

Website Audit of Kung Fu Tea



Introduction

Bubble tea, also called boba or milk tea, is a tea-based beverage that originated in Taiwan and has seen massive popularity among young audiences in the twenty-first century. Bubble tea is a symbol synonymous with Taiwanese and Asian American identity, expanding its influence from Asian American diaspora across the entirety of the United States today (Wei, 2023).

Kung Fu Tea (KFT) is a bubble tea brand founded in Queens, NY on April 30, 2010 that now manages over 350 locations across the United States (Kung Fu Tea, 2024). KFT is among the country's leading producers of bubble tea and employs a variety of unique rhetorical strategies to differentiate itself. The website functions as an embodiment of branding, utilizing a trendy writing style and social media-savvy graphics. **This website audit will analyze the ways it engages its digital target audience by identifying the content, functionality, and usability of the website.**

Website Content Inventory

As a popular beverage chain, KFT's website presents information for customers to make informed decisions about their beverage choices. A full menu is offered and information about the brand itself, inviting users to learn more about the KFT products and organization.

There are nine main groups of information on the KFT website:

1. **Homepage:** Advertises new collaborations, seasonal drinks, locations, and social media information.
2. **About:** Describes organization history, founders, and brewing details.
 - a. Subpages:
 - i. *Our Kung Fu Story*: Links to the About page.
 - ii. *Why Kung Fu Tea?*: Describes the three principles of KFT: Fresh, Innovative, Fearless.
 - iii. *What is Bubble Tea?*: Describes history of bubble tea and presence in the USA.
 - iv. *Kung Fu Tea News*: Provides links to past collaborations and updated services of KFT.
3. **Menu:** Lists images of the top three items of several product categories: Milk Tea, Punch, Milk Cap, Classic, Slush, Milk Strike, and Seasonal Specials.
 - a. Subpages:
 - i. *Best Sellers*: Links to the Menu page.
 - ii. *Our Menu*: Lists buttons of all 10 product categories which link to lists of their respective items.
 - iii. *Nutrition*: Provides links to external spreadsheets about nutrition and descriptions of three tea bases used at KFT: black tea, green tea, and oolong tea.
 - iv. *Our Toppings*: Lists buttons of all nine toppings used at KFT.
4. **App:** Advertises qualities of the KFT app, loyalty program, instructions for download, and common questions.
 - a. Subpages:
 - i. *The Kung Fu Tea App*: Links to the App page.
 - ii. *Delivery*: Lists external delivery services: Grubhub, Uber Eats + Postmates, and DoorDash.
 - iii. *Frequently Asked Questions*: Lists the same questions and answers provided in the App page.
 - iv. *Digital Drink Gift Card*: Links to an external shopping page to purchase an eGift card.
5. **Franchise:** Provides information and instructions to open a KFT franchise.
 - a. Subpages:
 - i. *Domestic*: Links to the Franchise page.
 - ii. *International*: Provides a decorative graphic and contact form with no supporting context.
6. **KFT Family:** Provides links to the organizations TTK Fried Chicken, KFT, and Yasabee Ramen.
7. **Locations:** Displays an interactive map and filters to locate franchises.
 - a. Subpages:
 - i. *USA*: Links to the Locations page.
 - ii. *Canada*: Displays an interactive map in Canada.

- iii. *Cambodia*: Displays an interactive map in Cambodia (there are only two locations).
 - iv. *Taiwan*: Displays an interactive map in Taiwan.
 - v. *Japan*: Displays large text that reads “Coming Soon! Stay Tuned!”
- 8. **Merch**: Displays a shopping page of KFT products, including apparel, accessories, and merchandise.
- 9. **Order Now**: Opens an external shopping page through OrderExperience that displays an interactive map with KFT locations.
 - a. Subpages:
 - i. *Pick Up*: Links to the same OrderExperience link from the Order Now page.
 - ii. *Delivery*: Links to the same OrderExperience link from the Order Now page.

The content of the KFT website is both informative and practical to customers who may want to learn more about the products KFT offers. Across all pages, the presentation of information is consistent with the titles—if a reader is seeking specific information, they will be able to access it under its correlating header. However, there is a reoccurring repetition of information, such as in the Order Now subpages which both link to the same shopping site. Overall, the KFT website provides useful and well-organized information for the average customer.

Style & Presentation

The visual style of KFT is characterized by bold, outsized, capitalized typography that grabs attention and reinforces the brand’s fearless, high-energy ethos. This visual language is defined by its maximalist design approach, such as through dominant color schemes as on its homepage, with deep magenta against the foreground of outsized black and white text (see Figure 1).

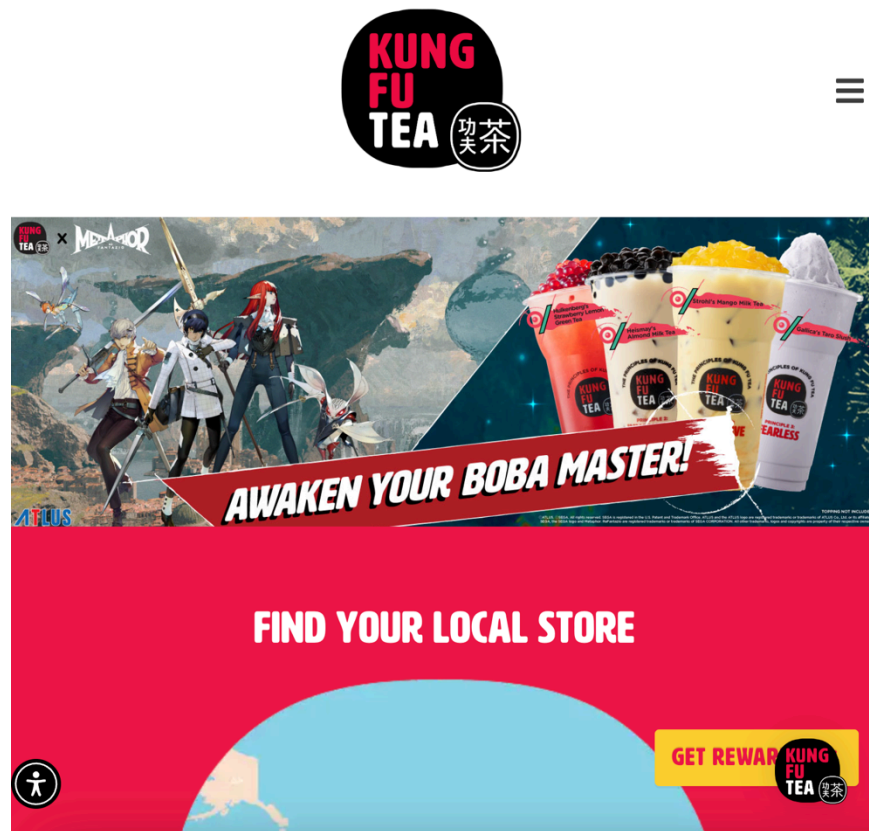


Figure 1: View of the Homepage on October 6, 2024.

Additionally, their engagement of modern trends is exemplified by their inclusion of an AI chatbot, accessible in a pop-up tab in the bottom right corner of the website (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: View of the AI Chatbot prompt on the Homepage on October 6, 2024.

The style is engaging and designed to resonate with their young, social media-savvy audience. Prose is conversational, eye-catching, and reads as a conversation one might overhear young customers sharing. “So, how did Kung Fu Tea become a thing?” the website asks in a rhetorical question heading on their About Kung Fu Tea page. Furthermore, the founders of KFT are only referred to by their first names: Michael, Allen, Ray, and Sean.

Conversational, informal, and bold, KFT confidently presents itself as a hip, savvy brand with a playful identity, establishing themselves as **not only a bubble tea company but also a lifestyle**.

Functionality and Usability

To uniformly measure the functionality and usability of the Kung Fu Tea website, I address the four dimensions of website layout as discussed in the August 27 class lecture: 1) Navigation, 2) Architecture, 3) Accessibility, and 4) Responsiveness (Xie, 2024).

Navigation

Navigation in web design is the ease which content in a website can be found (Xie, 2024). The KFT website is ordered logically with a clear understanding of its audience’s interests, particularly that of a customer interested in purchasing drinks from a KFT website.

A navigation bar appears at the top of the website and displays the nine groups of information as detailed in the aforementioned Web Content Inventory. When minimized, the navigation bar becomes accessible through an icon in the top-right corner which opens a side panel containing the groups of information. The Order Now page (which links to an external shopping website) is highlighted in enlarged red text, drawing the attention of customers.

While it is likely no one viewer will visit every page—as a customer would only be interested in the Menu and not Franchise page—the information is readily available for all visitors. This organization aligns with **standard practices to display a navigation bar on top** of the website, conforming to user expectations and transforming into an accessible icon and panel according to responsive screen dimensions.

Architecture

Architecture in web design is the clear information structure that is present in a website (Xie, 2024). The KFT website implements a structured approach to organizing its content in a linear, logical fashion so users will likely access the information they seek in as few clicks as possible.

The KFT repeats information across certain pages, as detailed in the Web Content Inventory. Most of these are sensical decisions, such as the Our Kung Fu Story page sharing the same web address as the About page. Both titles suggest topics of background information and history, even if the different titles lead the viewer into mistakenly believing each page is unique.

However, others are more misleading, particularly the Order Now options, Pick Up and Delivery, which **all lead to the same web address despite the suggestion of distinct, separate destinations**. This overlapping architecture may confuse users who seek specific information, like those who look for a full product list and are only presented with the Best Sellers on Menu when they should've clicked on the similarly-named Our Menu page.

Some product information is repeated across categories, echoing ecological website design which shares disperses information across pages rather than linearly. For example, the special drinks featured in new collaborations are publicized on the Homepage, Kung Fu Tea News, Menu, Best Sellers, and Our Menu pages. In this way, the website becomes a unified presence with consistent, present information.

In sum, the architecture of the KFT website follows a mostly linear path with some shared destinations and slight ecological design across pages.

Accessibility

Accessibility in web design is the ability of a website to be accessed by all users regardless of able-bodiedness (Xie, 2024). An accessible website should support multiple methods of content access, including screen readers, high contrast images, keyboard navigation, and evolving accessibility technologies for diverse users (Strantz, 2021).

Upon accessing the KFT website for the first time, it fails to adopt accessibility technologies, accommodating for a userbase that is strictly able-bodied. The decorative graphics and pop-culture style are prioritized over accessibility concerns, as the outsized typography in all capital letters makes reading difficult for dyslexic or visually-impaired users. Furthermore, **informative images have no alt-text or captions**, meaning a screen reader completely skips important content without any announcement (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Video of screen reader performance on the Best Sellers page. All body content exists in images that a screen reader does not announce, presenting a violation of accessibility.

An accessibility icon is available at the bottom left of the website, allowing users to tailor the viewing experience to their comfort, including options to adjust the contrast, saturation, graphics, and text (see Figure 4). However, this does not provide information in place of informative images.

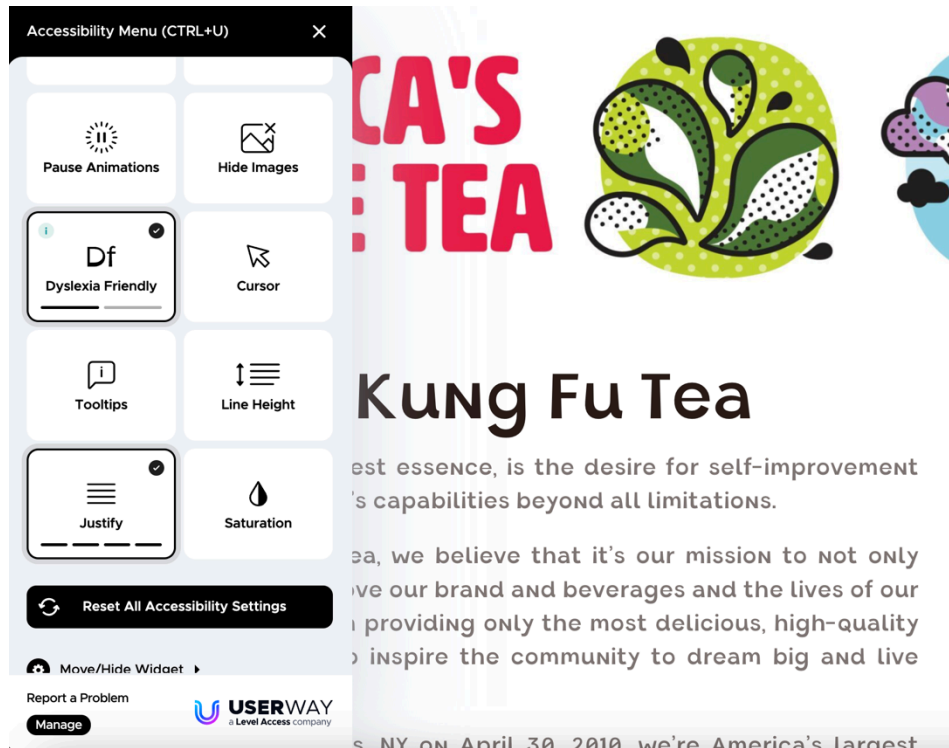


Figure 4: View of the About page with accessibility options toggled to customize text display.

Without this accessibility option, the KFT website risks alienating users who require accessibility features, and even still **not all content is equally available to users of all ability levels.**

Responsiveness

Responsiveness in web design is the ability of a website to function well across various devices (Xie, 2024). This includes the functionality of touchscreens, interactive components, and aesthetic display of content.

The KFT website adapts to smartphone dimensions, minimizing its navigation bar to an icon to maximize the content of each webpage. However, it compromises the legibility of certain elements, particularly body text. Because the KFT typography is in all caps, it is difficult to read, especially on a minimized screen (see Figure 5).

Additionally, the Homepage prioritizes the display of a map of store locations instead of its products and seasonal collaboration, representing a conflict of priority when content is translated onto a small screen (see Figure 5).

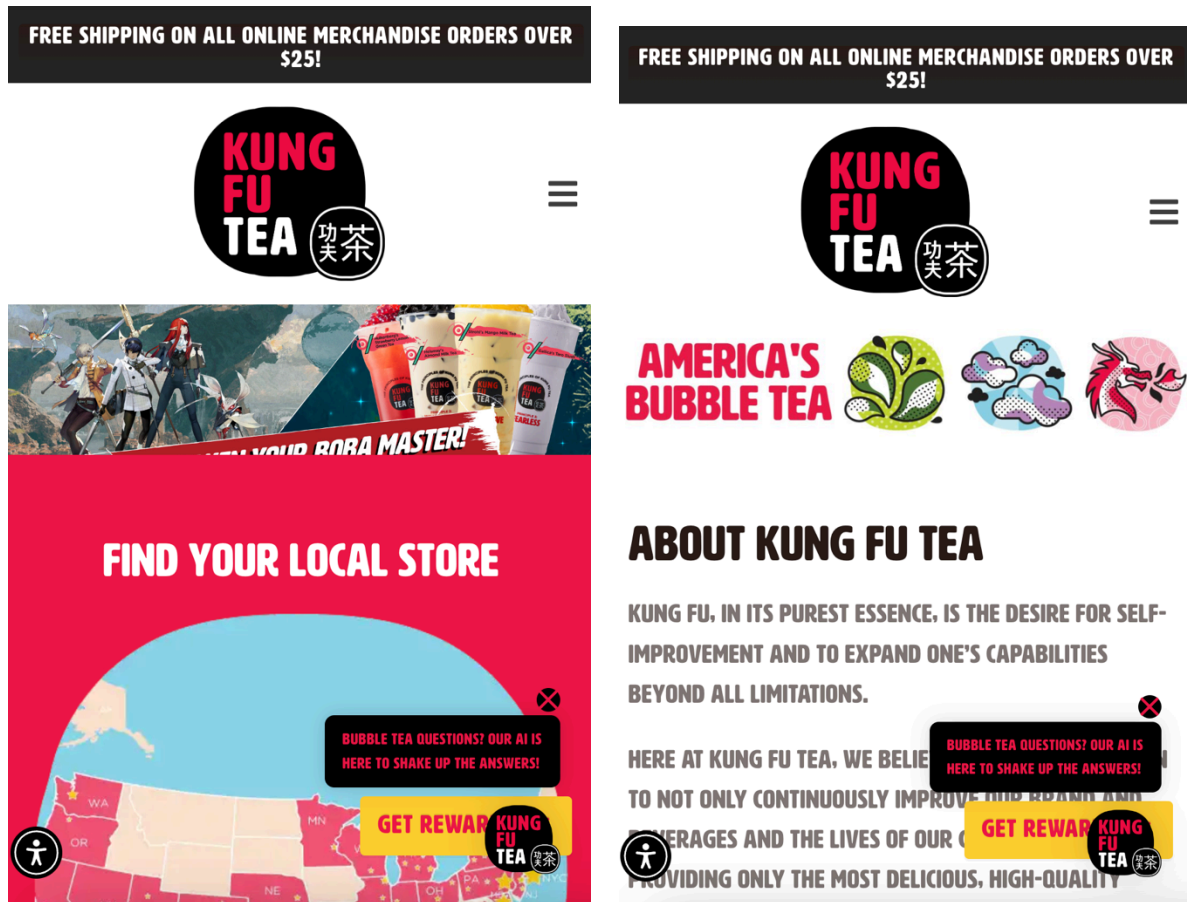


Figure 5: Mobile view of the Homepage (left) and About page (right).

While the KFT website responds and adapts to fluctuating screen dimensions across devices, readability issues and the hierarchy of content suggest **further optimization is required** to comfortably accommodate for all users.

Findings

Overall, the KFT website utilizes a striking, hip, and modern visual and written style to engage youthful audiences interested in KFT products. It appears professional and operational when viewed on a computer, but upon interacting with its pages, a user will find unexpected discrepancies, particularly if they are not able-bodied.

Web content should be “self-evident... every question mark adds to our cognitive workload, distracting our attention from the task at hand” (Krug, 2014). This discrepancy is exemplified in the Best Sellers page which consists entirely of informative, noninteractive images (see Figure 3). There are no external links nor body text included, so users who seek to learn more about any of these products will fail to do so (see Figure 6).



Figure 6: Graphic illustrating the confusion of a user who receives no response from an element that looks interactive but is not.

Because content is reused across the KFT architecture, accessibility features are not wholly unified with page content, and experiences across various devices are not equivalent, **the KFT website succeeds in appealing to general audiences but not in convincing them of a unified, professional entity.**

Conclusion

The aim of this website is not to act as an ordering interface, but **to provide information about menu items and brand information.** As a result, the KFT website prioritizes showcasing product details and company values over conducting transactions, as submitting orders takes place on external shopping site OrderExperience.

Though aesthetically pleasing and appropriately targeted towards their main consumer base of youth and young adults, the lack of accessibility for users who require external support to navigate websites makes for a significant concern of equity. Were KFT to revisit the design of infrastructure of their website, I would urge them to implement features that not only make the content of this site equitable but also easier to access for all users.

Works Cited

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