

ENGL 7060: Web Development

Interoffice Memorandum

To Dr. Susan Youngblood
From Kaitlin Coyle, Anna Mathis, Colleen May
Date May 3, 2024
Subject Client Project Final Memo

The following memo details our team's initial design choices; usability testing processes; client feedback implementation; and final revisions and design justification for the [Pilates on the Plains \(POTP\) website](#), designed through the Wix CMS for desktop and mobile viewing. We began by meeting with studio owner and lead instructor Becky Anders to acquire the studio's branding materials (i.e., color palette, images, and logos). We then presented Becky with multiple Wix template options and discussed page layout preferences; images and video content; and primary content for the site.

Initial Design Choices

The website's color palette and logo came directly from the client's current branding (see Figs. 1 & 2). We utilized two sans serif typefaces—Poppins Semi Bold for headings and Avenir Light for body text—to enhance user accessibility. Shriver (2013) notes individuals with “reduced vision” (p. 395) prefer sans serif fonts for legibility purposes and these fonts are also more “efficient” and “easy to read” (Wyatt and DeVoss, 2018, p. 67) in digital contexts, allowing users to easily be directed down the page.

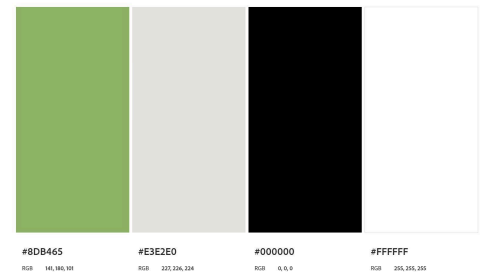


Figure 1. POTP's branding colors are green, black, gray and white.

We included a hero video on POTP's Home page with text overlaid, featuring the studio's name, a Joseph Pilates quote (i.e., the studio's tagline), and a class sign-up button (see Fig. 3). Kimball & Hawkins (2008) note that users expect a design “to fulfill their own goals” and “solve their problems successfully” (p. 12). This pairs well with Krug et al.'s (2014) first “law of usability”: to *not* make users think (p. 29).

Anticipating our users' primary goal as signing up for a class, we wanted this to be the first user action possible. When users click this button, they are automatically directed to POTP's Classes page, featuring a list of available classes, descriptions, packages, and pricing. On this page, users may also download POTP's Liability Form, Medical Release Form, and be redirected to the Vagaro page to sign up for a class.

As users scroll down the Home page, they encounter four testimonials from studio participants. We made the “human-centered design” (Rose, 2016, p. 429) choice to omit clients' last names and ages on these testimonials, avoiding exposure to privacy risks or identity theft. We initially displayed the client names in green (#8DB465) overlaid on white background (#FFFFFF); however, the Adobe Colors Contrast Checker noted this failed the WCAG's accessibility guidelines with a ratio of 2.37:1. According to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.1), the “visual presentation of text and



Figure 2. POTP's logo.



Figure 3. Class registration button on the Home page.

images of text” should have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1, whereas “large-scale text and images of large-scale text” should have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1. To improve accessibility and maintain contrast, we converted the text to black (#000000), the vector quotes to green (#8DB465), and maintained a white background.

Higher contrast improves usability, searchability, and information hierarchy in web design (Kimball & Hawkins, 2008; Shriver, 2013). To enhance our minimalistic black-and-white design, and integrate the client’s branding colors, we used green for all container boxes and buttons. The combination of contrast and white space helped chunk certain elements together and create order, facilitating users’ ability to scan pages (Shriver, 2013). On the About, Our Team, and Other Services pages, we used asymmetrical balance to arrange container boxes, images, and body text in alternating order (see Fig. 4). By breaking up the continuance, or flow of information, we “equalize[d] the weight on the page” while controlling the direction of users’ eyes for better readability and usability (Beaird et al., 2020, p. 40).

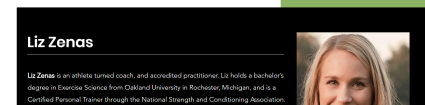
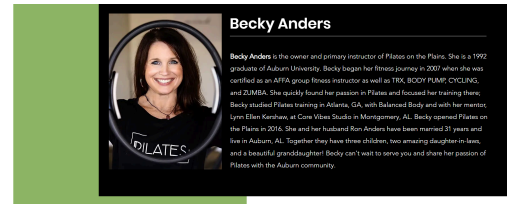


Figure 4. Layout on the “Our Team” page, designed with asymmetrical balance.

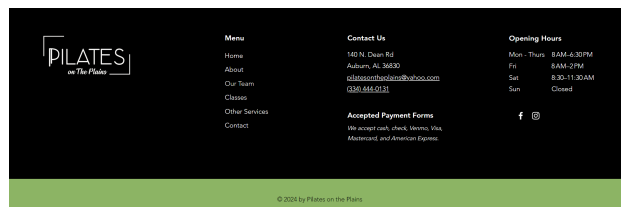


Figure 5. Information located on the footer as seen on every internal page.

Krug et al. (2014) notes the importance of user conventions, or widely “standardized design patterns,” to make information easier to grasp (p. 36). With this in mind, we placed POTP’s logo in the “power zone” of the page and hyperlinked it to the Home page for optimal functionality (Kimball & Hawkins, 2008, p. 126). Conventionally, users also expect certain information to be found in the

site’s footer, which is why we included POTP’s opening hours, contact information, social media, and accepted payment forms here (see Fig. 5) Finally, to reinforce connection, coherence, and consistency in layout, we kept titles and subtitles the same size across all site pages (Kimball & Hawkins, 2008, p. 28).

Usability Testing and Implementing Feedback

We conducted formative, low-fidelity testing on two users including six task-based scenarios—two for mobile-view testing and four for desktop—followed by a Desirability Test using the [Microsoft Product Reaction Cards](#).

User 1, a 65-year-old woman, reported the mobile view of the POTP site was “straightforward,” “informative,” and “easy to navigate.” However, she expressed difficulty locating the class cancelation policy. After scrolling through the Contact Us and About pages, we intervened and directed her to the Classes page. User 1 also noted that the cancelation policy did not stand out enough, and the asterisk created confusion since it did not link to relevant information in the body text. To improve usability, we removed the asterisk and created a 3-dimensional box, contrasted with green and black, to catch users’ attention when they scroll to the bottom of the page. During the Product Reaction Cards assessment, User 1 selected “accessible,” “clean,” “helpful,” “attractive,” and “clear” to describe her overall experience navigating the site.

Upon first impression, User 2, a 23-year-old Auburn University graduate student, described the mobile view of the POTP site as “minimalist” and “classy.” When she navigated to the Classes page, she reported there was “a lot of text happening.” The limited screen size on mobile caused pertinent information (i.e., booking classes) to appear below the fold, requiring users to scroll more. We took this into consideration and trimmed the Classes description section to approximately 75 words; however, following Becky’s feedback, we were asked to include several more lines of text. During the Product Reaction Cards assessment, User 2 selected “appealing,” “friendly,” “clean,” “fresh,” and “stable” to describe her overall experience. Notable areas of confusion included Scenario 2 (registering for POTP’s Intro to Pilates class via the Vagaro app) and Scenario 6 (locating information on canceling a class). While Scenario 6 was fixable, we could not fix issues with Scenario 2, as the Vagaro app was not under our design control; however, we informed our client of this problem.

During final stages of design, we conducted a summative usability test on a 29-year-old Microsoft Edge user, who noted the site’s colors were inverted on mobile view. On Wix’s help guide, they state that Microsoft Edge is not a supported browser for viewing Wix sites, thus, we discovered this was a Wix site-specific issue that we, as designers, had no control over.

Final Revision Process and Design Justification

Our primary revisions sought to 1) improve usability and accessibility on the site’s mobile and desktop view, and 2) implement Becky’s feedback on layout, images, and text. For the Our Services page, we decided to chunk the descriptions into separate blocks of text to prevent information overload. In mimicking the layout of the Our Team page, we worked to create more asymmetrical balance and contrast on the page (Shriver, 2013).

In speaking to Krug et al.’s (2014) rule of not making users read, we included 6-8 word snippets of class descriptions on the Classes page before adding a ‘Read More’ link. For an intuitive design, we opted to include ARIA labels in the HTML code for accessibility. Our key takeaways were 1) design for mobile-first for optimal transferability to desktop, and 2) balance the needs of clients and users while maintaining our intermediary positions as user advocates and designers.