashion was like, What a cool name. It's a natural fit.

R Rob Mineault 44:26
So interesting. I, I love this idea of universal design and fashion. You know, but when you think about it, it has been around for quite a while because like shoes that have Velcro on them instead of laces. Those have been a thing for for quite a while. And same thing with with shoes with no laces that you just slip on. And I never even it never even occurred to me that those are obviously great adaptive clothing that just sort of spill into the mainstream because some people like me are lazy and I don't want to bend over and, you know, tie up my shoes. So having a Velcro shoe, I thought that was pretty cool for a while.

L Lis Malone 45:12
That whole concept of necessity versus luxury. So, yeah, but I've been seeing this and I can't think of the name of the brand off the top of my head. But I've been seeing this these commercials running for these shoes like these that you mentioned. And that's their whole selling point, they slip right on. You don't need to use your finger to hold the you know, the back doesn't collapse. They stay on strong. No laces, no nothing. So, yeah, it's they're definitely they're definitely capitalizing on the laziness of of people in their wardrobing.

R Rob Mineault 45:46

Well, again, it's just this great

S

Steve Barclay 45:49

The need of people in their wardrobing.

L

Lis Malone 45:53

Well, it's the mainstream that's going to - that's definitely their laziness.

S

Steve Barclay 45:58

But keep in mind, though, in that mainstream, there's all kinds of people who have minor injuries, so on so forth, that you might not be able to bend over and, you know, put put a shoe on.

L

Lis Malone 46:08

Yeah, no, absolutely. But it's it's the it's the laziness that are going to make it more ubiquitous so that they can bring bring the prices down. Yeah, to make it more universal. So we love you lazy people, you make life so much better.

S

Steve Barclay 46:27

Make our market bigger. Read Braille

L

Lis Malone 46:34

Come on, people let your fingers do the walking Come on, learn.

R

Rob Mineault 46:38

But it is it's the sad truth. We've talked about this for years. I mean, that's what what it really takes to get to get the numbers up there. So that these these things can trickle into the mainstream is that is the greatest way is that is to get the mainstream embracing any that particular style or brand or piece of technology. And that's what usually generally needs to happen to really supercharge these things, and I feel like adaptive clothing is is so important, but it just it's not quite there. But I would love to be able to like walk into your, your big box store and find you know, adaptive clothing section and I just wonder how many years away we are from seeing that?

R

Ryan Fleury 47:29

Well, why does it even have to be its own section? Why can't you walk into Walmart go to the men's section and you're looking at dress shirts and you just happen to find a dress shirt with magnets instead of buttons.

R

Rob Mineault 47:39

Well sure for that but I mean I guess what I'm saying because because I do I understand what you know, what is the saying is that there's sort of that that universal design stuff that yes, you could see that everywhere. But then there's also the stuff that you know really is is very special for like seated frames or people who are seated right where you have the back seamless like and that those are the sorts of things that you would sort of need to have their own section in the store. But it'd be great to see it'd be able to for wheelchair user to just be able to wheel into Walmart and be able to Yeah, I'm gonna go buy a new pair of jeans that you know that that are adapted. That's sort of the I think the ideal and but I don't know it sounds like we're kind of still a ways away from that, but hopefully not too far.

R

Ryan Fleury 48:30

They got to be able to get up in over the curb to get into Walmart before they can shop Walmart.

S

Steve Barclay 48:35

And that's and that's where that curb guy comes in.

R

Rob Mineault 48:38

Stop Gap. We'll get there we'll get there we just got to keep doing the podcast for another seven years. See we'll look back in seven years be like oh man, remember remember how things have changed like that?

S

Steve Barclay 48:51

Yeah, we solved everything.

R

Rob Mineault 48:55

Well, anything else to add?

R

Ryan Fleury 49:07

None no time for dinner a shower

hope no time for dinner & shower.

S Steve Barclay 49:13

How do you do with the water tank?

R Ryan Fleury 49:15

We got the hot water tank they ended up having a pump so we didn't have to handbag buckets of water up the stairs and out the door. So they had the hose in the pumps and that took about 45 minutes to drain the tank and so all in all they were here about two hours. We have water again. We called three different companies starting on Saturday when we noticed we had no hot water and Milani was the only ones that called us back and you know basically came the next day so a Milani, thank you so much.

R Rob Mineault 49:51

Yeah, really, this podcast is brought to you by Milani Plumbing and Heating.

S Steve Barclay 49:56

It is one of the best I guess plumbing companies in town. Like I live in a strata corporation with 102 units in it. And when we have to shut down the water for a block of buildings in here, yeah, we call Milani, because they are one of the companies with the competency to turn it back on very, very slowly, rather than blowing up pipes all over the complex. Lessons learned over the years.

R Ryan Fleury 50:36

Yeah, do you have to say the guy that came today was phenomenal. Just very personal. courteous. Very, very, very good. Excellent.

L Lis Malone 50:47

And I wouldn't even mention the name of my hard seltzer I was drinking last week.

R Rob Mineault 50:50

I know. They've clearly just just diving into the corporate shilling.

L Lis Malone 50:58

I'm looking for a podday

I'm looking for a payday.

R Rob Mineault 51:01
You're holding out holding out .. these meatheads just did that for free.

L Lis Malone 51:10
Yeah, show me the money

R Rob Mineault 51:15
Ryan you should have just said, "Do you know who I am? You're gonna want to knock a couple 100 bucks off this".

R Ryan Fleury 51:26
Well they actually did because they put a hole in our wall going down the stairs.

R Rob Mineault 51:30
Oh, I Take it back.

R Ryan Fleury 51:33
They took a a little bit off. Yeah, the hot water tank that didn't get completely drained I guess and so when they get up the stairs or bring the new one down the stairs. I guess one of them slipped on a stair and gouged the wall. So there's no hole in the wall but there's a mark

R Rob Mineault 51:53
Listen, they knocked a couple 100 bucks off

R Ryan Fleury 51:57
Absolutely. Yeah.

L Lis Malone 52:03
Yeah, backhanded plug for them. Hmm,

S Steve Barclay 52:06
Well, that's because they weren't paying us if they had been paying us it would have been -

L Lis Malone 52:10
Glitter bombs. No, spangles!

R Ryan Fleury 52:21
That's my new band. My new song is going to be Spangles and Glitter. All right, we'll work on that.

R Rob Mineault 52:34
I can't wait to work on the music video for that.

R Ryan Fleury 52:39
Breakaway clothing, glitter.

R Rob Mineault 52:44
We will get Izzy who can design some breakaway clothing. Talk to a glitter manufacture. Okay, well, let's get out of here. Since we're all hungry, and Ryan is stinky. So hey, Lis.

L Lis Malone 53:04
Hey, Rob.

R Rob Mineault 53:06
Where can people find us?

L Lis Malone 53:09
We can be found on the web at www.atbanter.com.

R Rob Mineault 53:17

We can also be reached at an email that goes along the lines of cowbell@atbanter.com

S

Steve Barclay 53:35

And if you want to look for us on social media, don't because we're not there. We just hate social media. We just can't stand it. It's terrible. It's awful. It's influencing elections in the Philippines.

R

Rob Mineault 53:46

Are you off the social media now?

R

Ryan Fleury 53:49

He better not? His company has a Facebook page.

S

Steve Barclay 53:53

I can't because of my company has a Facebook page, I have to be on Facebook and Twitter. So yeah, so you can find Canadian Assistive Technologies on Facebook and Twitter - shameless plug. There might also be an AT Banter page there.

R

Rob Mineault 54:10

I can't wait. I can't wait for Meta to crashe and burn.

R

Ryan Fleury 54:18

I've already started researching if I can upload my consciousness to the metaverse.

R

Rob Mineault 54:24

Well, that might be cool. If we could do that. Places that are actually advertising, uploading, uploading your consciousness to google it up, see if you can upload yourself to the metaverse.

S

Steve Barclay 54:36

Actually, this is actually a really good idea, Ryan because I don't really want to change tech support in the future.

R Ryan Fleury 54:44
You won't need tech support in the future, it'll just be AI.

S Steve Barclay 54:47
Well, you know, I'd prefer to have some human experience in there until the AI takes over.

R Rob Mineault 54:52
Well listen, if you try to call anybody like you can't you can't actually reach a human on a phone. Exactly. So Oh, I mean, I don't know it's only a matter of time when it's ... I mean, how long before AI just answers a company's email itself. I don't know. I don't know what we're going to do in the future. We're just going to sit around. I guess we're watching Netflix and letting the robots --

S Steve Barclay 55:19
It's going to be 24/7 Netflix. Netflix and chill.

R Rob Mineault 55:23
Yeah, I'm down. That is gonna about do it for us this week. Big thanks of course the Easy Camera Larry for joining us. Big thanks to you for listening. And we will see everybody next week.

S Steve Barclay 55:38
Banter banter.