Coffee Cactus Project Reflection

Introduction

Importance of Identified Problem and Support

Coffee is one of the most well known and enjoyed drinks in the world. So many people go out to coffee shops to get work done, catch up with friends, or just to simply enjoy a local cup of coffee. Yet, many people find it difficult to bring that experience into the comfort of their own homes or have found tools that bring a personal and unique experience. Espresso machines, coffee tools, and unique terminology can be very intimidating for someone who is just starting to learn about coffee or wants to grow their own at home experience. The problem is that there is a disconnect between the market of specialty coffee and at home use.

As discussed in an article by Ready Set Eat, there are a lot of different tools and equipment you can get when making specialty coffee at home. The article lists: “whole bean coffee, filtered water or water filter, scale, dark-colored ceramic or glass container, coffee grinder, automatic drip coffee maker, French press, or water kettle, coffee filters,” and that is just to name a few. These items can be very confusing and a person might not know where to start. While the Coffee Cactus tool might seem like a more advanced place to start, I believe that it will start interest in specialty coffee and the info pamphlet will guide the individual into learning more about at home use.
Comparable examples

The other end of the market that this will appeal to is people who already are pretty advanced with at home specialty coffee and are looking to spice up their tools. There is a lack of unique and engaging tools in the market like the Coffee Cactus. When doing a google search for espresso distribution tools, all that comes up are the same standard black tools. There is no variation or intriguing products. The Coffee Cactus is a beautiful and unique looking tool that will not only catch your eye, but also make your at home station feel more personalized.

Project Summary and Objectives

I will be working with a friend who is creating the Coffee Cactus espresso tool, forming the brand identity and marketing strategies to be able to appeal to our target market, being young adults that enjoy the specialty coffee at home experience.

My main objective for this project is to take the Coffee Cactus espresso distribution tool and create a brand surrounding it that makes the at home specialized coffee experience engaging, more accessible and easy to understand, spark interest in unique coffee tools, and overall widen the market for fun coffee tools that people can collect and invest in.

This will include: a logo, branding guide, pamphlet to go with the espresso tool when purchased, and graphics for social media posts and marketing. The goal is to get the Coffee Cactus tool into a coffee shop in San Luis Obispo and generate sales through the store and through social media orders. The results will be determined by in store and online sales, along with social media analytics and rates of engagement (such as follows, clicks, shares, etc.).
Schedule plan

The tentative plan will be to finish the branding guide and logo by week 3-4. This will ensure consistency when working on the pamphlet and graphics in week 5-7. Week 5 will be the sketching and developmental stages for the pamphlet, mocking up: how many panels it will include, graphics used, and information. This will be completed by week 6 or 7. During Week 7, I will begin to print out the pamphlet and make the final correction on the design and information stated on the panels. Week 8 and on will be the photography phase, in which I gather the finished product and photograph it for marketing purposes. I will begin to post on social media and print/compile the pamphlet with the espresso tool by week 10. The product will most likely not be ready to be sold by week 10 but it will be in the final stages to start the marketing process.

Literature

The Graphic Communication theory that relates most to my project is usability and UX. Specifically, the pamphlet for the tool uses both of these elements. From the paper written on usability and UX, “From Usability to User Experience” written by IEEE, usability is defined as “one of the 6 characterizing elements of software product quality ‘Internal and external quality model’ which are: Functionalities, reliability, usability, effectiveness, maintainability, and portability.” Furthermore, one of the authors, Alben, defines user experience as “every detail about the interaction between users and the product from their feelings ‘while using the product’ to if they understand the way the product works and if it fulfills their goals, needs, and expectations in any context they use the product in.”
Based on these academic scholar’s definitions of usability and UX, we can explore the elements of current trends, the benefits, and the limitations to these theories and how it applies to my project.

Usability goes beyond how a customer interacts with a pamphlet, which in my case is a big factor of my Senior Project. Looking at other studies on usability like how it applies to the digital world can give us insight on how the current trends impacts user expectations and the “probabilities of a product failure increase in high degrees”, as discussed in “Current Trends in Usability Evaluation Methods: A Systematic Review” by IEEE. Regardless of the product, the usability and interaction should reflect in “user satisfaction”. This study discussed in the academic paper addressed the evaluation methods that are applied to Web domain and how there are several gaps “in the evaluation methods that are currently used.” Methods for usability are constantly being changed to try and fit all aspects of user satisfaction. Similarly, UX has become one of the most influential and important components of product development and progress. A study done by Norhanisha Yusof, Azham Hussain, and Nor Laily Hashim, in the published paper “The Trend of Published Literature on User Experience (UX) Evaluation”, discusses the landscape of user experience (UX) evaluation research based on keyword analysis. The majority of literature focuses on conference papers (480), followed by articles (129), reviews (11), book chapters (7), and books (5). Despite constraints, it provides valuable bibliometric insights, serving as a foundation for future research in the UX evaluation domain. Usability and UX are continuously changing and companies are doing their part to adapt to this changing environment.

Usability and UX can bring many benefits to a company when considering growth and product development. Great usability and UX can lead to customers coming back and purchasing more, leaving good reviews, and overall leaving them satisfied. “The Best Practices In User
Experience” written by Mike Gualtieri, discusses the specific benefits of good UX. On average, companies with excellent UX, “have 14.4% more customers who are willing to consider them for another purchase”, “have 15.8% fewer customers who are likely to consider doing business with a competitor”, and “have 16.6% more customers who are likely to recommend their products or services compared with their lowest-scoring competitors”. Customers expect the best and are looking for more than just a good product. As a company, you have to be willing to design beyond usability and recognize that the UX is an equally as important aspect.

There are limitations with any product or item that you are trying to sell. In terms of usability, your product might not be accessible to everyone, not easy to understand or use, or many other limitations that simply got overlooked in the initial developing stages. And the same goes for the user experience. Even mobile devices, one of the most popular and widely used products of this generation, has limitations. While mobile devices have a large e-commerce, there are still limitations in: “screen size, small keyboards, low processing power,” and much more. Though the initial use of mobile devices was for mere communication, they have now developed into a transportable access to information and internet, “anywhere and anytime”. Limitations are unavoidable because of our constantly changing world as seen in the paper, “Usability Issues and Limitations of Mobile Devices” by Suliman Al-Hawamdeh.

There are ways to track these limitations and measure usability and UX, while still recognizing the challenges. Discussed in “Current practice in measuring usability: Challenges to usability studies and research” by Kasper Hornbæk, it is important to remember that “not all studies use the term usability to denote the measures employed.” The paper also discusses some notable problems in how usability measures are employed, including: “(1) measures of the quality of interaction, for example assessed by domain experts, are used only in a few studies; (2)
approximately one quarter of the studies do not assess the outcome of the users’ interaction, leaving unsupported any broad claims about usability; (3) measures of learning and retention of how to use an interface are rarely employed, despite being recommended in prominent textbooks; (4) some studies treat measures of how users interact with interfaces as being synonymous with quality-in-use despite an unclear, if not weak, relation between usage patterns and quality-in-use; (5) measures of users’ satisfaction with interfaces are in a disarray and most studies reinvented questions to be asked users, ignoring validated questionnaires readily available; and (6) some studies mix together, perhaps even consider synonymous, users’ perceptions of phenomena (e.g., the learnability of an interface) with objective measures of those phenomena (e.g., time needed to master an interface to a certain criterion).” All of these things should be taken into consideration when discussing the limitations of your product and feedback received.

The Coffee Cactus tool has the potential to be an eye-catching, new and innovative product that has incredible usability and user experience. The three elements discussed above, current trends, benefits, and limitations, all play a crucial role in the final outcome of the product. Current trends are a great way to analyze the current market and tailor my product to it, and also apply new methods of usability and UX analyzing to continue to improve the brand. Knowing the benefits of good usability and UX will also inspire me to consider all aspects of the brand, and not just solely focus on the usability of the product. Similarly, limitations can be a huge discouragement to a company if not considered and applied to the developmental stages. There will always be ways in which I can improve my designs and product, and I need to be willing to recognize the need for feedback and further development.
Results

The Coffee Cactus tool expands the market for unique and engaging specialty coffee tools for individuals who are looking to enhance their personal coffee making experience. With the branding of the tool having bold and bright colors, and a unique western feel, it appeals to young adults with an eye for creative tools. My completed project of the Coffee Cactus includes the branding guide, how to use/informational pamphlet, and marketing photography.

After completing all of the aspects, I sent out a survey to coffee loving, young adults, to gather the following information:

Would you prefer the Coffee Cactus over a standard WDT tool? Based on the info from the pamphlet, would you know how to use this tool and know what it is used for? Do you think there is any information missing from the pamphlet? And if yes, what?

Based on these results, 99% said they would prefer the Coffee Cactus over a standard WDT tool and 95% said the branding is eye-catching and cohesive. When asked what information they thought was missing, survey results said: information about how to replace needles/addressing that there are extra provided if one needs to be replaced.

This data was collected through a google form I created with a mockup of the pamphlet alongside images of the Coffee Cactus tool.

Prototype

https://mackenziehaneman.myportfolio.com/senior-project

Conclusion

The problem that this project aimed to solve was the disconnect between the market of specialty coffee and at home use. The Coffee Cactus tool does just that, appealing to individuals that want
to enhance and diversify their coffee experience. After completing this project, the implications of the results to my thesis display an overall liking and appeal to the branding and marketing I created for the Coffee Cactus tool.

**Reflection and Limitations**

Over the course of this quarter, creating this project, there were a few difficulties faced: narrowing down the target marketing to create the branding for, deciding what information should be on the pamphlet, how to print and what paper stock to print on, and how to photograph the tool within the correct environment.

The target market was essential to determine so that I made sure that the branding really appealed to them. Once I decided that the market was young adults, I could then move forward with the colors, fonts, and overall feel for the brand. Then came deciding what information was necessary for the pamphlet and what other information we wanted the customer to know. After the survey, I determined that we did not fully hit this mark. I will add in more information about the extra needles and more clear instructions on how and when to switch them out. This will be put into future developments of the pamphlet and information used for social media and a potential website. Printing the pamphlet had some limitations as well, since it was printed on campus with limited stock options. The first round of pamphlets did not print double sided and the stock was too thick, cracking the paper and ink when folded. I decided to use a thinner, coated stock to ensure no cracking and more ease when folding into the accordion shape. Lastly, photographing the tool itself took a lot of rearranging plants and my espresso machine to make the environment align with the branding of the Coffee Cactus. Future developments will include
continuing to find the best stock and printing process, and refining the information printed on the pamphlet.

Other plans for the overall branding will be partnering with local coffee shops to sell the product in store, creating limited edition coffee bean packaging to go alongside the tool sold in stores, and merchandise, such as: sticker, hats, posters, etc.
Abstract Proposal References:


Literature Review References


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