

Basic Website Evaluation

Organization / Business:

URL:

Communicating the Site's Purpose

Imagine how disorienting it would be to walk into a store and not be able to tell immediately what services or goods were available there. The same is true of your homepage. It must communicate in one short glance where your visitors are, what your company or organization does, and what visitors can do at your website.

Communicates Site's Purpose			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Shows company name/logo in reasonable size & noticeable location			
Includes tagline that summarizes what organization does			
Emphasizes how you differ from competitors			
Highest prioritized tasks emphasized			
One page designated as official homepage			
Homepage differs from all other pages on site			



Butter Baked Goods offers delightful desserts
and **quality baked goods** for all occasions.

Butter Baked Goods' tag line is straightforward, and gives a good description of what their website is all about.

Communicating Information about Your Organization/Business

In addition to your homepage tag line, your business or organization needs to provide a clear way to find information about you, no matter how big or small you are, or how simple or complex your range of products or services. People like to know with whom they are doing business and details about you give credibility to your website.

Communicates Information about Organization/Business			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Corporate information - About Us, Job Opportunities, Press Room, etc. grouped in one distinct place			
Homepage includes About Us link			
Press Room or Newsroom link on homepage			
Contact Us link prominent on homepage			
Feedback mechanism provided			
Privacy policy included			

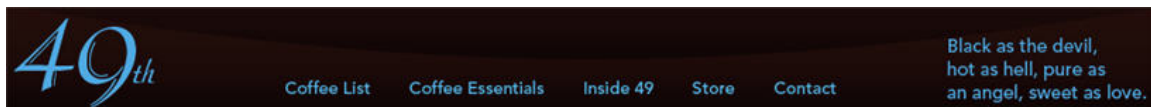


The *Say hello* link on the main navigation of the Kate & Birdie Paper Company website leads to information on how to reach them by e-mail, phone and post, or in person. The page also includes photographs of the owner's workshop and studio.

Content Writing

Visitors scan they don't read. Effective content writing is one of the most critical aspects of your web design. People actually read **only 25%** of what is on your page so make sure your copy can be easily scanned. Break text up with headlines, text boxes and pictures. Set up style standards for your site and follow them consistently.

Content Writing			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Customer-focused language used throughout			
Sections & categories are labeled according to customer value			
Avoids redundant content (are categories, links, items repeated)			
Uses consistent capitalization & other styles			
No single-item categories & single-item bulleted lists are used			
Abbreviations & acronyms are spelled out			



The header of this website from 49th Parallel Coffee Roasters doesn't explain very much about the company, nor can we tell much difference between the sections - *Coffee List*, *Coffee Essentials*, *Inside 49* or *Store* – until we have visited each of them.

Navigation

Don't make me think! Your website should be easy for visitors to find the information they want & to get answers to their questions. Visitors should not have to click on "things" just to find out what they are. Your navigation should focus on your most important content or categories of information and it should be consistent throughout your site.

Navigation			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Noticeable & consistent primary navigation scheme			
Similar items grouped together within navigation scheme			
Doesn't provide multiple navigation areas for same type of links			
Doesn't include active link to homepage on the homepage			
Category navigation is logical with user-friendly labels			
Link to ticket purchase included on homepage			

Archives & Accessing Past Content

Returning and new visitors often are interested in what you've previously done. It's helpful to include an archive for content that has moved off your homepage.

Archives & Accessing Past Content			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Easy access to anything that has been featured on homepage			
News release items are archived and available online			
News items have permanent location (URL)			

Tools & Tasks



Choose carefully which tasks to feature as tools on your homepage; think in terms of shortcuts.

Tools & Tasks			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Offers visitors direct access to high-priority tasks on homepage			

Links

Links are not unique to homepages. It is crucial to visitor success that you establish and follow design guidelines for links throughout your website.

Links			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Links are differentiated & can be scanned			
Generic instructions, such as "Click Here" are not used as link names			
Generic links, such as "More..." are not used at the end of item lists			
Different colours are used for visited and unvisited links			
Links to PDFs, launching audio/video, or other applications provide visual clue to format, other than another webpage, to which they link			

Opposition leader defies house arrest, heads to Islamabad for protest  48 |  13



CBC.ca uses icons to identify video and audio files on their website. This courtesy is appreciated by visitors, especially those using dial-up or mobile access.

Graphic Design

Graphic Design			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Font styles and other formatting, such as sizes, colours, etc. are limited			
High-contrast text and background colours are used for legibility			
Critical elements are visible above the fold			
Uses liquid layout so page size adjusts to different resolutions			
Logos are used judiciously			

Graphics & Animation

When you use graphics to purposefully illustrate content, you can enhance your website. Overuse can create visual clutter and slow download times, so use them judiciously and edit them for the web.

Graphics & Animation			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Uses graphics to show real content, not just to decorate page			
Graphics & photos are labeled			
Photos & diagrams are edited appropriately for display size			
Logos, taglines, headlines or other critical elements are not animated			
Animations are not automatically launched; visitors have choice on whether or not to view			
Animations are not used on homepage			

Other

Other			
	Successful	Could be improved	Deficient
Simple, straight-forward window titles			
URL contains company name; any variations are registered with re-direct			
Dates/times only used for time-sensitive content			