

ACI Global Training Instructor Biography



Name: *Eric Lipp*

Courses: *Accommodating Passengers with Disabilities (APD)
Workshop*

Eric Lipp, Founder and Executive Director of the Open Doors Organization (ODO), started the organization after personally experiencing the restrictions that people with disabilities face in everyday life. A day before his 30th birthday Eric was diagnosed with Von Hippel Lindau disease, which had resulted in a tumor growth on his spinal cord. Eric was told that due to the trauma of the surgery he might never regain his ability to walk. This diagnosis and subsequent spinal cord surgery have not stopped Eric from participating in life to the fullest. This experience was the catalyst in encouraging Eric to found the Open Doors Organization.

Eric helps businesses achieve equal access beyond simple compliance to truly open doors for people with disabilities of all types. To this end, he initiated the 2002, 2005, and 2015 ODO Market Studies which the travel industry views as the definitive source for statistics on air travel by Americans with disabilities. The research looks not only at travel patterns, frequency and expenditure but also which barriers still remain and which needs are not being met.

Much of Eric's impact and influence has been within the aviation industry. After first initiating symposia for airlines and airline service companies to better understand and find solutions to their customer service issues, he then created the Universal Access in Airports (UAIA) conference. Held biennially since 2006, UAIA brings together aviation access professionals to exchange ideas and learn about technology, best practices and regulatory changes and to hear directly from customers with disabilities about their experiences, both good and bad.