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Project Report

Competitive Analysis and Usability Evaluation for CCS.com

Project Sponsor
CCS.com (Footlocker, Inc.)

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Executive Summary

The goal of this project is to enhance the overall shopping experience for the user on CCS.com. We approached the project by conducting a usability test and performing a competitive analysis. The competitive analysis encompassed a website competitive analysis, keyword analysis, real estate analysis, side-by-side analysis and a call center analysis. The main competitors that CCS was compared against were Active Ride Shop, Pacific Sunwear (PacSun,) Skate Warehouse, Tillys, and Zumiez.

The usability test was conducted using 12 test subjects who were current skateboarders aged between 18 and 22. The test consisted of six different tasks, each with its own goal. As each task was performed, the team observed and noted each test subject's experience and followed up with interview questions to gain further insight into their experience.

The website competitive analysis evaluated CCS's and their main competitors' websites using a set of criteria that was predefined by the student-team and CCS. The criteria included site design, site functionality, and site content. Within each main criterion there were sub-categories that allowed for a further detailed analysis. Each item in the website competitive analysis was ranked on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 meaning the feature exists and was well implemented. The website competitive analysis was done to identify the leading practices, and potential areas for improvement on CCS.com.

The keyword analysis was done to examine where CCS ranks in search engine optimization. A list of 36 keywords was used in Google to verify where CCS came up in both the regular listings and the sponsored listings. The sponsored listings result was done based on if CCS appeared or not, while the regular listings was ranked based on what result number CCS was. Overall, CCS ranked best among their competitors for regular listings but still could improve their overall result. In sponsored listings, CCS performed average, only appearing in the sponsored listings with 8 of the keywords.

The website real estate analysis examined how different sites utilize their website space effectively with the objective of enhancing consumer shopping experience and maximizing promotional effects. The eight categories, identified by website usability expert Jakob Nielsen, were welcome/site identity, self–promotional, navigation, content of

interest, advertising, filler, unused white space, and operating system and browser controls (was fixed and not included in the analysis). All these different categories were assigned different colors to map out the overall layout of each web page. Percentages of each category on each websites homepage were calculated and analyzed. Recommendations for CCS were provided based on references to Jakob Nielsen's *Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed*.

The final analyses that were conducted were the side-by-side and call center analysis. The side-by-side analysis compared the shopping experience of CCS with Skate Warehouse looking specifically at the buying process of the Nike SB Bruin sneaker. Each step of the check out process of CCS and Skate Warehouse was placed next to each other. The goal of this analysis was to identify areas that CCS could improve in their checkout process. The call center analysis was done to examine how knowledgeable and friendly the CCS representatives were compared to Active Ride Shop. The team experienced mixed results with all the call centers. It seemed that users would either experience very friendly or very knowledgeable representatives but seldom found representatives that were both.

Overall, the team found that CCS was very highly regarded and ranked in all of the analyses. Although CCS does a very good job overall with their website, the team identified several opportunities for improvement. Some of the recommendations include:

- Utilize prime real estate area of website more effectively.
- Enhance the product pages by adding more detailed descriptions and alternative views, as well as let the customer know the real-time inventory availability.
- Improve the on-site search with alternate spelling suggestions, relevancy ratings, and filtering options.
- Improve search engine optimization to ensure CCS is being found through Google, and other search engines.
- Enhance CCS's social media presence to attract new customers.

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