Food Lion Website Current State Analysis, Competitive Benchmarking, & Recommendations Summary 1.0





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3. Men are enticed by product, then lifestyle; women are enticed by lifestyle, then product	
4. Women expand the mission; men stick to the mission	
Nielsen Norman Group Report, E-Commerce User Experience	
Provide the product details customers want and need	
Speak the customer's language: avoid jargon and clever names	
Be specific	
Don't present too much detail at once	
Product Images	
Price, Other Costs, and Availability	
Specifying Product Options	
Taking Action	
Jakob Nielsen Interview, E-Commerce Site Design	
Use a clearly descriptive title, and if possible a photo.	
Provide ALL the information a shopper will need	
State product availability and, when appropriate, delivery time	
Link to your site's guarantee policy, and, if possible, the manufacturer's warranty.	
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Executive Summary

The Food Lion website is in a transitional stage maturing from the "brochureware" that typified Websites 10 years ago to an "experience" site that today's online consumers expect from a large grocer. The site, however, is experiencing a number of growing pains in its attempt to establish and differentiate itself among its competitors. Like many retailer sites, foodlion.com is failing to maintain its brand identity as the umbrella over all its sections. Summarily, the site's focus on "community" overwhelms (rather than supports) the customer's primary motivation for visiting: To enhance the shopping experience.

In order to become a major player in the online channel, the Food Lion site needs to update its offerings. But *before* that can be done, our recommendation is that it rediscovers its foundation. Food Lion would be wise to begin by devoting its energy to an eGovernance strategy that is simple, solid, and strictly adhered.

To accomplish this, we recommend that Food Lion:

- Focus on grocery-based objectives and tasks -- contexts that are of interest to the Brand's primary shopping audience.
- Separate the navigational subjects such that tasks of interest to the primary audience (shopping consumers) are forefront in the design, while non-shopping (community, corporate, career) tasks are clearly delineated.
- **Diminish navigations that highlight corporation objectives.** These should be played down and clearly partitioned away from shopping experience items.
- Separate the promotional and "social networking" microsites from the navigational structure by highlighting them as banners.
- Establishing a template design that is uniquely Food Lion (the current design is obviously lifted from a competitor site).
- Cut back on the content. The site is too densely written for the Web.
- Create a standard terms list and follow a style guide for contents.
- Implement a standardized call to action for every page format preferably in a visual format.
- Don't begin (or continue) social networking strategies until after the site's foundation is more clearly defined.
- Establish a "look and feel" that speaks directly to the grocery shopper experience by using crisp, vibrant colors from a minimized organic palette.

The following recommendations are intended to help Food Lion establish its online brand by first re-finding its center.



Introduction

Purpose and Scope of this Heuristic Review

The purpose of this document is to:

- 1) Define the current state of the Food Lion website and highlight areas of opportunity for the redesign.
- 2) Assess some key competitors of the Food Lion website and benchmark against those competitors.
- 3) Provide Food Lion's team with a summary of secondary research conducted by Engauge to validate our recommendations for the new Website.
- 4) And most importantly, recommend improvements to the visitor experience of the Food Lion Website such to:
 - Showcase Food Lion product offerings to new customers and increase conversions.
 - Create a more sticky online experience that reflects and builds on the strengths of the Food Lion Brand.

This document also includes insights and best practices in customer-centered communication and consumer psychology from The Engauge User Experience and Behavioral Research departments. A full list of references is available in the last section.

Summary of Opportunities & Considerations

Analyzing a wide range of example shopping experience offerings and Food Lion's current website helps identify key opportunities and considerations for the redesign.

Based on research-driven best practices and international design standards, we indentify several kinds of problems that are common opportunities for website redesign. To support our findings, the following major categories of site components have been analyzed:

- Navigation
- Organization
- Taxonomy
- Content
- Features and Functionality
- Calls to Action
- Look and Feel



Navigation

If a user is unable to successfully navigate a website, they may give up before they find what they're looking for. We evaluate to ensure that there aren't any closed roads or detours that slow a user's progress or prevent them from accomplishing important tasks.

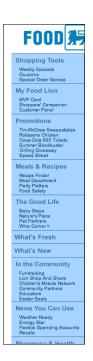
Issue: Oversaturation of Choices

A variety of options is great on the supermarket shelf, but not in the website's primary navigation topics. The current Food Lion homepage (snapshot May 12, 2008) displays over 60 links ranged across 23 independent topics in six functional groupings.

By displaying so many levels of contents at once, the visitor is overwhelmed by choices. Rather than being enticed to inquisitively find something new based on interaction (a mouse click or rollover), the site visitor establishes a subconscious "safe-route" in order to simplify their future experiences – in this respect, entire sections are akin to trees in a forest: unseen and daunting blurs that the visitor whizzes past along their route.







Too many disparate (but seemingly equal) choices for the visitor to digest and navigate.

Recommendation: Minimize the Number of Topics (as well as Non-Related Selections/Topics)

The hierarchical headings of the left navigation should help the visitor "learn" contexts and speed the visitor's route through the site – establishing task-based interactions and encouraging discovery.

- Reduce the number of navigational structures to four: Site-Wide Heading Topics; Primary Navigation; Functional-Task Navigation; and Footer Topics
- Only display sub-sections once the visitor has shown an interest in the overarching topic.

Issue: Inconsistent Navigation Locations and Mechanics

In several screens the navigation appears or disappears without an obvious rationale. This will cause the visitor confusion.



Several fourth level navigations appear to have random formats – appearing above the "hero image" on some screens, below the image on others – even new formats altogether on some sections.





Introduction of alternative navigation structures are visible throughout the site – adding to interface "learnability" issues.

Recommendation: Adhere to a Consistent Navigation Structure



By standardizing the navigation throughout, the editorial team can concentrate their efforts on the variety of the products and services – drawing the visitor's excitement and concentration to these subjects rather than the interface.

Issue: Illogical Navigation Organizations, Divisions, and Groupings

The navigation on the Food Lion website lacks focus. "Gift Cards" are listed among corporate subjects, promotion winners are listed in the "legal" navigation, and sanitation instructions is under "Meals and Recipes." Similarly, the order of subjects — especially in the primary navigation along the left edge — implies the store is not sincerely interested in sharing news and recalls information and would rather sell sweepstake tickets than promote a healthy lifestyle among its customers.

It's unclear why MVP Card, Recipe Finder, and Shoppers' Companion are not considered "Shopping Tools." To special order a cake or a fruit basket, the visitor may not think it makes sense to look under "Meals..." and then "Party Platters."



Home | Gift Cards | About Food Lion | News | Vendors | Associates

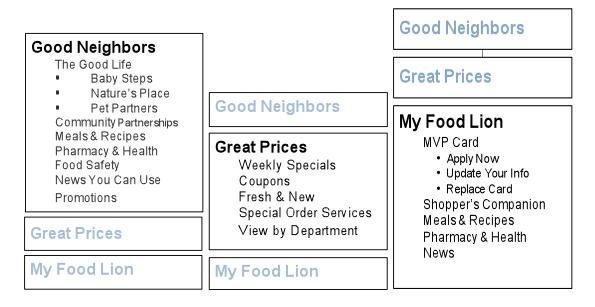
- 1. One of these things (Gift Cards) is not like the others.
- 2. Most web users know how to get back to a site's Home without it taking space in the header navigation (hint: the site logo at left).
- 3. Unless vendors and associates are links that are valuable to the typical user, move them under "About Food Lion."

Recommendation: Create a Strategy for Navigation Placement

- Make certain that each element in groupings are of similar subject matter.
- Minimized the number of navigation structures into (preferably) four groupings.
- Practice "card sorting." In this exercise, you simple write the context of each unique subject onto a card or postit and stack similar items together. If a postit like "Gift Cards" doesn't make sense in a group along with "News," "Vendors," and "Associates," simply stack it separately until it can be matched with other similar items.



- Next, arrange those similar items into an order that makes sense to your visitor through priority, steps, or Brand Promise.
- Move"In the Community" and "Promotions" headings under the Brand tenet of "Good Neighbors." Similarly, "MVP Card," and "Shoppers' Companion" could be considered "Tools" while "Customer Panel" (a section that doesn't clear indicate its own purpose/value until the visitor is well into the process) might make better sense under "In the Community."



Only display items as they're needed – this will simplify the navigation and clarify the site purpose – tying it back to the brand strategy.

By starting with just the examples listed above, the primary navigation can be reduced from 10 to seven major headings – simplifying the navigation while strengthening the Brand.

Recommendation:

• Use microsites as a brandable stand-alone (outside the www.foodlion.com format).

Organization

The next important step to creating a more cohesive Brand experience is achieved through organizing the sorted entries within the new navigation.

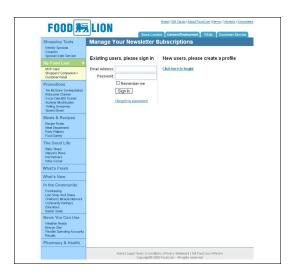


A well organized site:

- Leads visitors to a desired state, transaction or call to action
- Provides visitors a clear understating of the steps required to accomplish their desired actions
- · Appropriately arranges additional elements that the company want s to introduce to the visitor
- Excludes unnecessary screen clutter that inhibits the visitor from achieving their own (or the company's) desired interaction.

Issue: Navigational Organization

Several Food Lion website options are not presented in an order that would help the visitor better-understand the prioritizations of the company, its products or services. Given so many topics, this forces the visitor to attempt to learn the site's offerings in an unintuitive sequence.



Clicking on "Shoppers' Companion" offers no indication why a visitor should sign up.

Recommendations: Navigational Organization

- Set up a Food Lion "Storyline" by presenting the navigational items in an order that speaks to the Food Lion Brand ("Good Neighbors, Great Prices...").
- Organize the interactive components of the site under one logical grouping ("My Food Lion").

Issue: Template Organization

One challenge that's not unique to Food Lion is the need to accommodate a wide range of visitor purposes and mental models across their site. Their current solution is to present secondary and tertiary screens with unique formats designed to excite the visitor. The difficulty here is that so many varying templates weaken the overall site experience and, in turn, the brand.

At the deep content level (inner site pages) the site could benefit from page "anchors" (in page Tables of Content) and a less vertical organization in which key interests are buried below the scroll.



Recommendations: Template Organization

- Don't allow individual product branding to overpower the Food Lion experience.
- Move key site elements such as recipes to a standard location within screens on which they are displayed – preferably above the scroll.
- Develop a color, font, and image palette that supports the brand rather than allowing each screen to dictate a new experience.

Issue: Copy Organization

- Many pages with dense copy in which there is no introduction.
- List screens don't appear to have a logical organization of elements.
- Some screens include introduction copy that doesn't seem to be relevant to the page contents.

Recommendations: Copy Organization

- Adopt a reverse pyramid strategy. Content deep pages will be easier to follow if your
 editorial team places key issues in an introductory paragraph and expands the details later
 within the copy.
- As above, use "anchors" to help the visitor scan and reach page copy of interest easily.
- Add a logical introduction to list screens such as the "What's New" section.

Taxonomy

Taxonomy defines the words and icons used to represent and organize the categories of the website.

Proper taxonomy is designed to be both contextual and visual (iconic) in nature.

- The contextual components ensure that selections are named and grouped in accord with a visitor's expectations and mindset.
- The visual taxonomy presents (and arranges) each grouping so the visitor can easily discern
 a grouping's priority and value within the overall site scope.

Issue: Section Titles

• Some section titles are more clever than descriptive. These can lead a visitor down a path that will ultimately disappoint if the content wasn't meant to entertain. Conversely, some other sections (such as "Meat Department")do present a more exciting context but the titles don't reflect that. Mixing these two types of title presentations, the Food Lion site runs the risk of disappointing visitors looking for both.



- The cleverly named navigation titles are mixed with microsite titles that lead the visitor off the site.
- Some section titles are too broad or narrow for their own contexts. Example: "Party Platters" may not be a location that a person would look for cakes or fruit baskets.

Recommendations: Section Titles

- Treat microsites such as "Baby Steps" outside the site's own navigation structure. Placing
 these such items into their own category is a good start, but be careful that this strategy
 doesn't in itself feel like a brand.
- Remove the clever titles. Busy shoppers will appreciate a sense of clarity as they navigate to desired site sections.

Issue: Images and Iconology

The success of the Food Lion site experience hinges on a solid use of color, imagery, and recognizable icons that should express the quality, freshness and unique value of Food Lion products and services in a simple but powerful way. This is a difficult issue given the expanse of competition from not only other supermarkets, but also food service providers such as restaurants, specialty stores, and other competitions throughout the consumer branding industry from which Food Lion stokes its own shelves. The following are areas where Food Lion will need to visually make better use of its own online visual marketing.

- The site uses many disparate and complex images often on the same screens. Example: "News You Can Use" shows five small but busy images to represent the headings within this sub-section. An additional "New" icon and the screen's overall layout adds to the visual clutter and doesn't represent the sub-headings as a cohesive group.
- Some images are swimming in large template blocks (usually these are horizontal images in vertically designed blocks). This indicates that the template wasn't designed to best accommodate the image selections.
- "Hero image" (the main visual) on the home page is often competing with the Food Lion brand to the extent the visitor may think they've accessed the wrong site.
- While some product images are very good, the majority are either too small to be recognizable or so large that they overwhelm the site.
- The site doesn't use iconography (icons to denote contexts or interactions) to its advantage. As a result, the only brand strength is the Food Lion logo and the use of their trademark blue.
- Competing popular brand logos are a considerable challenge because the site relies so heavily on product placement. The company contributes to this dilemma by introducing its own brand identities and titles ("Baby Steps," "Wine Corner," "Lion Shop and Share," etc.).



• The site fails to recognize the value of color as a psychological incentive. The soft blue of the brand and the washed tones green and beige are not vivid enough to convey a sense of "Freshness" and "Crispness."



Would be a stronger visual if it had one (not two) slogans. Multiple brands clutter the design (why does the image need both Food Lion logo AND words "as 'Food Lion'"?).

Recommendations: Images and Iconology

- Focus on minimal and direct imagery that serves an immediate and re-enforceable
 purpose to a majority of visitors. For example, don't introduce complex images (such as on
 the "News you can use" page) as icons. Only use icons if they are going to be <u>re-used</u> as
 signposts and indicators within the section or somewhere else on the site.
- Use a highly recognizable snippet of product packaging or logo rather than attempting to fit an entire package into a small or vertical or horizontal space,.
- Make certain that the "hero" image on all pages (especially the home page) is recognizably Food Lion branded and doesn't compete with or confuse the brand identity.
- Don't use images that cannot be placed clearly and recognizably.
- Incorporate a simple set of "standard" icons with unique actions to help break up the textual nature of the screens.
- Use simple graphic icons such as those used within the current "Food Safety" section. Here, the use of iconology is simple and powerful.



Content

It's important the site clearly organizes – and reports – its contextual breadth and scale so that the visitor can find information and complete tasks as promised.

Conversely, it's important not to over-extend the site beyond your Brand promise. Too often, a strong Brand will get lost or "watered down" by attempting to be all things to all people.

Issue: Too many contextual choices and subjects

The Food Lion site goes to such length to qualify all its offerings that its own brand slogan is lost among the individual contexts. As stated in the "Navigation" section, this needs to be simplified.

Recommendation: Simplify Site Content Offerings

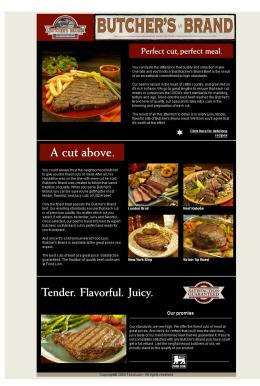
• Discontinue the use of non-Food Lion branded "What's New" product pages. Unless product pages (such as those listed under "What's Fresh") expressly educate the consumer on Food Lion specific qualities, we recommend discontinuing the use of these pages.



Pages displaying don't promote the Food Lion Brand.

Make certain that the navigational titles match the page titles that they lead to.
 Otherwise, you run a risk that the visitor will think they've gone to the wrong location.







-----→ ????

Selecting the "Meat Department" link leads to "Butcher's Brand." This can lead to a disappointing experience for a customer expecting to find a section more like the physical store's meat dept which includes poultry and other meats.

- Each screen should stand on its own merit, but should restate the premise of the overarching site.
 Begin by expressing the product's benefit to the Food Lion customer
- End with a strong, concise call to action unique to Food Lion.
- Don't simply restate offline collateral. Remember that the online environment requires its own
 contextual structure and format. See "Supporting Secondary Research" for more information on how
 to write for the Web.

Features and Functionality

In evaluation, we assess existing site features and functionality to determine they compliment the visitor's experience and are in keeping with the brand promise.

Issue: Site design is dated.

- The site doesn't employ features and functions typically used by today's savvy Web interfaces.
- There is no interaction (other than forms and a very basic flash component).



Navigation is lengthy and lacks interactive utility.

Recommendations:

- Bring the site (including microsites) up-to-date with a more sophisticated navigation structure
- Incorporate a more sophisticated flash experience (not merely a flash animation) to illustrate key components/areas
- Investigate dynamic page technologies to help structure the site
- Create excitement and innovation in order to establish viarl marketing and "stickiness."
- The site doesn't reflect Food Lion's commitment to innovation. The copy and imagery appear to have been reused directly from offline brochures ("brochureware"). The Brand value of the site is diminished due to this dated, "repository" format.
- Enhance the site functionality by including up-to-date Web technologies
- Edu-tainment (consumer products, safety, history, audience specific contexts) is secondary in the consumer's mindset while on the site. Be careful to implement it such that it doesn't get in the way of the tasks.
- Automation of customer services and tasks
- Consumer "self-voyerism" opportunities such as scenario calculators, shopping list visuals and recipe minders

Calls to Action

"Call to Action" refers to how the site **communicates and successfully completes hand-off** of a visitor to a next [preferred] stage in the experience.

However, the visitor does not have to be presented with the opportunity to complete every transaction online. The Food Lion site should provide adequate information to allow the visitor to proceed to the next stage of a desired task.

As an example:

Wrong: For more information, phone customer care.

Right: For more information, contact <u>customercare@foodlion.com</u>:

1-(800)-555-1234 (Monday –Friday, 8am to 7pm, EST).



A. All tasks and site interactions should lead to a desirable solution or conclusion UNIQUE TO FOOD LION. Many pages on the Food Lion site(s) simply end. The lack of a call to action is a lost opportunity to restate or further the experience.

Recommendations:

- Complete each experience [page, task, interaction] by restating the screen highlights or offering an option to further the experience.
- Set off urgent interactions and instructions ("Recalls," "Customer Service" "Weekly Specials") in a separate navigational strategy or banner format outside the standard contexts of the casual site-surfer navigations.
- Reduce Banner Blindness. Rebates, promotions and special offers are unexpected gifts for visitor and Brand alike. Allow them to shine by presenting them in a format that gets them noticed.
- Set off "recipe" items in a unique but standardized way but don't hide them "below the fold" such that the visitor has to scroll to find them.
- Set off Microsites (such as "Baby Steps," "Lion Shop and Share," and Promotions.



Lots of text and few images make the site seem dated. The current flash image overwhelms the screen – making the visitor feel as though they are on a "theater" site.



Look and Feel

A visitor's first impression of a website often sets the tone for their confidence in a company and the scope/quality of their products and services.

To retain the trust of your target audience and customers, it's important for a site's look and feel to align with your Brand promise.

Issue: No sense of "experience" in the visual design.

At first glance, www.foodlion.com does not appear to be a grocer Web site. Too much emphasis is placed on individual promotions and specific products. The Food Lion brand color (a pale blue) is not generally associated with the concepts of "Crisp," and "Fresh."

Recommendations:

- Unify the visual messaging. Food Lion's slogan conjures a strong brand mental model. By structuring the various visual aspects of the site within the context of "Good Neighbors..." they already have the foundation for a visual image "palette" that can express the emotional positives inherent within their own sales process. Examples would be to use more contextual images showing diverse groups of people enjoying generic foods and products
- Employ color psychology. While we aren't recommending Food Lion re-brand itself away from pale blue, it would be in its best interest to de-emphasis the color on its website. There are a number of very successful ways that Food Lion can denote its brand by placing it into a more vivid color palette. A key way to emphasis this would be in a slightly posterized, vibrant photographic color palette using vivid reds, greens and yellows keeping away from pale, weak hues.





Use







Competitive Sites

Comparing competitor web sites in respect to our six heuristic categories (Navigation, Organization, etc.) is often a more subjective than objective task. Themes, approaches and deliveries that fail for one Brand site may work fine or even appear "best practice" on another. It's important to keep in mind that this exercise is designed to illustrate ways that the competition has successfully overcome similar channel issues.

For this exercise, we focused on three of Food Lion's competitors: Kroger, Safeway, and WalMart.

Navigation

The first thing that you notice on either the Safeway or Kroger sites to is that they approach their navigations by displaying only what the visitor needs to see, relying more on the premise of web "scent" (the premise of seeking out a destination page by following a logical trail). Rather than showing ALL their wares on the homepage, they trust the visitor to self-navigate based on task. This keeps the homepages clean and uncluttered.







The Wal-Mart site, however, displays many more diverse paths. Like Food Lion, they want people to see a lot of products and services directly from the homepage. But one key differentiator is in the *way* Wal-Mart addresses the groupings. First, Wal-Mart uses its primary navigation solely as a means to locate products/services. By moving promotions, corporate information, and other non-purchasable items to a separate navigation at the bottom of the screen (far below the scroll), they allow their navigation structures to self-define the initial "scent" premise: "What type of item are you looking for?"







The Wal-Mart side did deviate from its basic navigation in one main area; it's corporate section. This could be considered a wise decision because the focus of corporate visitors is so different than that of other audiences.

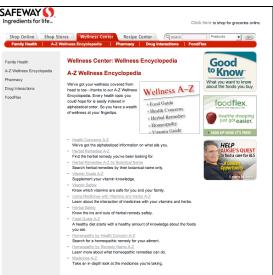
Organization

Each page within the competitor sites is based on a strict adherence to the site template and definition. The secondary pages of the Safeway site each contain very different contexts but always maintain the same "template" structure.



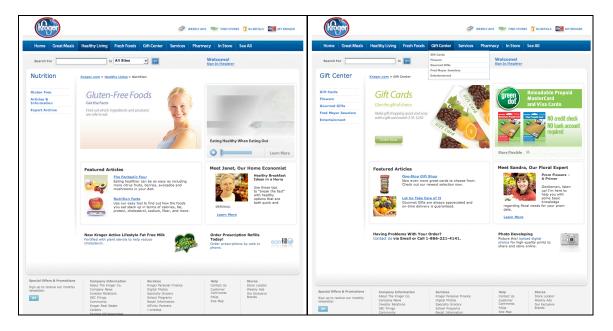


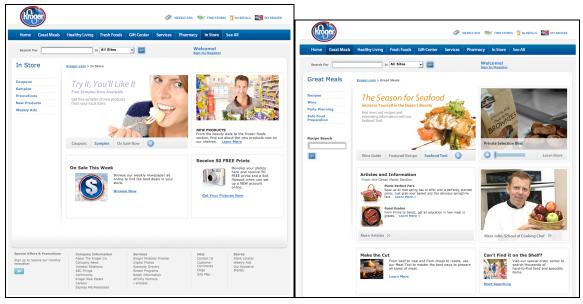






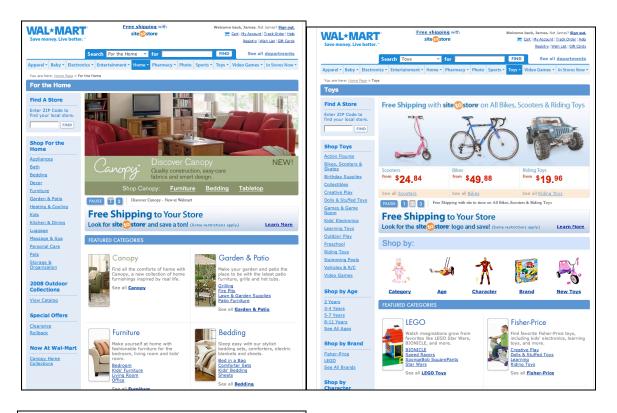
The Kroger secondary pages are even more strictly aligned to a template guideline.

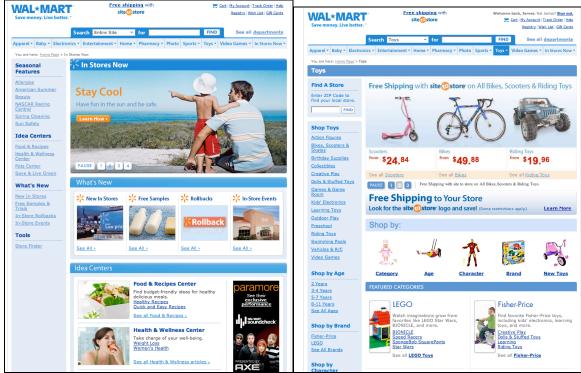




WalMart also has a strict template, but allows for a slight variation as you get deeper into particular contexts. Note the difference in the *Idea Centers* format of their "In Stores Now" screen.









As you navigate into each of the competitor sites, you will notice that Safeway does begin to falter on its organization standards. For example, its Health Centers section was organized in an unintuitive order. Kroger also had a few issues but was much more likely to adhere to alphabetical order for long lists.

Wal-Mart lists were consistently alphanumeric in order, but given the expansive nature of the site this would have been out of necessity.

Taxonomy

One of the differentiators among the competitor sites in comparison to Food Lion is that they do not introduce sections through the use of clever titles. The titles are short and clear. Task-based sections are easily recognizable in that they start with active verbs (Shop Online; Order Refills; Print Coupons; Bookmark Us).

Content

Except for corporate content and some deeper pharmacy/health items, each site maintained a strong adherence to the reverse pyramid format. The majority of contexts were never longer than three sentences per paragraph (most were one or two sentence per paragraph). And each used plenty of short-phrased bulleted lists and subheadings for scanability.

Features and Functionality

All three competitor sites offered some amount of online purchasing functions, coupons and recipes maintenance (with advanced printing features), and search features (including recipe and/or section specific searches). Other typical online forms such as shopping lists, loyalty card application/maintenance, maps, email newsletters and viral marketing initiatives were available.

Additional features that helped to differentiate the competitor sites include:

- Sophisticated (and branded) use of flash and animation
- Recipe "themes" such as a calendar-based menu planner
- Location- and product-based advertising
- Interactive shopper education tools (Foodflex, calorie calculators, health interactives in the pharmacy departments, etc.)
- "Experience" companion items to compliment the featured products
- Structured and interesting formats for displaying food preparation information.

Calls to Action

Each competitor site page was designed to end on a strong call to action within their main categories.

Look and Feel

Each competitor site maintained strict, professional brand equity on their sites. The competitor microsites also used a similar brand strategy of color palettes and formatting that made them immediately recognizable.

There were, however, several instances in which partnership sites (separate than microsites) lost branding altogether. It's important to note that such sites probably should have entirely unique experiences as they are not part of the company's Branding.





CHEMICAL SAFETY RIGHT-TO-KNOW INFORMATION STATION			
A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is prepared by the manufacturer of a product for the purpose of providing information on the safe use, handling and potential hazards of a product. This information assists with the proper response in the event of an emergency.			
To search, type the criteria for the product you want, then click the Search button. You may only search by one field at a time.			
Product Name:			
Manufacturer Name:			
UPC#:			
Item #:			
Clear Search			
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. provides a MSDS to our Customers and Associates to assist with proper usage of the products and assists our small business customers to comply with applicable regulations. By law, customers that utilize our products in a business must provide access to MSDS to employees. As distributors of hazardous products, we provide this information in a furnity manner and strive to exceed our customer's expectations.			
Have questions or need help? Click on one of the options below:			
Search Examples, Hints Tips Frequently Asked Questions Contact Us			
Wal-Mart disclaims any responsibility for and makes no guarantees as to the contents of each MSDS or for the labels in the index. Although Wal-Mart has endeavored to obtain the never MSDS available, we can make no guarantee that each MSDS is the latest, most up-to-date MSDS available from the manufacturer. While we have attempted to include information for as many products as possible, an MSDS for every hazardous product we self may not be available.			
This page is best viewed with Internet Explorer 6.0 or later if you are accessing this page on a standard IBM computer. However, if you are using an Apple Macintosh computer, please use Safari or Netscape for the best results.			

Supporting Secondary Research

Engauge has provided the following summary of research that is appropriate to The Home Depot's online audience. The purpose of this summary is to provide insight and validation for the recommendations for the newly designed Website.

Internet Retailer – Gender Matters

Available at http://www.internetretailer.com/internet/marketing-conference/35722-gender-matters.html
This article presents observations about differences in online behavior by gender, based on The Gender Agenda research by Resource Interactive. Women feel empowered; men feel powerful.

- 1. Men's inner shopper is awakened; women's inner shopper is enriched.
- 2. Women scan; men dig.
- 3. Men are enticed by product, then lifestyle; women are enticed by lifestyle, then product.
 - a. 65% of women consider online shopping to be like window shopping vs. 46% of men.
 - b. Men are 20% more likely to use comparison tools than women, and were observed sessions going to great lengths--and through however many shopping aggregator, retailer, and manufacturer sites as necessary--to find the price range and features of their product. They are more likely than women to compare multiple products, learn more about product specifications, read product reviews, check product ratings and select a manufacturer or brand as a final shorthand to quality and satisfaction once the other criteria have been met.
 - c. Women are 1.5 times more likely to add items to the shopping cart for later viewing (carts are a winnowing tool that accommodate women's stop-and-start shopping patterns), and are two times more likely to use visualization tools than men.



4. Women expand the mission; men stick to the mission.

- a. 57% of men recalled product attributes and brands, despite the concealment of logos. They made 20% more "narrow view" mentions, and 15% more mentions of exact wording.
- b. Women mentioned their feelings about the overall web site without prompting 31% more often than men. They also made 44% more "wide view" mentions and 75% more color-related mentions.
- c. Women take three times more tangents than men when shopping online, but most female participants spoke of themes that connected diverse items, such as "vacation." One woman shopping for bathing suits ended up buying a kayak.
- d. Men are twice as likely as women to buy online and pick up their purchase in-store. This could be explained as a motivation to save shipping charges on large items. But men also rank availability to ship immediately higher in the top five relevant features and benefits than did women. By contrast, several women spoke of the pleasure of receiving packages long enough after the purchase for there to be an element of surprise.



Nielsen Norman Group Report, E-Commerce User Experience

- Provide the product details customers want and need.
- Speak the customer's language: avoid jargon and clever names.
- Be specific.
- Don't present too much detail at once.
- Product Images
 - Provide a recognizable image for familiar items.
 - o Provide images that are big, detailed, and free of visual distractions.
 - Beware of losing details in dark-colored images.
- Price, Other Costs, and Availability
 - Show all costs/rates—or lack thereof.
 - o Link to guarantees and policies.
- Specifying Product Options
 - o Show all options on the same page when applicable.
- Taking Action
 - o Use a simple button for the apply mechanism.
 - Put a Buy button on enlarged views.
 - o Provide strong feedback when an item has been put into the cart.



Jakob Nielsen Interview, E-Commerce Site Design

Available at https://www.ecommerce-guide.com/solutions/building/article.php/3579196, this article reports on an interview with usability expert Jakob Nielsen. While this article is geared toward product pages, there is information that is relevant to the "product" aspect of online credit options. Below is a summary of Nielsen's take on the ideal product page.

Use a clearly descriptive title, and if possible a photo.

 Any search engine expert will tell you that a page's title is how it's found in search engines, so a descriptive title is a must in a product page's title and text.

Provide ALL the information a shopper will need.

- A product page should include not only a detailed list of product attributes (with a nearby link to still more information) but also final cost, including, if feasible, shipping charges and tax. In Nielsen's consumer research studies, 11 percent of "sales catastrophes" (a failure to make a sale) were due to the product page not providing enough information.
- Also important: avoid jargon or industry-specific lingo.

*Engauge recommends considering: This item as it relates to finance charges and fees.

• State product availability and, when appropriate, delivery time.

- You've ruined a customer relationship when you force a customer to go through check out to discover that the item won't ship for three weeks. On the other hand, letting them know the item is "in-stock" and "usually ships same day" is an attractive offer. "
- The bottom line is that the product page should clearly indicate whether an item is in stock, and if it is not, the page should explain the situation," Nielsen notes. Lack of information about ship date and availability "really lowers willingness to buy."

*Engauge recommends considering: This as it relates to when an approval decision is made, when the user can shop and when the card will be in the user's hand.

Link to your site's guarantee policy, and, if possible, the manufacturer's warranty.

 Many experts have noted that a prominently displayed guarantee policy, with a money-back offer, is a trust builder (and hence a sales builder). In fact, many design gurus say that guarantees should be on every page of a site, not just the product/offer pages.

Prominently display the "Call to Action" button.

If shoppers cannot take action easily, they're not going to take the effort. Remarkably, in Nielsen's studies of consumer interactions with e-commerce sites, "We've had cases where people haven't been able to find out how to buy, because it's so complicated." His study found that six percent of sales catastrophes were created by a user's difficulty getting the item into the cart. While the Food Lion site does not [currently] allow online shopping, there should still be a clear instruction to the shopper explaining the required next step. Even a



simple "Got it at your local Food Lion now!" is better than leaving the customer without a sense of what to do next.

*Engauge correlates this information to the "apply" action in the same way users would put a product in a cart.

Nielsen also emphasizes the following principals:

Make Detailed Information Available through Layers

- Product pages should be simple, but they shouldn't lack ready access to a complete source of information.
- "Quite often people need to know some specifics to decide whether they want it or not,"
 Nielsen says. "And this is one of the reasons people give up on buying, because they're uncertain about some of its attributes like, "Will it work with what I already have?"
- Providing information, however, should be done with care. While a classic mistake is not giving enough information, "there's a dual problem of giving too complicated information."
- The best strategy for providing information is *layering*. Layering is when all the information is available, yet it's one click away but just one click. "It can't require another fishing expedition to go and find it it's got to be a clear link that says 'technical specs' you click that and then you get it."

^{*}Engauge recommends considering these factors as it relates to display of card details and supporting information.



Overall Recommendations for Redesign

Several factors and principles were considered in the development of recommendations for the Website. Consider the following areas with regard to the redesign.

Consumer Psychology Priming

1. Design for Decision Making and Information Gathering

While making a decision like applying for credit, potential buyers often seek input from other key decision makers and collect missing information.

2. Design for Nomadic Behavior

Shoppers are not 100% task focused. They often wander during the online shopping process -- both physically and mentally.

3. Leverage Positive Reinforcement

Shoppers often need motivation to get through to online purchase/application completion. Positive reinforcement is a powerful motivator. With positive reinforcement, humans increase particular behaviors when these behaviors are paired with something they desire. In the case of online shopping, we want to increase user button clicking behavior as it relates to applying for credit.

Customer-Centered Communication Best Practices

A key function of the Website is to provide information, so it should follow best practices in information design and writing. Customers need complete, correct, credible, persuasive information available in layers and in an easy-to-scan format.

Include the Right Information Types

From the customer's perspective, most information serves one of four purposes. Website information pages will use a majority of the purposes listed below.

Property	What is	An explanation of something, such as a fact, concept, or structure
Principle	What should be done	Rules, laws, guidelines
Procedure	What you have to do	A set of steps or tasks to achieve a result
Process	What happens	A series of events occurring over time, usually the "big picture"



Emphasize the Right Information Topics to Support Decision Making

Customers are interested in a variety of information to make a decision to apply. Frequently Asked Question content will provide the details which users seek as long as they cover the majority of areas for which users seek information.

Include the Right Persuasive Appeals to Influence Decision Making

Getting a user to apply online involves a level of persuasion. The information and writing should not only be clear and complete, it should also be convincing and credible. One way to add persuasive punch is to include these three appeals:

Logos	Rational appeal	Include quantitative evidence such as statistics, rate comparison, feature comparison, etc.
Pathos	Emotional appeal	Feature qualitative evidence such as case studies, customer reviews, testimonials, quotes; imbue language and images with the appropriate tone.
Ethos	Credibility appeal	Note years of experience, sources or references, affiliation with other credible brands; ensure copy is error-free; use high-quality images, etc.



Write for the Web

Layer Information from Basics to Details

Thinking of your information as layers will help you avoid overwhelming your audiences with information on a single web page. Layers also allow your customers to choose the amount of information they want.

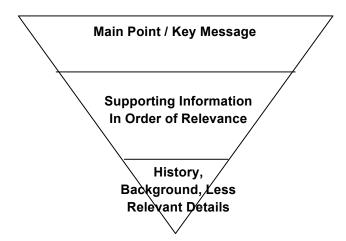
Organize Text into Short Sections with Labels

Your customers will not read your web pages like they read a novel. They will scan instead, focusing on headings, summaries, and labels until they find the information they want. Only then will they read the details.

- Chunk your writing into small, logical sections.
- Label them clearly and descriptively. Think about helping the customers decide whether to read the section.

Organize Text Using the Inverted Pyramid Writing Style

Used in journalism and mass media, the inverted pyramid writing style puts your key message first, then supporting information in the order it is relevant to readers.



Use Short Words and Sentences and Active Voice Sentence Construction

Less is more when it comes to words and the web. Even highly educated audiences understand web writing more quickly when it uses short words and sentences. A few techniques to try:

- Stick to words with no more than three syllables.
- Avoid modifiers that don't add meaning (e.g. really, basically, generally).
- Use active voice, and use passive voice sparingly.

Passive: My writing was read by the audience. (The subject receives the action.) Active: The audience read my writing. (The subject does the action.)

Use Your Customer's Words

Use words that your customers are likely to use, especially for navigation, headings, and key labels. These words make information on your website easer for your audience to



- Find through search engines.
- Find once they're on your site.
- · Understand quickly.

Use a Personable, Appropriate Tone

Use a personable tone and words appropriate for your brand's major attributes, the product, and the customer's situation.

Use a Polished Style That Customers Enjoy Reading

Polished writing is more enjoyable to read than basic writing because it's easier to read, it's more clear, and it is more interesting. The more a customer reads, the greater the opportunity to persuade the customer. A few techniques for a polished style include

- Rhythm: For a prose section, use a mix of short and long sentences to keep the pace interesting.
- **Balance:** Use parallel structure for headings, list items, or sentences with a similar relationship. Parallel structure clarifies ideas, makes text easier to scan, and enhances rhythm.
- Simile, Metaphor, Analogy: These techniques involve comparison, a powerful way to explain abstract concepts or services and new or complex information. For instance, Prudential compares its stability to a rock with the metaphor in its tagline "Rock Solid. Market Wise."



Summary of Tactical Recommendations

While recommendations have been woven throughout this document, the list below is a recap of some of the most strategic suggestions to consider when building out the Website prototype.

Technical/Structural Recommendations

- o Make all microsites open in a separate window.
- Separate microsites from the navigation via banner placement.
- Remove the clever titles from the navigation. These can be used as "kicker titles" on the actual pages, but won't be as easy to recall or locate out of context.

Call to Action Recommendations

- Increase visual emphasis of Calls to Action specifically buttons and place them independently in prominent and consistent locations as opposed to within other graphics.
- Clearly call out the various options for "Learn More", "Sign Up" and "View..." to avoid any confusion for actions.
- Call the users to action by making it clear that said action offers an immediate benefit.

Content/Organizational Recommendations

- The main page should include efficient access to an MVP account holders information and tasks.
- o Reduce the amount of copy in each paragraph so that it becomes one line of text where possible. Text should supplement or compliment the text presented in site imagery and headings.
- If paragraph information cannot be scaled down perhaps for legal reasons consider bulleting some of the text to make content more readable and scannable by the user.
- A welcoming statement will help assure the user that they are in the right place and help them understand what they can do next.
- On the main page, bring the information currently presented in the grey box on the left hand side into the page and present in a way that is easily processed and scanned.



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