

Introduction

This report is an analysis of Poppin Joes popcorn website. Here, I provide evidence-backed recommendations to improve the quality and cohesiveness of content as well as the user experience. A functional and visually appealing website will increase sales, credibility, and attract new investors and customers.

The recommendations are my opinions based on professionals in the field and their knowledge and experience of how websites are most effective.

Purpose

The main purpose of the Poppin Joes website is to **sell popcorn**. This is obvious as this business remains operable from sales of their products at stores, fairs, as well as through the website. The website serves as the place to find all the information for Poppin Joe's including,

- Where to find them
- What flavors they sell
- How to contact them
- Their mission as a company

The secondary purpose of the website is to highlight their company's owner, Joe, who has disabilities. The website brings awareness to disabilities and also helps to remove the stigma surrounding them by showcasing Joe's success in his business.

Rhetorical Appeals

Strong rhetorical appeals can turn a mediocre website into an outstanding one. The rhetorical appeals work together to draw on the audience's emotion and logic to bring them in and get them on board to act, in this case, buy popcorn to support Joe.

Pathos



Pathos is strongly present through the website and the company's mission. The photos of Joe like the one shown above evoke emotion in the audience; people have sympathy for those with disabilities because of the hardships they face. By showcasing Joe as the face of his business, the audience feels personal connections with him and wants to support someone who works hard and is passionate about his job.

We could develop the elements of pathos by including stories of those affected by Joe or his company, such as charities they raise money for and individuals who have been helped by this company.

Ethos

Ethos is present when the website states they have been in operation since 2005. By emphasizing how long they have been in business, the audience can safely assume they have perfected their popcorn and satisfied many customers in the past. The inclusion of the award on the home page also appeals to ethos. **We can further support the ethos appeal by adding testimonials in pull-out quotes on the home page.**

Logos

Logos is developed when the website is concise, and each element of the website clearly follows the company mission. When Poppin Joe's website emphasizes quality and customer satisfaction, we appeal to logos. Without adding statistical data, we can appeal to logos by mentioning the quality ingredients used in the popcorn. Statistical data does not align with this company's approach of being friendly and casual.

Writing Quality

Style

The style of the website is consistent, with a memorable color scheme and impactful photo choices. My recommendations to improve the style of the website are to implement the Rule of Thirds, remove clutter, and introduce negative space.

Rearranging the welcome page by placing the most important "about" information, and three of the most relevant photos "before the scroll" will help

immensely to catch the reader's attention in the crucial first moments someone has visited the site. A website has less than 10 seconds to pull in the reader, so it is crucial to, "make sure that the most engaging content is above the fold" (Brebion). The "fold" is when the reader must scroll to see more content. Anything below this fold is unlikely to be read or seen. The three chosen photos should be of Joe as well as him in action at fairs and festivals. Since Joe is the face of the company, it is important he remains visible. The photos should ideally follow the [Rule of Thirds](#) to subliminally appeal to the eye.

Introducing negative space throughout the site will also help to make the website flow better and give a more approachable, skim-able website. The home page, for example, is cluttered with photos. If we reduce the photos down to three with plenty of space around them, we can include more information in the form of captions and smaller text boxes without crowding the screen. As shown below, adding a tab of whitespace between the photo, welcome header and the next line of text will eliminate the need for the red separation lines and open the page.



Removing clutter can be done in several ways. Reducing the number of photos and shortening the informational paragraphs down to a few sentences will make the website more digestible. On the "About Us" page, we need to choose 3 testimonials and have them be in larger font at the top of the page. Instead of listing them, the pull-out quote technique will make them more visible and easier to see.

Tone

The tone is conversational and personal. The community-forward company will do well with an approachable and friendly tone.

Voice

Joe, as the face of the company, is not as vocal in terms of the website, however, his disabilities may affect his ability to do this. There could be great leverage to strengthen the company's image if Joe had more personality shown through the website within his capability. This will play off the personal and friendly tone. Ideas to help include Joe more on the website are having him featured in a short clip of him waving on the homepage, or finding a way in which Joe could "write" his name to be scanned into the website.

User Experience

The user experience can impact its visitors' attitude toward the company, if there are faulty buttons, improper links, and incorrect navigation, the website's credibility goes down immediately, and the user is likely to leave the site. Poppin Joe's website is functional but could be refined in navigation and usability.

Navigation

The navigation bar, shown here,



can be compressed into just four headings to reduce clutter and usability.

Welcome	About	Products	Contact
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By having only four navigation buttons condensing the information in the other tabs, we can lessen the number of choices that need to be made. The principle of Hick's Law, the less choice, the more likely someone will be to take action. Hick's Law can be applied to web design by using it to limit choice. This article by many professionals in the field states, "The more options a user has on your website, the more difficult it is to use" (Laja et al.).

I propose the information be organized differently.

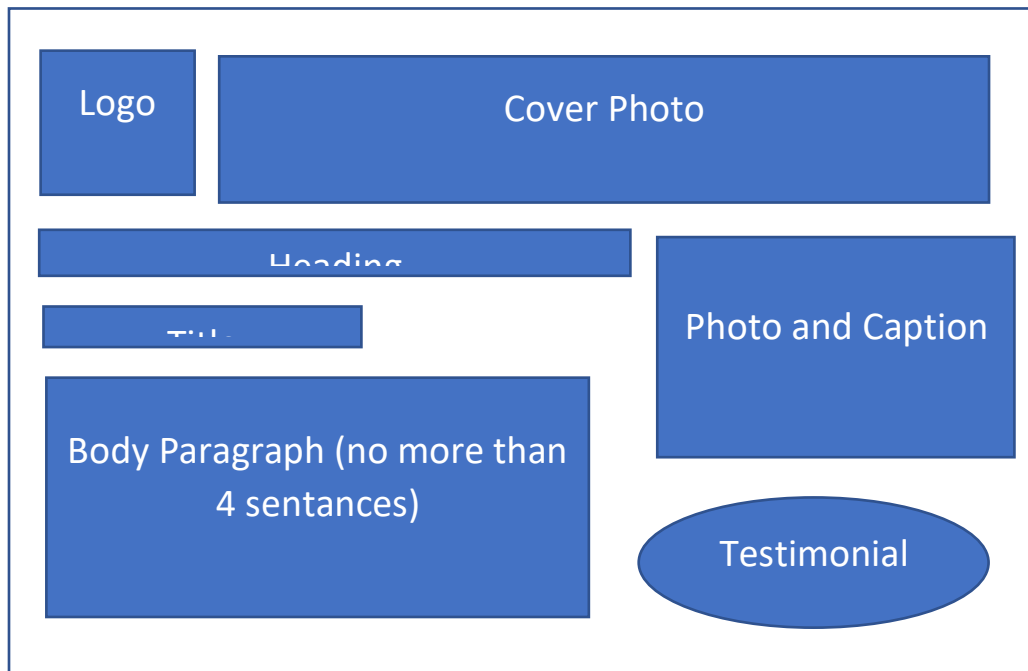
- **Welcome** – three most relevant photos, "Autism Inspired"/general info paragraph, and awards
- **About** – more on Joe, fundraising/charity contributions, testimonials, and two photos
- **Products** – photos of each flavor with a description, name, and price
- **Contact** – phone number, email, and list of future events

This way, the user can easily navigate to whichever tab they need and are able to see it immediately, while still maintaining minimal clicks.

Page Layout

The page layouts under each tab are consistent, with a cover photo followed by a main header and then going into the text of the page with a footer at the bottom. The space available is not used effectively. Because of the size of the cover photo and the header, the user must scroll to see important information, such as testimonials on

the “About Us” page. By reorganizing and de-cluttering the page, you could fit all the necessary information without scrolling. My recommendation would look like this,



This example of the “About Us” page can be applied to the other pages by utilizing the space available to ensure the user does not have to scroll. The repetition of this general layout will make the site have rhythm and be more visually appealing (Carroll, 2019). The rhythm for this site should be light and free flowing with the use of small shapes because of the light tone and fun nature of the company.

Visual Appeal

Visual appeal plays into the impression of the company, if the site is messy, people will think the company is disorganized and unprofessional. Making sure the site is aesthetically pleasing but maintaining a unique feel is essential to build a brand.

Color

Poppin Joe's color scheme is memorable and effective for the purpose of the site. The yellow background reminds the user of popcorn and is bright. The website does a good job of sticking to a minimal color palette which helps the interface not look too busy.

Logo



Just as the website is crowded in areas, the logo could be refined as well. It is redundant to have "Kettle Korn" repeated in the name because of the picture of popcorn at the top. My recommendation is to leave the logo as is, but only have "Poppin Joe's" as text in the center of the circle. I believe this will give a cleaner look while remaining recognizable for past patrons.

Fonts

Limiting the number of fonts is a way to reduce visual clutter (Osborn, 2018). Another issue preventing the website from looking cohesive and clean is the use of too many different fonts, font sizes, and colors. As we can see in all the different pages, the title is a different font from the body text. Using boldface versions of the same font helps the page to look less busy and more appealing to the eye. In this example from *Design for non-designers: Part 1*, we can see this in action.



Using only two typefaces makes the widget look and feel cleaner.

We can see parallels between the before image above and the fonts on Poppin Joe's site below.

about us

We first explored the concept of Poppin Joe's™ Gourmet Kettle Korn in October 2000. Poppin Joe's™ Gourmet Kettle Korn was officially launched in April 2005 with Joe Steffy as the sole proprietor and was established to provide Joe, a young adult with DS-ASD, the opportunity to operate and manage his own business. By doing so, Joe has developed an excellent work ethic and realizes the value of good, hard work.

Supported by a loving family, Joe's business continues to grow each year. Poppin Joe's™ Gourmet Kettle Korn can now be found poppin' at Walmarts, fairs, craft shows, car shows and events throughout Kansas and Georgia. In addition, Poppin Joe's™ is involved in raising funds for charitable organizations and is enjoyed at snack and office locations throughout the greater Kansas City area and now Brunswick, Georgia.

Poppin Joe's™ proudly supports our troops in Iraq by shipping numerous bags of Gourmet Kettle Korn overseas for their enjoyment.

Be sure to check our calendar page or contact us to have Poppin Joe's™ Gourmet Kettle Korn at your next event or fundraiser.

Special News & Honors:

- http://www.thebrunswicknews.com/life/poppin-joe-s-sweetens-possibilities-for-disabled-man/article_56b07c36-b053-5a24-830d-3b4702b4f810.html
- Small Business Town Hall Held in Texas
- Poppin Joe's™ in US News & World Report
- Congressional Briefing (Click on Employment Panel Video)

I would recommend changing all the headings to bold Arial and all the body text to Arial. With the exception of the quotations from customers being a more stylist font to catch attention, such as Congenial, there is no need to have more than one font in the main body of the website. The use of bold and italic versions is more than enough to add style and emphasize important text without cluttering the screen.

Images

Images on a website are crucial for building a brand and making the customer feel connected to the product. Choosing images carefully is of utmost importance to effectively use the limited space available to tell the story of the company.

My recommendation for what photos to use and how to place them are as follows. This will be the most straightforward way to convey the same message about Joe and his popcorn without overcrowding each page with too many photos.

1. **Welcome** page- this photo followed by the shortened “Autism inspired” paragraph with an award banner at the bottom of the page



2. **About Us** page- A small logo on the right side of the screen with this photo of Joe to the left as a cover photo, small enough to fit a shortened information paragraph and 3 testimonials



3. **Products** page- No cover photo is necessary. This page should consist of only photos of each flavor (not currently included on the website) followed by a description and price.

4. **Contact page-** One photo of Joe as well as one with him around others is plenty for this page. The contact information can be found below these images without scrolling.



This method of choosing and arranging photos eliminates the need for a gallery tab that is unlikely to be viewed by most visitors but keeps the idea of Joe being at the forefront of the company. There are a variety of photos without having too many to clutter the screen, the company values are portrayed, and the website is visually appealing.

Content

Web browsers are unlikely to read large amounts of text, so as web developers, we have limited time and work count to get the point across. On Poppin Joe's website, the only body text necessary will be on the Welcome and About pages.

welcome

Poppin Joe's™ is old-fashioned, homemade, Gourmet Kettle Korn with amazing flavors that are always fresh, always tasty, always satisfying.

- Welcome —

Under the Welcome heading, change text to “**Poppin Joe's™** old-fashioned, homemade Kettle Korn—made to satisfy”. As we get into the “Autism inspired” paragraph, we can drastically shorten this text to make it more approachable and quicker to read.

Autism Inspired: Poppin Joe's

Poppin Joe's Gourmet Kettle Korn was established to show that Joe Steffy, a young man with autism and down syndrome, is able to work. He is the CEO of this popular business that gives him an opportunity to do a variety of tasks he can choose between while at work each day. The business sells fresh popped kettle corn at festivals, and in local retail outlets. They also do private events and fundraisers for their local community. This is just one example of successful small businesses for someone with special needs. Read the story here: <http://bit.ly/poppin-joes>

Recommendation:

Joe Steffy, a man with autism and down syndrome, is acting CEO of Poppin Joe's. Joe leads his company with pride, between manning the kettle and adding the flavors, Joe interacts with his community at fairs, festivals, and private events. Read the story here: <http://bit.ly/poppin-joes>

- About Us -

This paragraph is too long for modern web users and is not broken up in a way that makes it skim-able.

To ensure the

visitors of the website gain the main idea of the paragraph without having to read the entire thing, we can modify the text with these instances of bold text and integration of whitespace. Recommendation:

about us

We first explored the concept of Poppin Joe's™ Gourmet Kettle Korn in October 2000. Poppin Joe's™ Gourmet Kettle Korn was officially launched in April 2005 with Joe Steffy as the sole proprietor and was established to provide Joe, a young adult with DS-ASD, the opportunity to operate and manage his own business. By doing so, Joe has developed an excellent work ethic and realizes the value of good, hard work.

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Poppin Joe's™ proudly supports our troops in Iraq by shipping numerous bags of Gourmet Kettle Korn overseas for their enjoyment.

About Us

Poppin Joe's™ Gourmet Kettle Korn was officially launched in **April 2005** to provide Joe, a man with [DS-ASD](#), to the opportunity to manage his own business. With Joe's commitment to hard work, the business continues to grow. Found at **Walmart**, local fairs and events throughout Kansas and Georgia, Poppin Joe's success contributes not only to Joe, but to charitable organizations.

Poppin Joe's supports troops in Iraq!

These modifications ensure there is not too much text to read and that all the content we need fits on the page before the user has to scroll.

Miscellaneous Recommendations

Remove the section “Special News and Honors” and instead have these links at the bottom of the page. This section does not contribute directly to the purpose of the site and therefore does not need to take up so much space.

Remove repeated information, such as the contact information at the bottom of the products page and the phone number on the About page. All contact information should be on the contact tab to provide a straightforward user experience.

Conclusion

After reading this website analysis, you should have a solid idea of my recommendation for how Poppin Joe’s website should look to maximize user-friendliness and visual appeal. After the changes are considered, you will see how much less cluttered and more effective simple design techniques can be to create a better experience for the customer, which in turn, supports the success of a business. Some aspects of the website are spot-on, the tone, voice, and use of pathos appeal are strong points for the website. Removing clutter, optimizing screen space, and leading with purpose can turn this website into a real asset for Poppin Joe’s.

References

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