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To: Director of Treefort Music Fest

From: Bob Barker, Digital Marketing Analyst

Subject: Recommendation Report for treefortmusicfest.com

The following is an evaluative recommendation report for Treefort Music Fest's website, www.treefortmusicfest.com, with the purpose of providing valuable feedback on how it may better serve its prospective customers by providing user-friendly, intuitive navigation within the site, encouraging more customer interest from website visitors, and effectively communicating and accurately reflecting its vision and purpose through its design and layout features.

In order to evaluate the website, I carefully investigated several key features, such as design, layout, ease of navigation, depth of information, and user-friendly components. I continued my analysis by surveying a number of voluntary participants who responded to yes or no questions related to several properties of the site, including navigation, design, information, and loading time. Finally, I performed comparative analyses between Treefort Music Fest's website and a related website. After collecting and synthesizing my data, I completed my report with a number of recommendations, summarized below.

My main conclusions and recommendations are that Tree Fort Music Fest should consider a complete design overhaul while maintaining or fine-tuning its strong characteristics, such as ease of access and availability of important information. It should seek to find a design aesthetic which is congruent with the vision and mood of the organization in order to bolster an accurate online representation of itself to the community.

Website Evaluation and Recommendation Report: Treefort Music Fest

Prepared for: Director, Treefort Music Fest

Prepared by: Bob Barker, Digital Marketing Analyst

April 18, 2020

Introduction

I was approached with the task of evaluating Treefort Music Fest's website, treefortmusicfest.com, in order to determine how the site might maximize performance in accurately and effectively conveying its vision, drawing prospective customers in, and providing all the necessary information in an easy-to-access format for its visitors.

The current site for Treefort Music Fest includes an organized format, a wealth of information, and an eclectic use of fonts, font sizes, and colors. While some of these features are strengths, others act as deterrents to potential patrons. Treefort Music Fest relies on the use of its website as one of its main marketing and community outreach strategies. Thus, it is important to ensure that the characteristics that make up an effective business website, such as site organization, design, color, readability, and ease of access to pertinent information, are scrutinized and evaluated for opportunities to improve upon.

With this in mind, the director of Treefort Music Fest asked me focus on the following tasks in my evaluation:

- Determine the ease of navigation on the site
- Analyze the design features in relation to the aesthetic values they convey
- Synthesize data relating to perceptions from site visitors
- Assess overall website quality in comparison to a competitor site
- Determine the quantity and quality of information that the site provides

In my personal analysis, I determined that the site provided a user-friendly experience for navigation from one section to the next. I found the overall design aesthetic of the site to be distracting and disorganized. With the data collected from my survey participants, it was found that the site's information was readily available, but its design was distracting and unappealing. My comparative analyses between treefortmusicfest.com and a competitor site suggested that the former site has room for improvement relating to design and simplicity of layout. Finally, I determined that both the quantity and quality of information presented on the site were generally satisfactory.

My recommendations, based on this evaluation, include completely redesigning the website, making sure information remains easily accessible, and maintaining content quality to ensure that all information is presented in a clear and concise manner.

The following sections outline my research methodology, conclusions from my research, and recommendations based on those conclusions.

Research Methods

My primary research included a thorough, firsthand inspection of the following website characteristics:

- Design
 - I evaluated the use of colors, fonts, text sizes, positioning of headers and links, and relative size of graphics within the site.
- Navigation
 - I browsed every link within the website, analyzing whether the setup was intuitive and user-friendly.
- Content
 - I explored the information provided, determining whether the website provided sufficient information for the interested consumer.

Secondary research included the following series of yes or no questions presented on Facebook, where participants responded voluntarily:

- Is the site designed in an intuitive, easy-to-navigate format, where pertinent information is easily accessible?
- Do the site's design elements, such as colors, fonts, and graphics, encourage you to learn more about or patronize the business?
- After browsing several areas of the site, did you experience any lag or issues with loading?
- Does the site offer enough information to give the visitor a comprehensive understanding of what the Treefort Music Fest is (location, artists, event dates, event features, etc.)?
- Does the site's overall aesthetic seem to match well with the content that it is advertising?

Finally, I conducted a comparative analysis between Treefort Music Fest's website and the website of another festival which takes place in Boise: Water Lantern Festival (waterlanternfestival.com). In my evaluation, I compared design, ease of navigation, and content of both websites.

Results

1a. Personal Analysis: Design

In my personal analysis, I found that the site's design was cluttered, unappealing, and distracting. The use of multiple fonts and font sizes without clear purpose impeded the site's ability to effectively draw the viewer's eye towards the focus on each page within the website.



Figure 1.1: Treefort Music Fest's homepage utilizes too many colors, with a pastel background that distracts and clashes with the bright font colors.

Additionally, I evaluated the positioning of the text, headers, and tabs throughout the site. The quick links at the top were clearly labeled, with an all caps font that gave it a more professional appearance than the serif fonts utilized elsewhere.

However, the switch between styles of fonts did not lend to a cohesive design for the website in general. On the upper left-hand corner of the site, the link to return to the homepage is labeled as "tmf," which was not as clear as simply labeling it as "home."



Figure 1.2: Quick links are clearly labeled with an all-caps, sans serif font. Homepage link is not clearly labeled.

The lack of design consistency is also disorienting for the visitor. While a simple, consistent design can be found on certain pages (such as in Fig. 1.3), another page utilizes entirely different colors and fonts (Fig. 1.4).

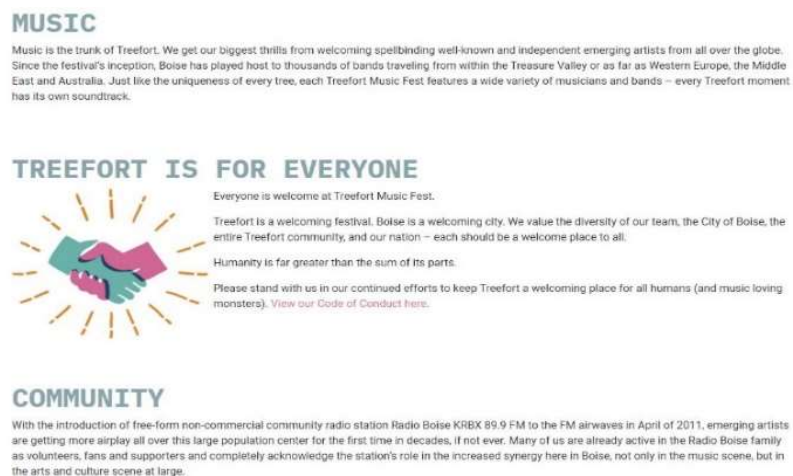


Figure 1.3: The design elements are simple and streamlined here.

HACKFORT

What is Hackfort?

Hackfort is a digital humanities conference that focuses on the delightful aspects of technology, seeking to stimulate your curiosity, creativity and passion for tech.

Are there kid-friendly programming at Hackfort?

Tons! Check out the Hackfort schedule when available and look for the Kidfort crossover events!

What if we just want to check out the expo hall, but don't want to buy a Hackfort badge?

Treefort wristband holders have access to all Hackfort events; Expo Hall is open to the general public.

FILMFORT

What is Filmfort?

Emerging artists cinema! Filmfort hosts feature full length and short films, discussions and Q&A sessions with filmmakers

Where is Filmfort located?

Filmfort location(s) for 2020 are TBD, stay tuned!

Figure 1.4: In comparison to Fig. 1.3, this page uses a different font and multiple colors.

1b. Personal Analysis: Navigation

The site was generally easy to navigate, with pertinent information such as FAQs, ticket information, news, and artist lineup information clearly and conveniently placed at the top of the homepage. Hovering over some of the links, the site provided several subcategories in order to narrow down what the visitor may be searching for.



Figure 1.5: Hovering over "Info," a bar appears with several subcategories.

After navigating to several links, it was easy to return to the homepage by clicking on the link labeled "tmf" in the left-hand top corner. However, as stated in the design section of my analysis, I found the ambiguity of this label to be less user-friendly for navigational ease. At first glance, the average visitor may not immediately recognize "tmf" as an abbreviation for Treefort Music Fest, nor make the connection that it is the link for returning to the homepage.

1c. Personal Analysis: Content

Treefort Music Fest's website provides ample information relevant to their potential consumers. Location, event features, prices, and the organization's philosophy are all thoroughly outlined and easily accessible.

As outlined above from *Figure 1.5*, the "info" link provides several subcategories which break information down for the visitor to find answers to specific questions they may have. Additionally, detailed information about the "forts" – specialized stations throughout the festival offering a diverse range of activities – can be found under the FAQ section of the website.

Finally, treefortmusicfest.com provides relevant content about the music artist lineup, one of the key components of a music festival. This information can be easily found by clicking on the “lineup” link at the top of the page, and every band and artist is displayed with its own link, providing biographies of each music artist.

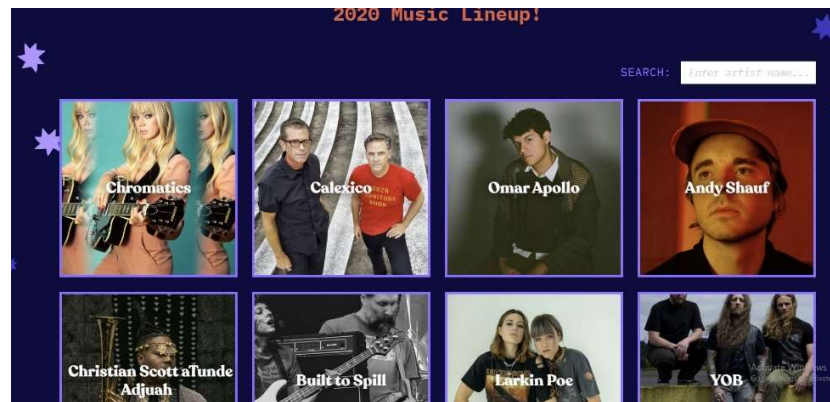


Figure 1.6: Artist lineup is clearly displayed with profiles for each artist provided.

2. Secondary Research: Questionnaire Statistics

Following my primary research, I solicited feedback on Facebook from voluntary participants in response to five questions pertaining to features of the website. 11 respondents provided the following results:

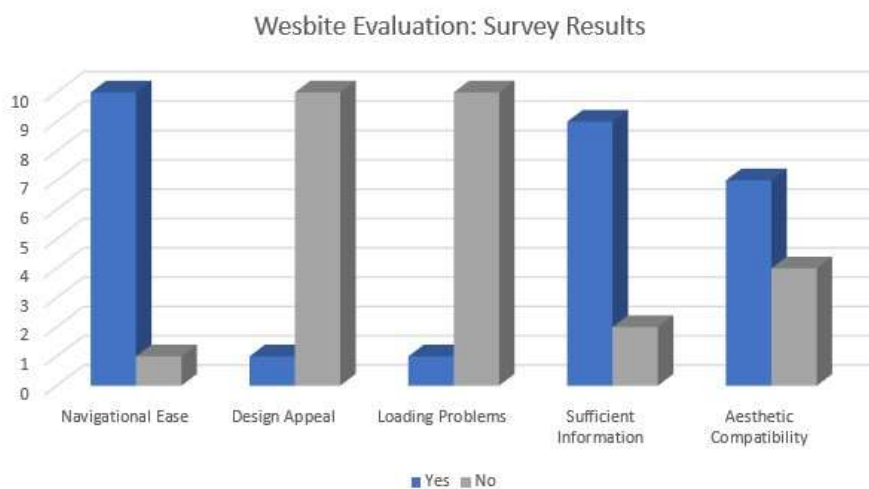


Figure 1.7: Results from website questionnaire

- **Navigational Ease:** 10 out of 11 participants agreed that the site was easy to navigate.
- **Design Appeal:** 10 out of 11 participants responded negatively to the site's design.
- **Loading Problems:** 10 out of 11 participants did not experience any problems with loading.
- **Sufficient Information:** 9 out of 11 participants found that the site contained enough information to help visitors understand the essence of the organization.
- **Aesthetic Compatibility:** 7 out of 11 participants agreed that the aesthetic matched the site's content, while 4 out of 11 participants disagreed.

3a. Comparative Analysis: Design

In my comparative analysis, I chose to compare and contrast key features between Treefort Music Fest's site and the site of another festival, the Water Lantern Festival. The differences in design features were striking. The homepage features a single font color and style, a classic navy backdrop, and a large, animated image of the event displayed across the screen.

In comparison, Treefort Music Fest's website employs multiple font colors, sizes, and styles, making it difficult for the visitor to know where to focus their attention. The clashing pastel colors also overstimulate the viewer, contrasting with the calm and welcoming photo displayed on waterlanternfestival.com.

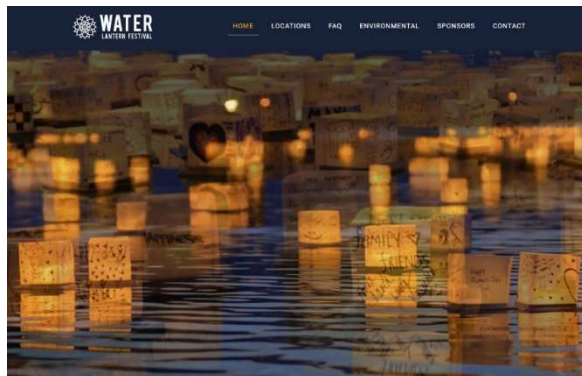


Figure 1.8: The Water Lantern Festival homepage displays subdued colors, consistent, sleek style, and a single font.



Figure 1.9: Treefort Music Fest's homepage is cluttered with several noisy colors and multiple fonts.

3b. Comparative Analysis: Navigation

The Water Lantern Festival's site is optimized for intuitive navigation, including clearly labeled, easy-to-read links at the top of the homepage. In addition, the bottom of the site offers a more comprehensive list of links and information (see Fig. 2.2).

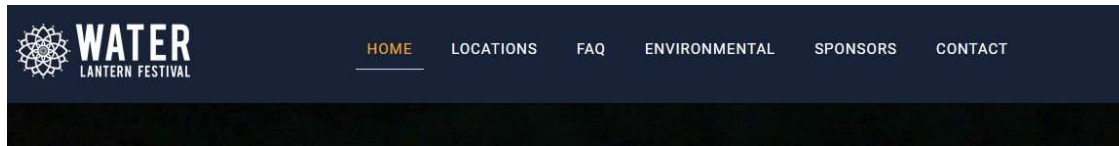


Figure 2.1: Water Lantern Festival's site contains clearly labeled and easy to read links for ease of navigation.



Figure 2.2: The Water Lantern Festival's site contains multiple informational links at the bottom of their page.

Treefort Music Fest's site, in comparison, also provides clearly labeled links at the top of the site to aid visitors as they navigate from page to page. One key difference in Treefort Music Fest's site is the absence of a clearly labeled link to return to the homepage. In contrast to the Water Lantern Festival's site, which provides a link clearly labeled "home," Treefort Music Fest's site only provides a home link labeled as "tmf" (see Fig. 1.2). The Water Lantern Festival adds intuitive strength to their navigational setup by also redirecting the visitor back to the homepage by clicking on the logo on the left side of the header.

3c. Comparative Analysis: Content

Both treefortmusicfest.com and waterlanternfestival.com sufficiently orient the visitor to the essence and vision of their respective organizations with the information provided. Content included on each site is comprehensive, thorough, and clearly written. Elements such as contact information, location, frequently asked questions, ticket information, and sponsorship information are all clearly labeled, thoroughly explained, and easily found on both sites.

Conclusions

In this section, I will outline the conclusions and summary of the results from my research and analysis.

Design

The design features of treefortmusicfest.com were cluttered, distracting, over-stimulating, and outdated. The overall aesthetic did not lend itself to drawing in visitors or encouraging them to continue browsing the site. These design flaws were even more glaring when compared to a similar website, waterlanternfestival.com, which had a sleek and welcoming design. These results suggest that treefortmusicfest.com is not currently satisfying the needs of its potential patrons in its design elements.

Navigation

The site was generally organized in an intuitive, easy-to-navigate manner, with only minor confusions in labels of important links (see *Fig. 1.2*). Survey respondents found that the site was easy to navigate and did not experience any lag when moving from one section of the site to another. The navigational features of the site are one of its strengths, and no major changes are likely needed.

Content

The website provided ample information and content, allowing visitors to gain a comprehensive understanding of what Treefort Music Fest is. Information was easy to find and written in an easy to understand manner.

Recommendations

Design

I recommend that Treefort Music Fest conduct a complete redesign of their website. A simplified color scheme should be selected, including no more than 2 or 3 colors across all sections of the site. For large headers and titles, a classic sans serif font should be selected, and smaller text should match or complement that of the larger text. Text and background colors should offer contrast with each other to improve readability on the site. Changes should be implemented to reflect the more effective design of the competitor site, Water Lantern Festival, such as one large image on the front page that encapsulates the mood and vision of the event. In this way, the visitor will be drawn in with an accurate and powerful first impression of what Treefort Music Fest has to offer.

Navigation

I recommend that Treefort Music Fest maintain the navigational system that it has in place, with only one minor change of relabeling the “tmf” link as “home.” Alternatively, the “tmf” link could remain and the addition of a “home” link would add more navigational ease for the site’s visitors.

Content

I recommend that Treefort Music Fest continue to provide all the content that is currently offered on their site. Any changes regarding information about the festival should be maintained and updated as needed.

Appendix

Questionnaire for treefortmusicfest.com

1. Is the site designed in an intuitive, easy-to-navigate format, where pertinent information is easily accessible? Yes / No
2. Do the site's design elements, such as colors, fonts, and graphics, encourage you to learn more about or patronize the business? Yes / No
3. After browsing several areas of the site, did you experience any lag or issues with loading? Yes / No
4. Does the site offer enough information to give the visitor a comprehensive understanding of what the Treefort Music Fest is (location, artists, event dates, event features, etc.)? Yes / No
5. Does the site's overall aesthetic seem to match well with the content that it is advertising? Yes / No