

www.Brown-Haley.com Usability Test

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Introduction

Brown-Haley.com serves as an on-line market place for customers around the world. Brown-Haley.com provides a large variety on confectionary products for purchase.

A usability test was implemented to determine the extent an interface facilitates a user's ability to complete routine tasks. The test was conducted with a group of potential users in a usability lab. Users were asked to complete a series of routine tasks. Sessions were analyzed to identify potential areas for improvement to the web site.

The Brown-Haley web-designer, here-after called the *facilitator*, conducted this usability test. During the session, the facilitator collected data on the participant's navigational choices, task completion rates and comments. The participants were generally successful at completing the usability tasks.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the test is to collect data from actual Brown & Haley website users. The tasks tested are as follows: The path to purchase of a canister of Cashew ROCA® and Multi-flavor Assorted pack of ROCA®. The questions to be answered are: How long does it take them to find what they are looking for and add it to a cart, and can the user find an assorted package of ROCA® and find the number of servings in each container?

In completing this test, difficulties and roadblocks for the user were discovered which lead the facilitator to suggest recommendations for improvement.

Upon review of this usability test, usability goals for www.brown-haley.com will be incorporated.

Methodology

Session

Three people were chosen to visit the website with the specific tasks in mind. To test each task, the facilitator observed the user while they performed the list of tasks to complete on the website. The number of clicks it took the user to find the information they are looking for were counted. Additionally, the number of errors they encountered and the amount of time it took them to complete the process was noted.

Training

No prior training was provided for the test user. The participants received and overview of the usability test procedure, equipment and software. The test user was provided with a fully functioning computer and web-site for use during the time of testing.

Procedure

Participants took part in the usability test in an on-site location. The participants were seated at a comfortable workstation in a home-like environment.

The facilitator briefed the participant and instructed that he or she is evaluating the Web site/Web application, rather than the facilitator evaluating the participant. Participants were informed that the tasks will be measured and that exploratory behavior outside the task flow should not occur until after task completion.

The facilitator will instruct the participant to read aloud the task description from a printed copy and begin the task. Time-on-task measure then began. The facilitator encouraged the participants to 'think aloud'. The facilitator then observed and entered user behavior and comments in a data logging application.

Participants

The participants range in age from 21 years old through 80 years old. They were recruited via word-of-mouth solicitation. The participants were not expected to have prior knowledge of the website. Additionally, they were not required to have online shopping experience.

The participants' responsibility was to attempt to complete a set of representative task scenarios presented to them in as efficient and timely a manner as possible, and to provide feedback regarding the usability and acceptability of the user interface. The participants were directed to provide honest opinions regarding the usability of the application, and to participate in post-session subjective questionnaires and debriefing.

Participants were selected on the basis of being willing to participate. The success of the website is based on the ability of an unskilled user finding the information they need.

Evaluation Tasks/Scenarios

The participants were asked to perform the following tasks. The facilitator measured user success in completing these tasks:

- Find a 5 oz Almond ROCA® box and add it to cart, locate the cart, and proceed to checkout.

- Find out how many servings and calories are in one Peanut Butter MOUNTAIN® Bar.
- Find where they can purchase a Peanut Butter MOUNTAIN® Bar locally.

Results

Task Completion Success Rate

The facilitator recorded the participant's ability to complete the tasks without prompting. The participants successfully completed task 1 (Find a 5 oz Almond ROCA box). Two out of three (67 %) completed task 2 (Find how many servings and calories...MOUNTAIN® Bar). One out of three (33 %) were able to complete task 3 (Find where you can purchase...locally).

Ease in Finding Information

All participants agreed that was easy to find a package of Almond ROCA. They found this information immediately by searching the top navigation bar and selecting *SHOP ALL*. All participants were confused when looking for the number of servings in a container. Their first instinct was to read the nutrition panel information. The number of servings listed there is "X". The user had to read the product description to find the correct number of servings per container. All participants struggled with finding where they could purchase Almond ROCA® locally.

Overall Ratings

After task session completion, participants rated the site for four overall measures. These measures include:

- Ease of use
- Getting information quickly
- Homepage's content facilities understanding of the sites purpose.
- Site organization

All participants were able to identify the purpose of the web-site by looking at the home page. Most participants agreed the site was well organized and easy to use.

Recommendations

The recommendations section provides recommended changes and justifications driven by the participant success rate, behaviors, and comments. The following recommendations will improve the overall ease of use and address the areas where participants experienced problems or found the interface/information architecture unclear. Task three had the highest rate of difficulty for the user.

Find where you can purchase Almond ROCA® locally (Task 3)

Task 3 required participants to find where they could purchase ALMOND ROCA® locally. This task presented the highest rate of difficulty for all participants.

Change	Justification	Severity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add categories of locations around the world • Add additional drop-down menu of local stores listed by state on home-page. 	<p>Participants across both tests rated the ease of finding store locations difficult.</p> <p>Location information is not categorized and requires users to search the top navigation and the footer to find the store location.</p> <p>Participant comments also included that they expected to see a list of stores where Almond ROCA® is sold in the local area.</p>	<p>High</p>

Conclusion

Most users found the brown-haley.com well-organized and easy to use for their on-line shopping needs. Implementing the recommend changes will ensure that the user can also find Brown & Haley products in their local stores.