

Team Name: Competitive Analysis

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Summary

What you did

In general, what worked and what didn't (summary of findings below)

We evaluated the Hops House Brewery's competitors, including the Great Lakes Brewing Company, Jackie O's Pub & Brewery, Rockmill Brewery, Ohio Brewing Company, and Willoughby Brewing Company. We compared and contrasted their navigation and labelling systems, content and features, the company's voice and tone, and the design aesthetics that were involved.

Elements that worked were the usage of a horizontal navigation bar with full screen websites; additionally, all but one used a hamburger-style navigation that worked well for smaller sizes. The friendly, natural tone of voice was consistent with all the companies, but worked the most successfully for the Great Lakes Brewing Company because it supports the conversational voice by engaging the viewer with fun illustrations and photography. Something that Jackie O's did well with was incorporating a beer finder into their site. It uses an interactive map to help find nearby stores and product availability.

Something that could be improved upon was a more thorough description of products, like including pricing, store availability, flavor, and more on the page. Maybe some could even start including something for online customer reviews of different products.

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. Great Lakes Brewing Company (<https://www.greatlakesbrewing.com/>)

Great Lakes Brewing Company was chosen for the site's organization and overall design. The site is also responsive.

2. Jackie O's Pub & Brewery (<http://jackieos.com/>)

Jackie O's site is also responsive and uses a gridded structure well throughout each page.

3. Rockmill Brewery (<http://www.rockmillbrewery.com>)

Rockmill Brewery was chosen by the client.

4. Ohio Brewing Company (<http://www.ohiobrewing.com/home.html>)

Ohio Brewing Company was chosen by the client.

5. Willoughby Brewing Company (<http://www.willoughbybrewing.com/>)

Willoughby Brewing is located only 59 minutes away making it a close competitor for Hops House Brewery.

Navigation and Labeling

Common labels (terms) used to navigate the sites

#1 Beer Finder, Beer, Our Brews, Brews, Beer Here

#2 Area Events, Private Event Info., Events, Bands & Events

#3 Contact Us or Contact

#4 About or Our Story

#5 Store

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

All the companies have a consistent use of navigation listed horizontally at the top of the page for larger screen sizes. Four out of the five companies use a hamburger menu at small sizes. Only one uses a drop down menu at small sizes.

Great Lakes Brewing Co: When you hover over the main navigation, the sub navigation drops down. It's at least double the size of the main nav at the top.

Jackie O's: Once you get passed the main navigation, sub navigation is consistently located at the top left of the page contained in a gray box.

Willoughby Brewing Co: Only one main navigation item has a drop down sub navigation. The drop downs type is slightly smaller than the main navigation.

Content and Features

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

A competitor that stands out with features and functions is Rockmill Brewery. They give the user an interactive map to find their location. They also have a calendar showing events and their times. Social media is a popular feature. All the sites seem to link to their social media platforms. However, Rockmill doesn't simply have an icon that links to their socials. It actually has a sectioned grid of their recent instagram posts.

Other sites like Great Lakes and Jackie O's offer online stores for the user. The stores sell merchandise apparel, barware, glassware, gift cards, etc.

Jackie O's has a very nifty beer finder. The user can type in their location and on an interactive map, all the stores that sell their products are shown.

What types of content is available on the sites.

The most needed piece of information is the location of the breweries. The types of beer is another important part of content throughout all the sites. Upcoming events and the latest news is the third most popular content throughout the sites. Food menus are also important for those that have a restaurant aspect.

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

Some sites didn't display their pricing while others could use information on each drink, such as when it's availability, flavor and ABV

Voice and Tone

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

Many of the competitors have a conversational tone of voice. It's as if you're having a comfortable conversation with your neighbor down the street. For this reason it's very friendly.

Is there consistency in voice and tone across the sites?

Some sites are more consistent than others. The Great Lakes Brewing Company has the best voice and tone. It's the same throughout the entire site and keeps the visitor excited to be there.

Design Aesthetics and Layout

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

Colors: mustard yellow, orange, red-orange

Typography: Most use very modern sans-serifs

Layout: Large images take up the entire landing screen, horizontal navigation bars on top, colored boxes are gridded throughout the sites.

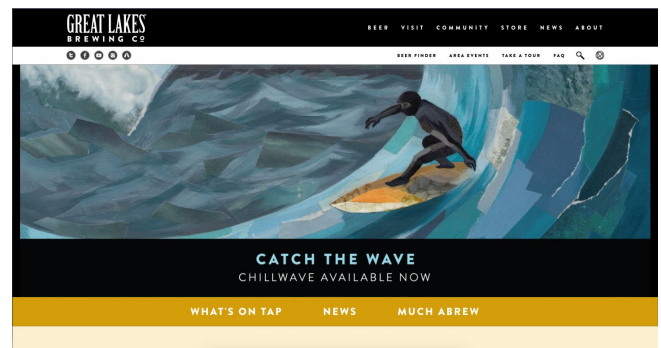
How does the design contribute to the usability of the site on various devices?

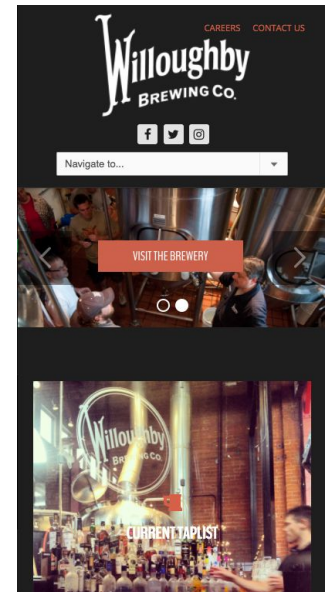
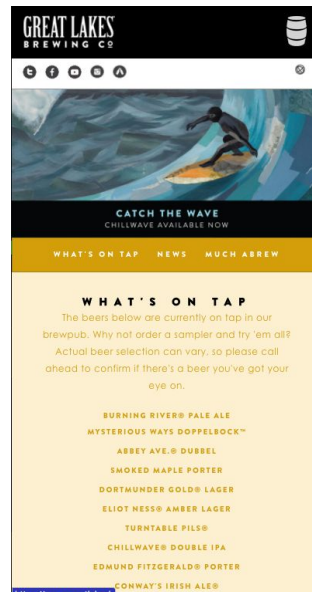
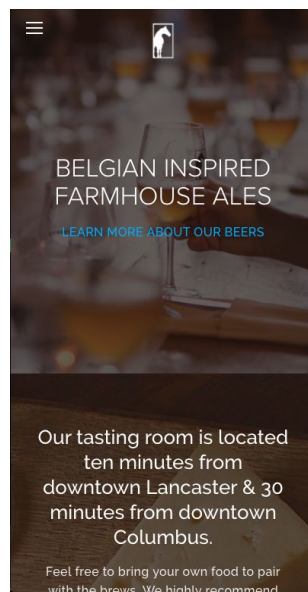
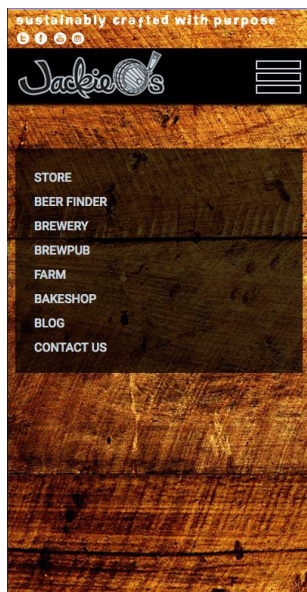
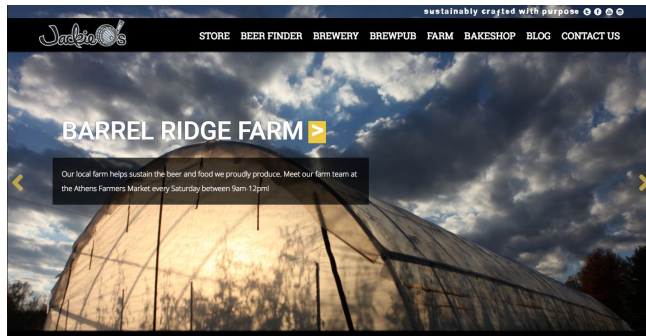
Because of the grid, the information in individual boxes is easy to understand and access. This is extremely important at small sizes. The user needs to be able to quickly get information on small screens.

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

Large images of the products and atmosphere of the brewery can be utilized. A strong grid will also be useful to cleanly organize and show information.

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





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.

We would recommend implementing a responsive design with a simple color scheme (some sites were all over the place with color), high quality images, and strong grid system and horizontal navigation bar that best assist the website's functionality.