

Merci Floral Usability Testing

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Executive Summary

A two-part usability study to evaluate user impressions and functionality was performed on Mercifloral.com, a luxury florist website specializing in event installations and bespoke wedding arrangements. Study 1 utilized a remote Five-Second Test to assess the homepage's immediate impact and communicative effectiveness. The intent is to receive feedback from the user on memorable elements and their understanding of the website's purpose from their brief exposure. Study 2 involved a remote usability test to evaluate the website's functionality for potential clients seeking the florist's services for their wedding. The user navigated Mercifloral.com to determine how to find out the florist's availability for a specific wedding date, highlighting the site's usability and inquiry submission process. (Barnum, 2021)

UX Issues and Findings

Five-Second test -

The major takeaway from this user test was learning that it could be confused as a floral e-commerce business. The assumption that it was for florals was correct, due to the name of the site and the floral image in the background, but the brief interaction with the site communicated to the user that it is a way to purchase bouquets or wedding packages for florals. The user spent the brief testing time scrolling down the long home page rather than looking at the categories of the nav bar or reading the blurb at the top.

Usability Test for Availability -

This test highlighted several usability issues for the site. This test was created with the knowledge that there is no way to view the florist's availability, a problem in itself, but to direct the user towards the only way to proceed in the process of booking her: to find the inquiry page, fill out a detailed form, and submit it.

The user found the inquiry page by scrolling down the home page and went through most of the process to fill out the form; she remarked several times about how long it was and questioned what she was supposed to do without knowing all the details it required; additionally, she mentioned specific parts of the form that were frustrating because they required a multi-select section and then a text-box where the user has to

rewrite each selection and note how many and the description of each item. The form was submitted accidentally and vanished with no way to edit it and the user looked around the site for any other options to find availability.

I was glad to learn that for this user, the Rentals page didn't strike her as relevant – it is for renting materials such as vases and poles to other florists or vendors. She didn't consider that it could have relevant information for her, and she was correct in that assumption. That gave me more confidence that the terminology was reflective of its content.

The major feedback for the inquiry page is that the forms are excessive, require exhaustive input from the user, and have no way to view, edit, or cancel a submitted form.

Implications

The identified UX issues have significant implications for Mercifloral.com's user experience and customer engagement. The incorrect assumption observed in the Five-Second Test regarding the website's primary purpose suggests a messaging and branding challenge. Users interpreting the site as a floral e-commerce platform may overlook its more luxury services for event installations and bespoke arrangements, potentially leading to missed opportunities for business engagement and conversions. I do think that it communicates well its focus on florals and that an adjustment to the welcome blurb and a few seconds longer of viewing the page may amend this easily.

The usability issues discovered during the Usability Test reveal fundamental obstacles in the inquiry submission process. The lengthy and complex inquiry form creates substantial user friction, potentially deterring potential clients seeking wedding services. The absence of a visible calendar or availability checker further complicates the user journey, making it challenging for customers to determine the florist's schedule for their event; this system creates a mass of customer inquiries that the florist must sort through despite previous commitments and blocked-off dates. This lack of clarity and user-friendly interaction can make organization and scheduling difficult for the florist and create disappointment in potential clients.

The forms themselves likely do not cultivate valuable, clear information from users in the extensiveness of their inputs. A form that requires the user to check between several sections and rewrite parts of the form creates a poor experience and can sap cognitive energy. Forms should be just as extensive as necessary and no longer than that. Minimizing the user's effort by asking only what is needed is a practical method for encouraging users to participate as fully as possible (Jarrett & Gaffney, 2010).

Actionable Solutions

1. **Clarify Brand Messaging:** Revise the homepage content and layout to clearly communicate Mercifloral.com's specialization in event installations and unique floral services. Reemphasize these unique offerings through concise headlines, and better information hierarchy.
2. **Simplify Inquiry Process:** Redesign the inquiry form to streamline the submission process. Implement progressive disclosure techniques to break down the form into manageable steps, reducing cognitive load. Provide simple instructions to help guide users through complex sections, enhancing usability and reducing user frustration.
3. **Integrate Availability Checker:** Develop a visual calendar or availability checker in the date section of the inquiry form to allow users to quickly assess the florist's schedule. This enables users to assess availability without needing to wait for a response and can keep a user from filling out an extensive form needlessly.
4. **Implement Form Editing:** Introduce functionality for users to view, edit, or cancel submitted forms after submission. This allows flexibility and can let a user return to add more details at a later time in their wedding planning process. (The form requests venue information, photographer information, and other specifics of the event. Allowing users to come back to add more detailed information keeps them from needing to fill out the form repeatedly.)

References

Barnum, C. M. (2021). Usability Testing Essentials: Ready, set ... test! Morgan

Kaufmann is an imprint of Elsevier.

Jarrett, C., & Gaffney, G. (2010). Forms that work: Designing web forms for usability.

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