

Shane - Group 6: Competitive Analysis

Team Members: Shane - Group 6

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Summary

I researched these 5 microbreweries, Hoppin' Frog, Rockmill, Ohio Brewing Company, Royal Docks, and Paladin, to assess what the client should do when creating their website. I took elements that I thought would be essential and elements that I think the client should avoid in my analysis. I review many areas, such as design, color, patterns, and similarities that the competition all share.

Competitors Evaluated

List 5 competitors, their URLs, descriptions of their websites or businesses and how they were chosen. You may use competitors determined by the client or your own.

1. **Hoppin' Frog Brewery:** <http://www.hoppinfrog.com>
 - a. Responsive?: Yes
 - b. Design is average. The landing page has an immediate fork in the road. Users must choose either "The Brewery" or the "Tasting Room" when they visit the site... It also doesn't offer any other info on the landing page – you must choose between these two factors which seems odd and confusing.
 - c. They are located in Akron, OH. They offer many different themed nights throughout the week, including a throwback thursday with discounted prices. They have an outdoor patio that have "Terrier Tuesdays" where

customers can bring their dogs. They have a frog as their logo as a play on words to the brand identity -- "Hoppin' Frog"

- d. Asks if you are of legal drinking age immediately

2. **Rockmill Brewery:** <http://www.rockmillbrewery.com>

- a. Responsive?: Yes
- b. Nice design. Good, neutral colors. Great "flow" to the website. Uses enticing photography as the background for each different section. It continuously flow downward with the sections at the top. If you click on any of the sections, it will jump you down to the section you clicked on. The hover transition changes from white to orange on the text for the headers. It's strange that their "Our Story" section is smack in the middle of their content... It would make more sense to either be right after the welcome or at the very end. It's odd to have it in the middle.
- c. The use of an embedded map adds a nice touch if someone is confused about their location. (Lancaster, Ohio)
- d. Interactive calendar of events - You can open and view the details of each event on any given day.
- e. Embedded instagram feed right on the page makes for a nice touch (especially for an older audience that wouldn't venture off the site onto social to view photos.)
- f. Gives individual, specific information on how to book certain events on location and what to expect during your event -- The site even includes pricing for some events.
- g. Provides a great list of the brews they offer and where to purchase them if you cannot make it to Lancaster.
- h. Great site with a great design.

3. **Ohio Brewing Company:** <http://www.ohiobrewing.com/home.html>

- a. Responsive?: No
- b. Not as good of a site... Isn't responsive and has a horrible design.

- c. If you click on “Brews,” the site gives a detailed description of their brewing process. It also listed the brews that they offer.
 - d. The colors on the site are harsh and bold... Not very aesthetically pleasing either.
 - e. They have links to social... Facebook and Twitter
 - f. The “About” section only has text... Plain text, black, and that’s all.
4. **Royal Docks Brewing Co:** <http://www.royaldocksbrewing.com>
- a. Responsive?: Yes
 - b. Great design. It is new and modern. Good use of color and use of photography. Doesn’t use the same kind of format as Rockmill.... The user is required to click one of the headings to go to that section... it’s not an open layout like on Rockmill.
 - c. Royal Docks has presence on 5 different social media platforms, and their icons are fresh and modern.
 - d. Hovering over the headings puts a black box around them, and some headings have a dropdown menu to itemize the subsections.
 - e. Their list of brews is located on the main page.
 - f. They also have a “View our beers” right under their selection of brews. It’s in a box with a hashtag #Tanglefoot.
 - g. Under that is their calendar of events, that is interactive.
 - h. On the footer is hours and another way to access social platforms. It also has their address and a quick way to subscribe to their email list. They have a great, modern logo.
 - i. On the “our story” section, is their story in various size fonts. There is also a place to apply for a position at the microbrewery.
 - j. Took awhile for me to realize it was located in Canton, OH.
 - k. Overall great design! My favorite.
5. **Paladin Brewing:** <http://paladinbrewing.com>
- a. Responsive?: Yes

- b. A pop-up appeared immediately upon visiting the site, asking me to subscribe to their newsletter.
 - c. Has a carousel on the main page. Too quick for me to gather information on the various slides.
 - d. Gives their address but not the city they are located in...?
 - e. Hours are listed right at the top, under the headings
 - f. They have links to social -- using the icons from the actual social media platforms.
 - g. The tab on the browser does not say the brewery's name...
 - h. The site is a mess and doesn't have any flow... The black background makes the light text irritating to read.
 - i. The design is terrible...
 - j. They include a list of all of their brews under the "brews" section.
 - k. Multiple opportunities to sign up for their mailing list thru email.
 - l. The location is in the footer: It's located in Austintown.
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Navigation and Labeling

Common labels (terms) used to navigate the sites

- Brews
- About
- Home
- Events
- News
- Careers/opportunities
- Tavern/Tasting Room
- Calendar
- Visit/Directions

Common navigation designs used to navigate and different screen sizes (drop down menus, audience-based navigation, vertical side navigation, call to action buttons, etc.)

Drop-down menus for itemized subheadings

Ex) Events > Upcoming events / Plan an Event

Interactive Calendars

Users can view and click on events listed on these calendars. When clicked, the user gets a detailed description of the event.

Full list of brews/beers

All of these sites have a full list of their available brews. Most have images associated with the different selections.

Text box to submit email address to subscribe to messages

Most of the sites invited you to subscribe to their email messages/Newsletters

Content and Features

What features and types of functionality do competitors offer their users.

What types of content is available on the sites.

What content is missing on the sites that would be helpful.

Interactive Calendars

Can choose certain events on specific days.

Read details of each events, including the activity and time(s).

Full Menus

Complete menus of Brews and beers that they offer

Most have food/appetizer menus as well, with prices.

“Our Story”

Attracts users that like the “Home grown” or “Rooted in Ohio” feeling. This tactic is used to attract people that don’t respond to big business types. This also attracts people that

would rather go to a local microbrewery rather than Buffalo Wild Wings or T.G.I. Friday's for a few drinks.

Full Brew lists w/ details

Lists the ABV % for each brew. Most sites give a description of what it tastes like as well as what color it is (how light or how dark).

What's missing:

Weekly updated list of brews

It would be helpful to show what they currently have available or unavailable. It is nice that we can see all the possible brews that they offer, but some of the seasonal ones obviously won't be available at certain times of the year. They could disappoint customers that look online, make the trip only to discover that the one they wanted to try is out of stock or not available.

Brew match quiz

It would be convenient if there was some sort of quiz that allowed users to be paired with brews that fit their palette. If not a quiz, then perhaps some sort of filtering system that allows users to get rid of brews that they immediately know they wouldn't like.
Ex) Filter out dark brews, filter out brews that are too "hoppy," only show brews that have an orange/citrus flavor.

Printable PDF of menu(s)

It would be convenient if there was a printable PDF of the menus, for both the food and the brews... This was I could print it off to circle things, show a group of friends, etc. Not a single competitor offers this.

Photos of the venue

Only one or two of the sites had photos of the venue - and it was on social. I would like to see what I'm about to visit before I actually commit to go. Some of these breweries boast about their awesome patios or bars... but none of the sites have photos.

Voice and Tone

What is the common "voice" of the competitors (friendly, serious, helpful, excited, boring)

Is there consistency in voice and tone across the sites?

Casual/friendly to boring/informative

The tone I found was somewhere between laid back/casual to just informative, which is boring. I think that the informative ones were better because there was less copy and more photos or visuals.

Design Aesthetics and Layout

What are common design choices across the sites (colors, typography, layout)

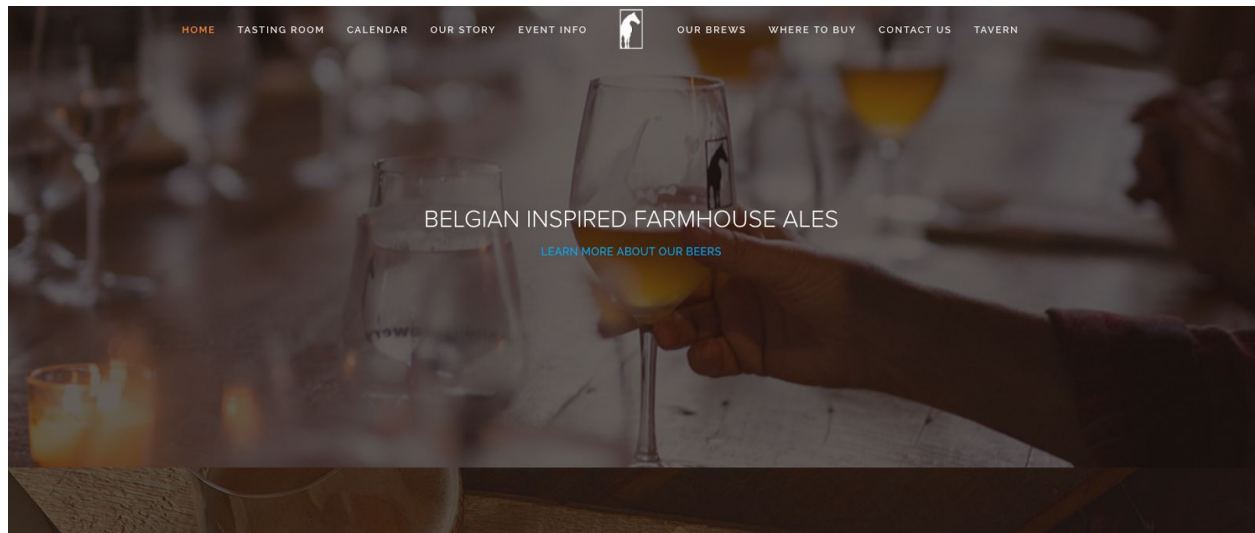
How does the design contribute to the usability of the site on various devices?

Which design pieces (patterns) could be utilized on our website?

Show side-by-side screenshots of each website evaluated.



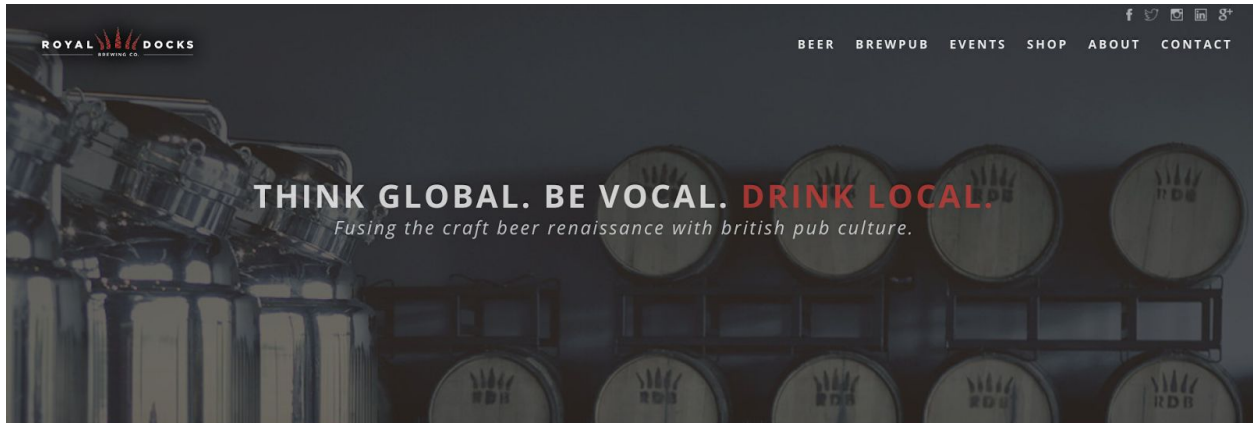
Hoppin' Frog Brewery



Rockmill Brewery



Ohio Brewing Company



WHAT'S ON TAP

Come down to our *brewpub* and grab a pint.

Royal Docks Brewing Co.



Paladin Brewing

Design

I personally love the design of both Royal Docks Brewing Co. and Rockmill Brewery. They are both modern and stylish, while being more user-friendly. They also offer MORE content than the others but I don't feel nearly as overwhelmed reading the content on these two than I do the other ones.

I enjoy the simplicity of these two. I like how the landing page is one large backdrop with a photo. It's clean and inviting.

Colors

There was a strange occurrence of green and yellow... Which are harsh on the eyes.

I enjoyed the gray, reds, and blacks and whites that I saw on the majority of the competitors' sites. It felt badass and masculine.

Patterns

I would like to utilize the large landing pages that the top two competitor sites used. I think it's clean and can easily be made mobile-friendly and responsive.

Recommendations and Strategy

Based on the findings above, what top recommendations do you have for your client's website, based on the top goals that they've shared already.

Do not include design solutions at this point, just recommendations.

I would recommend that they use color that aren't too harsh on the eyes. The neutral colors with brighter accent colors are the way to go. The use of photography for background layouts is a must – The top two competitors utilized that, even if they are stock images, and they look great.

Don't go too crazy on copy... It could make users overwhelmed.

Include easy-to-find icons that direct them to social.

Embed your Instagram photos onto your page so users don't have to navigate away from the page just to see the property/venue.

Videos/video testimonials would be very beneficial.

Include a full list of your available brews as well as a food menu, if applicable.

Consider doing something the competition isn't doing... Like filtering your brew choices for consumers that have a particular taste.

An interactive calendar is a must.... Maybe give an option to copy it to Google Calendar or iCal?

Don't use a pop-up window to get users to subscribe to a newsletter...