

# Innovation in 5\_ Stress Less A...with Ahoi and Momentum Refresh

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

disabilities, bathroom, restroom, wheelchair, momentum, mobile application, place, accessibility, jake, adjustable, user, enjoy, refresh, accessible, community, dehydrate, google, dignity, caused, hoier lift

## SPEAKERS

Jake Haendel, Molly Lazarus, Becky Hansen

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### M Molly Lazarus 00:01

For people with disabilities, where to go is a much more complicated question than it is for the rest of us. The better question is, where can they go for most of us who will leave the house on a daily basis, we know that if we need to use the restroom while we're out, that we will be able to find one. We don't necessarily consider the stairs we will need to walk down to get to it. We don't consider the space we might need to maneuver a chair. We don't consider that we might need an adult changing table, and when it's not available, the alternative feels public and embarrassing. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights law that was enacted in 1990. Its goal was prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, but its scope and enforcement is so narrow that many disabled people are left with the persistent fear of not being able to find a place to go when nature calls. My name is Molly Lazarus, and in today's episode of Innovation in 5, we'll hear from two companies that are trying to bring more control and dignity back to the ever-present problem of where to go.

### B Becky Hansen 01:21

My name is Becky Hansen, and I work with Momentum Refresh.

### J Jake Haendel 01:26

I'm Jake Haendel. I am one of the founders of Ahoi.

### M Molly Lazarus 01:31

For Jake, founding this company came from a really personal place.

**J****Jake Haendel 01:35**

I'm the only documented case of survival in the world from a terminal brain illness that caused me to have locked-in syndrome for 10 months. I spent four years in the hospital recovering, and when I came back to my community of Boston, as a guy in a wheelchair, I just found it really impossible to find places that were truly accessible for my specific needs at that time, and I had a lot of anxiety about going anywhere. So I was kind of becoming more of a shut-in and that's just not me. And I talked to my therapist about this and I'm like, "is just this unique to me?" And they're like, "Oh no, all of our patients have these fears and unknowns." And I was just like, technology should be able to solve for this. Like, you know, Google and Yelp has all this ambiance and food, but it's like, we're just trying to find out, like, is there a bathroom I can use? Is there a seating that I can safely sit at, comfortably enjoy? Like, will I have to dehydrate myself because there isn't a bathroom? It's too small, the door will stay open. There's all these things and it's causing people to not enjoy life, and that's really sad.

**B****Becky Hansen 02:50**

So many people with disabilities are limited in the places that they can go because they cannot use a standard ADA restroom. So the ADA standards were developed over 30 years ago, and in that 30 years, technology has increased dramatically, and wheelchairs and accessibility has changed as well. So because people don't have access to the correct facilities, it means a lot of times they miss out on festivals or sporting events or just enjoying different things in the community because there's literally no safe space to use the restroom.

**M****Molly Lazarus 03:35**

So Momentum Refresh set out to create the most accessible restroom, and for them, this most accessible restroom is on wheels.

**B****Becky Hansen 03:46**

So from the outside, it looks like a van or a box truck, and then on the inside, it has an adult-size changing table. It's got a toilet with adjustable grab bars. It has a bidet, it has a Hoyer lift. It's got a height-adjustable sink with a cutout so somebody can get their wheelchair up and under it and still reach the water. And makes it a safe, respectful, hygienic way for people to have the accommodations that they need, and especially if they need a companion or a caregiver to help them in the restroom, it's got all of the space that they both need to get done what needs to be done. And then back to the fun.

**M****Molly Lazarus 04:26**

Momentum Refresh makes a fleet of these vehicles. You may have seen them at the LA Marathon, the Minnesota State Fair, or perhaps you'd like to rent them for an event happening near you. You can do so at their website, [www.momentumrefresh.com](http://www.momentumrefresh.com). For Jake and the team in Ahoi, they want to give the options back to the user so they can know with less stress what type of accessibility the venue they're going to might have.

 J

Jake Haendel 04:57

It is a mobile application. Think of a Google Map experience, but we take the mystery out of accessibility. We're letting you know what is there and if it worked for someone, possibly in your situation. So we also do things like we flag, you know, automatic soap dispenser, like, again, what is there? Just you're gonna have to pull paper towels, or there's a hand dryer, but it angled at a wall, so it might be difficult for you. You know, we kind of just let users know what is indicated by our user-generated content. And you know, there might be a better bathroom. I've been to places where I couldn't use the bathroom there, but I found out there's like, you know, something next door with a great bathroom. And we tell users that too. It's like, you know, you can enjoy this place. You won't fit in the bathroom with even a small wheelchair, but you know, 50 feet away, across the street, there's a coffee shop with a great bathroom.

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Molly Lazarus 06:06

Ahoi is a mobile application and can be downloaded from the App Store, while we do have a very long way to go to make the world truly accessible and to create safe and dignified ways for people with disabilities to be able to use the bathrooms in their community, Ahoi and Momentum Tefresh are paving the way for a bit more inclusion and dignity.