Mosi Bakery Website - Analysis

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Mosi Website Link: https://www.mosibakery.com

Mosi is a beautiful local business with delicious food and a lovely, quaint atmosphere. Unfortunately, their website does not convey the quality of the bricks and mortar business. Scattered information, inconsistent design, unappealing visuals, and broken links lead to a discouraging user experience.

While the whole website could use a redesign, this case study will focus on evaluating the landing page and how it could be improved from a user interface and experience perspective.

The following analysis will include a usability heuristic evaluation, information architecture principle evaluation, list actionable items, and provide a couple landing page redesigns with rational to support design decisions.

Usability Heuristic Evaluation

The 10 usability heuristics are a used as design guidelines. The usability heuristic violations found in this analysis will be rated on a severity scale ranging from 1 to 4.

1: Cosmetic problem
2: Minor usability problem
3: Major usability problem; important to fix
4: Usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

User control and freedom, error prevention (4) - Navigation Bar

The first usability heuristic violation on the Mosi website is of the user control and freedom and the error prevention heuristics. The user control and freedom heuristic states that users often do things by accident and that they need a simple and quick way to undo their actions. The error prevention heuristic states that good design avoids error inducing situations, or at least warns users before they complete error inducing actions.

On the Mosi website both of these heuristics are violated if the user visits the Mosi Gelato website and selects the 'Mosi Bakery' site from the menu. Performing this action, the user would expect to return to the landing page of the Mosi Bakery website, however the website loads a version of that site with the Gelato site's navigation bar overlaid over the top. Once the user accesses this broken version of the home page, there is no clear escape other than the back button. Furthermore, this is a clear point of friction for any users that visit the Bakery site if they are directed there from the Gelato website. Simply put, there is no clear escape or warning for the user. On the usability severity scale, these two violations constitutes a 4, a usability catastrophe. It is imperative that this issue is resolved as soon as possible.

Consistency and standards (3) - Navigation Bar

The second heuristic violation involves the consistency and standards heuristic. The consistency and standards heuristic emphasizes the importance of applying interfaces that are familiar to the user. Designers should avoid redesigning elements that already work and are established. Furthermore, users should be able to predict the result of actions they are about to take.

The Mosi website takes an existing design precedent (hover animation) and applies it in an inconsistent manner. On the landing page, each navigation element has a different hover animation (or no animation all). This inconsistency is confusing to the user as it implies varied functionality. Unfortunately, users expecting inconsistent functionality will be woefully correct. Certain navigation bar elements (like the gift card element) redirect the user to a totally different website. As this issue affects the navigation usability of the website, it scores a 3 on the severity scale. It is a major usability problem and is important to fix.

Aesthetic and minimalist design (2) - Navigation Bar, Page Content, Footer

Aesthetic and minimalist design emphasizes the importance of clear and concise interfaces. A user interface should avoid unnecessary clutter and inconsistent or overly stylized visuals as they distract from the salient information presented to the user.

The navigation bar on the Mosi website is very inconsistent. Each element appears as a unique button with varied colour, shape, and hover animation.

The landing pages' content appears cluttered and is challenging to read at a glance. The location and contact info is centred on the page but displayed in a way that makes it challenging to read.

The footer is near illegible due to its styling. The chosen colours mask the information on the page. This prevents users from reading the content of the footer. Furthermore, the footer has non-removed placeholder text. This extra text further distracts from the real information presented on the page.

The above violations receive a 2 as they are a minor usability problem. While inconvenient, they don't totally inhibit the functionality of the website as they deal mostly with aesthetics.

Aesthetic and minimalist design (1) - The Whole website

While this analysis is focused on the landing page, it is worth noting a general heuristic violation present on the landing page and congruent through the rest of the website. The use of fonts is wholly inconsistent throughout the entire site. There are several varieties of font colour, alignment, type face, and size.

Finally, certain page elements are obscured by other elements. The use of images for areas that could be text (such as cafe menus) are a contributing factor to this violation.

These general aesthetic heuristic violations receive a severity score of 1 as they are primarily cosmetic.

Information Architecture Principle Evaluation

Information architecture pertains to content organization. A good user interface organizes content in a logical and user-friendly way that makes it easy for the user to find what they are looking for. The following section will assess how the current Mosi website handles each of the 10 information architecture principles with improvement recommendations where relevant.

Objects Principle

The objects principle states that content always has its own lifecycle and parameters. Furthermore, content should be regularly updated so as to be current.

The current Mosi website landing page features a few items that are relevant to the objects principle. Firstly, the landing page features images tied to an Instagram account. Theoretically these images should be continually updated due to being linked like this. Something worth considering is the lack of quality control over this design decision. It may be better to utilize a few choice images that represent the business in lieu of these linked images. This change would allow Mosi to showcase their best images rather than just their most recent (ie. their best croissant and coffee photo instead of their most recent).

Secondly, the menus linked by the navigation bar should feature evolving information as menu items change. The current menu system has the menus themselves as photos. It would be more legible and easier to maintain if these menu photos were replaced with formatted text.

Choices Principle

The choices principle addresses the importance of limited choice. Too many options can overwhelm the user and clutter the user interface.

A clear violation of the choices principle on the Mosi website is the navigation bar; specifically the menus element. The menus navigation element contains a hodgepodge of menus, about page link, and links that remove the user from the current website. Furthermore, clicking on the Acqua Cotta nav element outside this menus dropdown displays the menu for Mosi's Acqua Cotta location.

The navigation menu system should be simplified and re organized. In place of a 'menus' dropdown in the navigation bar, the site should have a 'menus' page where the user can select the appropriate location at the top. Furthermore, external links should be removed from the dropdown and the about / contact page should be its own navigation item. These changes would reduce the amount of unnecessary choices and simplify website navigation.

Disclosure Principle

The disclosure principle deals with previewing information to users. Interfaces should assist users with interpreting what they will find if they proceed in the interface.

The first violation of the disclosure principle on the Mosi website is the landing page. On the landing page there are images that reveal 'about' information on hover. There is no indication on the page that these images have information hidden within them. The information should be relocated to another location where it is visible or otherwise removed if it is deemed necessary.

The second violation of the disclosure principle is within the navigation bar. Many of the navigation bar items open new tabs or redirect the user. For example, the gift card button in the navigation bar takes the user to a different website. The navigation bar items shouldn't redirect the user. These items should be repositioned into the page and include some form of signifier to indicate they will redirect the user. These changes would mitigate the lack of disclosure perpetuated by the current design.

Exemplars Principle

The exemplars principle indicates that an interface should have examples of content to indicate where the user is and where they are going.

The primary violation of this principle on the current website is the navigation bar, especially in regards to Mosi's three locations. The Bakery and Acqua Cotta locations are included in the landing page and within the rest of the website, linked by the navigation bar. Conversely, selecting the Gelato location from the navigation bar redirects the user to a totally different website. This contrast in functionality reduces the clarity of navigation within the website.

The website should be modified to include all three locations in the one site instead of one location having its own website. There is significant crossover between the products offered by each location and there is no benefit in segregating them to separate domains.

Front Door Principle

The front door principle states that roughly half of users will access a website through links other than the home page. This means it is crucial that users can determine where they are within the website.

There are two violations of this principle in the Mosi website. Firstly, the navigation bar is very inconsistent in its signifiers. Some pages on the site have no discernible indication of where you are while other pages have navigation bar highlighting to indicate the current selection. This can be resolved by redesigning the website to have current page signifiers in the navigation bar on all pages.

The second violation is in a back door entrance to the site from the Mosi Gelato website. Selecting the link to Mosi's Bakery website on the Gelato site loads a broken amalgamation of both websites where the navigation bar from the Gelato website is overlayed over the Bakery navigation bar. The Gelato website should be fixed to not load both sites in the bizarre way that it currently does. The best solution is to combine both websites into one and avoid the redirect all together. This would lead to a much simpler user interface and make it easier for users to determine where they are in the website.

Multiple Classifications Principle

The multiple classifications principle indicates that interfaces should offer users multiple ways to browse through the content.

In the current Mosi website, the navigation bar is the only way to browse the websites content. There is no hierarchy or search functionality. One shortcoming of the current design is that there are external links embedded in the navigation bar items. It would improve the user experience if these elements that redirect the user where moved out of the navigation bar and placed in logical locations within the websites pages.

Focused Navigation Principle

The focused navigation principle emphasizes the importance of consistency. Designers should avoid grouping unrelated fields together.

The primary violation of this principle in the current Mosi website exists in the navigation bar. The current navigation bar contains several unrelated fields. The about and contact information should be relocated out of the menus dropdown and menu should become its own page with a location selector within the page.

Growth Principle

The growth principle assumes that content will always be expanding. This creates the expectation that websites should be scalable.

This principle is clearly relevant as Mosi continues to expand as a business and add additional locations. This means the website needs to be able to handle information on additional bricks and mortar locations as they are opened.

The current menu system manages this principle in a questionable way. Their Gelato location is hosted on a totally different website, yet their most recent Acqua Cotta location is part of the original Bakery website. In its current state it does not seem like there is a plan or structure set up for managing growth. Mosi needs to determine a plan for managing the addition of further new locations as well as a the three they already have. A good start would be to restructure the current website to manage all locations. It is confusing to have separate domains for various locations of the same business.

Actionable Items

Navigation Bar / Layout Restructure

In both the heuristic and information architecture evaluations the navigation bar is a persistent point of friction. In the heuristic evaluation the navigation bar scored a 4 on the violation severity scale. The current design of having a separate website for the Gelato location coupled with a website breaking link between that and the Bakery website is the most significant and pressing issue to be resolved. The websites should be refactored into one website that showcases information for all three business locations. This solution will remove the confusing navigation of two websites required by the current system and will also solve the currently broken link between the two websites.

Furthermore, the overall layout needs to be restructured. The current layout has external links in the navigation bar as well as items incorrectly organized; a violation of the focused navigation principle. The site should be refactored to provide external links with proper use of the disclosure principle and simplify the navigation bar to be more succinct and organized.

General Aesthetic and Design

While primarily a visual shortcoming, the current landing page (and full website) is loaded with inconsistent design and design with challenging legibility. While this area scored lower in the heuristic violation severity, it is a relatively simple improvement to make for a significantly better user experience.

Firstly, the fonts on the site should be altered to be more consistent. Currently the website uses different fonts for most items including varied colour, weight, alignment, and type face. Secondly, the current site has areas where the text is illegible or obscured due to colour choice. Thirdly, the navigation bar has inconsistent button design and hover animation. While these issues don't make the website unusable, resolving them will lead to a significantly simpler user experience.

Covid Dining and Order Information

The current Mosi website does not have any notice about Covid policies or whether they are open for takeout or order online. The prototypes designed following this analysis will address this shortcoming by adding this information to the home page.
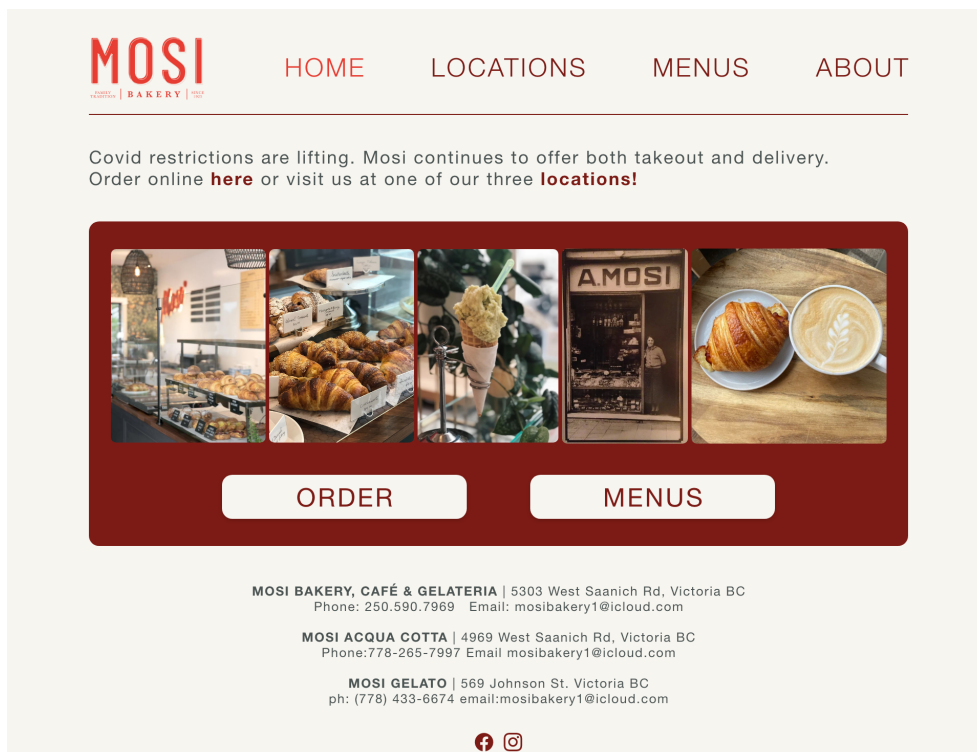
Current Landing Page vs Prototypes
Current Landing Page:
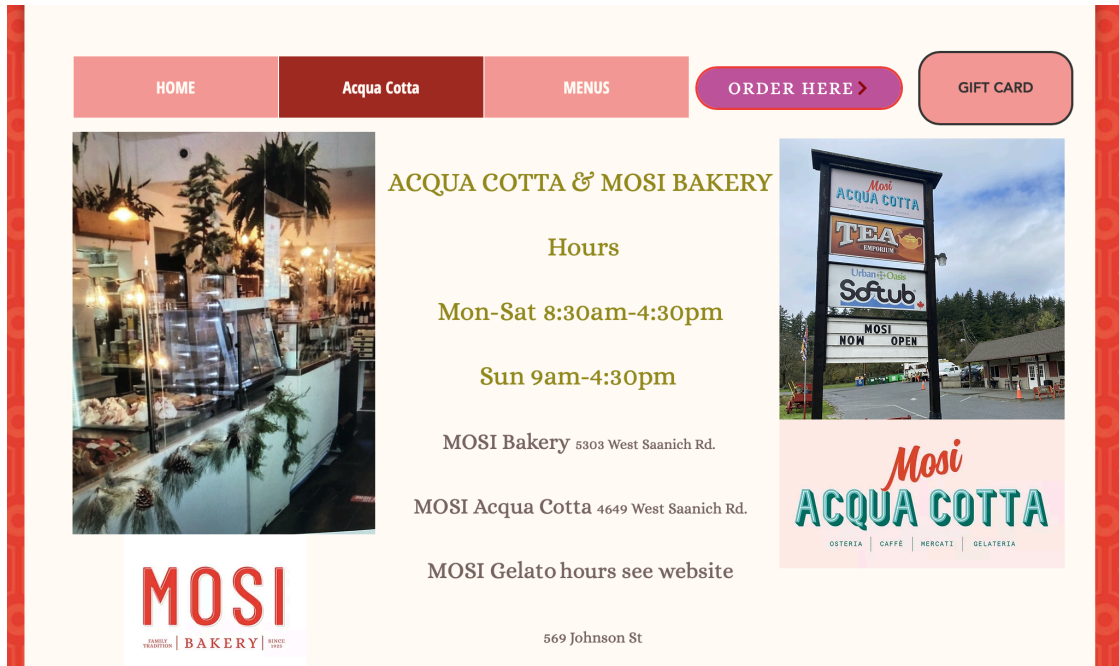
Prototype 1:

Prototype 2:

Why Prototype's Are an Improvement

Both prototypes address the heuristic and information architecture violations present in the prior analysis.

The growth information architecture principle is addressed by refactoring the information layout. In both prototypes the location information is moved from the home page, and separate website to having its own page accessible via the navigation bar. This addresses the current lack of a plan regarding growth and replaces it with a page that can easily be maintained and updated as Mosi adds more locations.

The user control and freedom and error prevention heuristic violations are addressed by removing the second Gelato website in favour of containing all location information within one website. This will fix the current broken link on the Gelato page that breaks the website, and provide users with a simpler, more contained navigation layout.

The consistency and standards and aesthetic and minimalist design heuristics are addressed by the simpler and more consistent designs of the prototypes. Both prototypes employ more limited colour palette, and font choice. They also address the wild inconsistency of the current navigation bar by simplifying its contents and redesigning its styling to be consistent. Furthermore, there are now no external links hidden in the navigation bar. This will prevent users from unintentionally leaving the website. Aesthetically, the prototypes use appealing colours and photos to better convey the warm and bright atmosphere offered by Mosi's bricks and mortar locations.

Of the two prototypes, prototype 1 is the strongest. The use of teal adds an inviting brightness to the design and ties in with the Mosi Acqua Cotta logo. Coupled with the warm inviting photography it yields an aesthetic design that is both enticing and reminiscent of the atmosphere of Mosi's bricks and mortar locations.