

# The Eight Golden Rules of Interface Design

The Eight Golden rules of Interface Design, proposed by Ben Shneiderman, are meant to help us develop productive and well designed user interfaces that are easy to use and as intuitive as possible. Most of the big tech enterprises, such as Google, Amazon or Facebook, are great examples of companies whose well-designed products reflect Shneiderman's rules.

In this project we are analyzing the websites of two world-renowned cosmetics brands: Bobbi Brown and M·A·C. Although these brands work in the same field, each of them has created a website according to its needs, objectives, beliefs and products, that is, each has had its own vision in the use of the Eight Rules, so we have found in them two very interesting companies to analyze and work with.

## 1. Strive for Consistency

When creating a site, it is important to be consistent throughout it as long as it will allow us to develop our identity and keep users as they are navigating through our site, so we need something that defines us and makes us stand out: the colors we use, the style of the buttons, and even the fonts are elements that will help us make the difference from other companies, so they are really important in the development of our site.

Comparing the two sites, we have chosen to analyze a part of their home pages where they show their newest make-up products. We can tell that the layout used is the same, or very similar to one another, but each brand uses very specific elements of them. There is a consistency between all the MAC pages, as well as Bobbi Brown's. Also, each of them has chosen a different color theme: MAC has decided to use shades of rose gold and turquoise for their holiday campaign, while Bobbi Brown has opted to go for the classics and use the typical colors of the brand.

Even though they are selling the same kind of products, we can always tell the difference between each brand and we can guess which site we are on.

## 2. Enable Frequent Users to Use Shortcuts

The use of frequent shortcuts such as "ctrl +c" or "ctrl + v" to which the user is already accustomed helps to make the user's experience with the interface more comfortable and efficient. As a result of using shortcuts we should be able to navigate the page with minimal use of the trackpad or mouse.

In both websites we've chosen as an example we can see that some shortcuts such as ctrl+v or ctrl+x don't work (neither are the useful since we are not going to add new information to the pages) although ctrl+c does work and might be useful if we needed to extract some information. Nevertheless, the most helpful keyboard shortcut that this kind of webs offer is the use of the tab and enter keys to navigate the menu. With the tab key you can select section on the menu you would like to visit and pressing the intro key would be like clicking in the selected section. This is why it is so important that the menu bar is clear and intuitive.

### **3. Offer Informative Feedback**

The user needs to know at all times what is going on, where they are and what is happening with their activity. Therefore, for every action they perform there should be appropriate, human-readable feedback within a reasonable amount of time.

For example, when adding a product to the cart on either of the two websites analyzed, you will see a number in the bag icon at the top right of the screen. This way the user will know that the wanted products are being stored in their shopping list.

When moving on to the checkout process, each of the pages will inform of the total purchase price, available payment methods, offers, discounts... and other relevant information such as the time it will take for the package to arrive.

### **4. Design Dialog to Yield Closure**

It is crucial to offer to the users an informative dialogue so that they feel comfortable while using a website. For instance, when looking at a shopping website, it is expected from the interface to show some messages to the user such as “Thank you! your order has been placed” simply to confirm to the user that everything has gone correctly.

In our examples, the interfaces should communicate to the users that everything has gone perfectly with their purchase because most people don't feel the most comfortable online shopping since it can lead to misunderstandings whether it is with the order or with the payment among others. This is why to provide the best experience in a shopping website for a user, mostly during the payment steps, the interface should maintain a dialogue as clear and specific as possible with the user.

Like none of us has ever shopped on bobbi brown's website before we don't know how this dialogue is during the shopping procedure. On the other hand, we have shopped online in MAC and we can confirm that everything is very clear and that there is no room for error.

### **5. Offer Simple Error Handling**

When navigating through a site, its interface should be designed to avoid errors as much as possible. However, if something goes wrong, the system should make it easy for users to understand the error and fix it. Simple ways to deal with errors include displaying clear error notifications and descriptive suggestions for resolving the problem.

For example, on MAC and Bobbi Brown's sites, when logging in with the wrong information, the system will display a warning message, giving the opportunity to re-enter the information so you can access your account.

### **6. Permit Easy Reversal of Actions**

Knowing that there is an opportunity to discard a change you have made immediately is quite convenient for users. Everyone has made a change by accident, like maybe discarding something,

and has to start all over again. With this option, users will be able to browse the site with more confidence, security and ease of use.

None of the websites studied count with this facility, but we think it would be a great idea to add a reverse button when you discard something from your cart for example

## **7. Support Internal Locus of Control**

Keeping the user in control makes them feel comfortable and means they will be more likely to continue using the software in question, and even possibly recommend it to others so the company will get more customers, making this particular Golden Rule not only good for design practice, but good for business as well. Users should be the initiators of the actions rather than the responders.

If we dig into Bobbi Brown's site, we can tell that they allow users to interact within it in cases such as the possibility to chat with makeup artists, book virtual makeup sessions and even make them part of the brand's community, giving the possibility of sharing pictures of the looks created with Bobbi Brown's products.

Navigating into MAC's site, we can find almost the same services as in Bobbi Brown's, with the difference that the user cannot share their picture directly on the site, but you will have to upload it to instagram with an specific hashtag, and then the pic will be selected or not to be on the web.

## **8.Reduce Short-Term Memory Load**

We should always try to make sure that the users have to remember as little as possible. We should never overload their memory making them remember where things are or what each button does. Therefore, their attention should be driven to where we are interested in by keeping the displays as simple and eye-catching as possible. Also, the menu should be very intuitive and segmented in specific windows for each section to make the information easy to find. Lastly, knowing that it is easier to recognize than to remember, we should use common icons to make the navigation easier like, for example, a bag or shopping cart for the virtual cart, a person for identifying your profile or a magnifying glass for search.

As we can see, both MAC and Bobbi Brown have tried to draw attention to the Black Friday offer (30% off in all the websites) being the only information to pop up when you open the website before scrolling down. We can also notice the recognizable icons on the MAC website or, in case of Bobbi Brown, the chose to replace the icons directly with the words.

## **Conclusion**

Both websites are very similar, and so are most of the cosmetics websites we've looked up. Therefore, none of them is better than the other. Although one might have a better dialogue to yield closure the other one offers better informative feedback. Both have successfully implemented the 8 golden rules in some way taking into account that certain rules, such as the use of frequent shortcuts or the easy reversal of actions, are more unnecessary on websites dedicated

to sales than on document editing websites. We think that the choice of which of these two websites is better is probably a personal decision.

M: I personally believe that MAC's website is better because I find it more eye-catching than Bobbi's. I also think it is more intuitive and colorful. Also, I prefer having the menu bar at the top of the page instead of in a lateral position because I feel that it keeps the attention in the centre of the screen instead of diverting it to the side and back to the centre.

R: In my opinion, Bobbi Brown's site is better because it has been able to use the 8 rules while maintaining the brand's characteristics. It is easy to use and easy to understand. You don't need to be an expert in new technologies to use it and it is very intuitive. Also, it seems to me that it always stays true to the brand and its beliefs, always putting the user first to make them feel as comfortable as possible.