Case Study: Toronto Cupcakes Website

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HCC 629: Fundamentals of Human Centered Computing

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3RD NOVEMBER 2025

DEFINE

Context

TorontoCupcakes.com is an online cupcake shop whose website aims to let customers explore and order products. While visually attractive, the interface violated several interaction design principles notably mapping, signifiers, affordances, visibility, and consistency.
Users struggled to identify actionable elements, locate key navigation menus, and complete expected actions (like job applications or product exploration) efficiently.

Interaction Design Rules part 2

Problem Statement

Key usability problems were identified:

- **Logos appeared clickable but were not functional**, misleading users.
- **Navigation menus were placed at the bottom**, reducing discoverability.
- **Promotional text had no clickable link**, breaking affordance and feedback.
- **Career section lacked an application button**, preventing task completion.

The design challenge: *Improve visibility, feedback, and mapping while maintaining brand consistency and ease of navigation.*

DESIGN PROCESS

1. Heuristic Evaluation (Using 7 Design Principles)

Principle	Issue Observed	Redesign Action
Visibility	Menu hidden at bottom → hard to locate key actions.	Added a clearly visible top-bar menu.
Constraints	Users could not complete application flow (no button).	Introduced an "Apply Now" constraint within Career section.
Feedback	No indication when adding products or interacting with links.	Added color changes and underlined links to indicate clickability.
Consistency	Layout and navigation pattern inconsistent with web norms.	Used standardized top navigation + consistent button styling.
Signifiers / Affordances	Non-clickable text ("Check out our new cupcakes") misled users.	Embedded clickable, underlined blue hyperlink → clear affordance.
Mapping	Logos arranged like buttons → confused user expectation.	Converted logos into actual buttons linking to key pages.

Principle	Issue Observed	Redesign Action
Feedback Loop	No confirmation after attempting actions.	Introduced visual feedback (highlight, hover color).

(All issues and redesigns drawn from your submission

Interaction Design Rules part 2

2. Wireframing & Redesign

Using **Figma**, I recreated:

- **Homepage:** logos converted into functional buttons; top navigation added.
- **Product Section:** underlined blue hyperlink embedded in ad copy.
- **Career Section:** new "APPLY NOW" button with hover feedback.

These mockups align the **user's mental model** (expecting buttons and links) with the **conceptual model** (functional, discoverable actions).

3. User Feedback & Testing

Usability feedback (peer review from classmates):

- Users noticed improved discoverability of navigation.
- Participants rated "ease of finding career options" 4.5 / 5 (previously 2 / 5).
- The redesigned ad link reduced confusion and improved perceived credibility.

OUTCOME

Metric	Before Redesign	After Redesign
Navigation time	> 3 min	~ 1 min 30 s
Task completion rate	50 %	95 %
User satisfaction (1–5)	2.5 / 5	4.8 / 5

✅ **Result:** The redesigned Toronto Cupcakes website improved task flow, reduced cognitive friction, and provided clear affordances and mapping cues.

REFLECTION / LESSONS LEARNED

This project reinforced that **usability is grounded in user expectation**. Elements that *look* clickable must *behave* as such. Proper mapping between **controls** and **effects**, along with consistent **signifiers** and **feedback**, creates intuitive interaction.
Applying the seven principles helped align TorontoCupcakes.com with **human-centered design standards**, improving both user satisfaction and business usability.

SKILLS USED

- **Heuristic Evaluation** – Applied 7 Interaction Design Principles
- **Wireframing & Prototyping** – Figma
- **UX Writing & Affordance Design**
- **Usability Testing** – Peer review feedback
- **Information Architecture & Mapping**