

Website Evaluation Report

for



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Home Page

The home page must tell/remind the user on impact: who you are, what you do and how you can help them. The buyingbuzz home page does this, but the two images (the one with the pictures and the one with the orange shapes) are unclear as to their purpose.

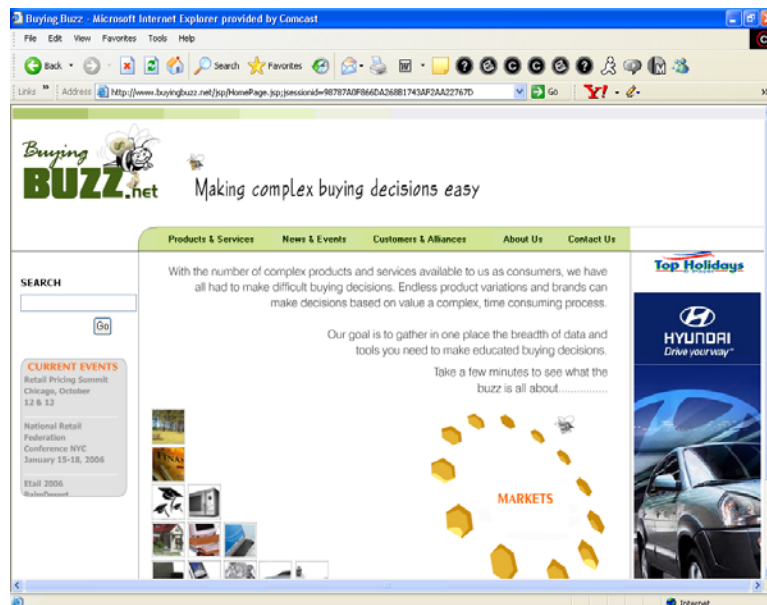
Recommendation (Medium Priority) – Unsure of the reason for two separate images. They appear to both link to the same place. Just have one with the text visible next to each image without having to mouse over it to see it.

There is a tremendous amount of movement on the home page. Many users may find this to be distracting.

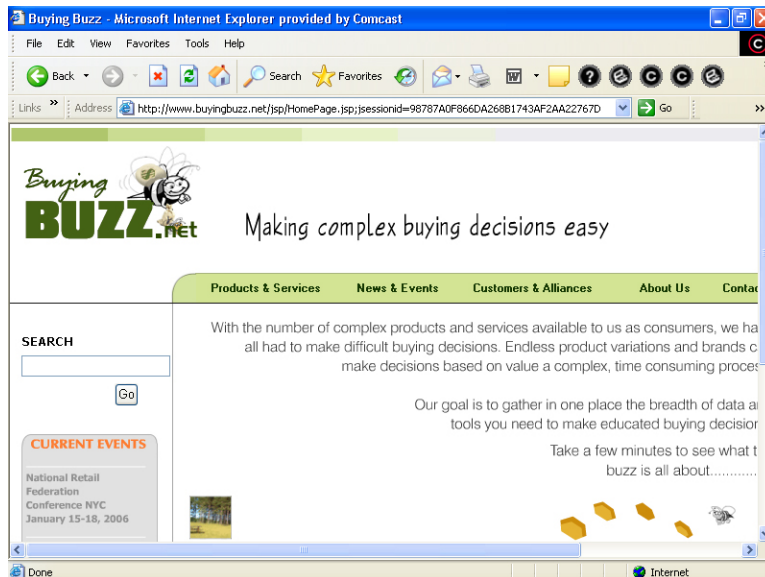
Recommendation (Medium Priority) – Limit the amount of movement by either making the current events list static or eliminating the buzzing bee in the middle of the page. Another option is to limit the movement of the top bee. Just show the movement for the initial page load, then have it land and remain at rest.

Browser view

The website was designed to fit a 1024x768 screen, the most common size. When viewing the site in 800x600 resolution, the pages do not adapt to the browser window and the user needs to scroll horizontally to view the pages.



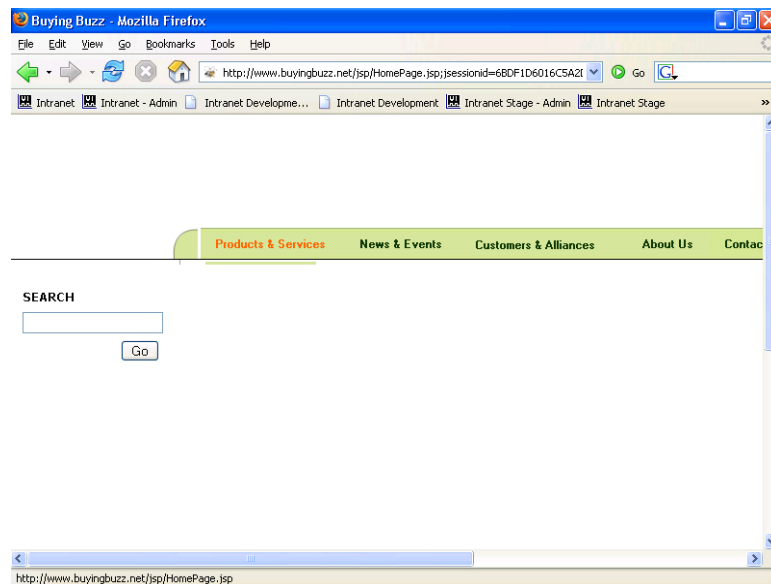
1024 x 768 resolution



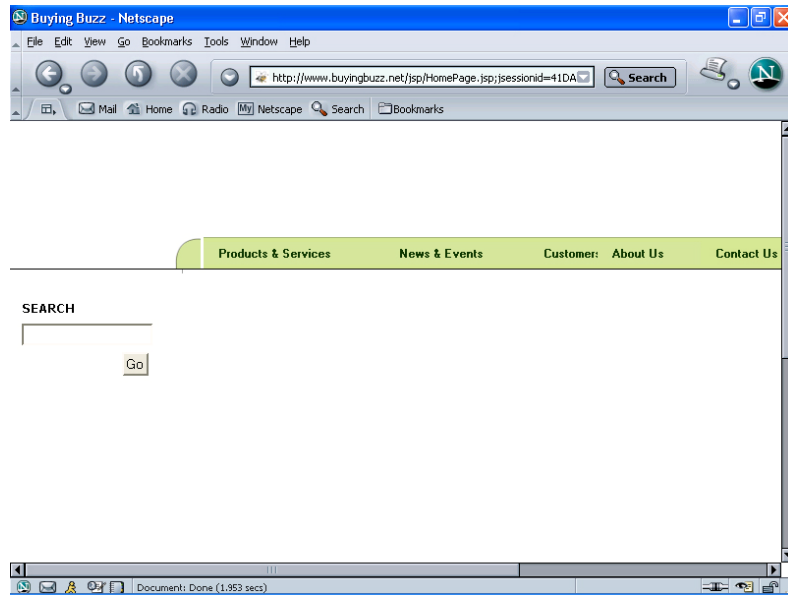
800 x 600 resolution

Recommendation (High Priority) – The page should scale to whichever screen size it is viewed in, with the minimum being 800x600. While 1024x768 is the most common, 20% of internet users are still using 800x600 resolution.

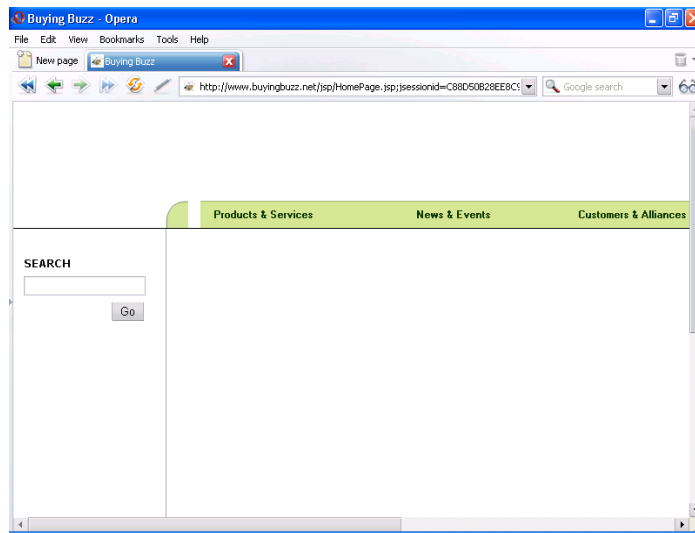
The website appears to have been built to be viewed in Internet Explorer. Approximately 75% of web users use Internet Explorer, however that number is dropping as other browsers are becoming more secure and preferable. The second most popular browser is Firefox, which has been gaining ground on IE quite rapidly over the past years. The website was also tested in Opera and Netscape. As you can see in the examples that follow, the site is only viewable with Internet Explorer.



Firefox 1.0.7



Netscape 7.0



Opera 8.5

Recommendation (High Priority) – The website needs to be programmed to be viewable in all browsers.

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Navigation System / Website Usability

The top navigation menu contains dropdowns which make site navigation quick and easy.

Recommendations (High Priority) – There should be a link to the home page here as the first item. This is where users will expect to see it. The Product & Services heading links to the home page, however this may be misleading to users. The Contact Us heading contains a dropdown with links to the same page. This is redundant –remove the dropdowns and just link directly to the contact page.

The bottom navigation menu looks good, again a link to the home page should be added here as well.

Other than the page heading, there is nothing on a page that tells the visitor which section of the website they are in. For instance, when on the press release page, it is not apparent that the visitor is in the News & Events section of the site.

Recommendation (High Priority) – Highlight the heading on the top navigation menu of the section (like when you mouse over it) so the user has a sense of where they are, and/or add the name of the section before the page heading. Leave a breadcrumb, for example News & Events > Press Releases

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Pages

Recommendations (Medium Priority) – Links to external websites should open in a new browser window.

The buyingbuzz logo in the top left corner of each page should be linked to the home page. This is standard practice.

Limit the amount of text on each page on the interior pages. Visitors will not have the patience to read through 10 paragraphs of text to find the information they are looking for. Split up into separate pages.

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Search Engine Optimization

A search engine is a database created by “spiders” or “robots” that “crawl the web. They follow links in a website and log the information in their database. The information logged is what is used in their ranking algorithms. These algorithms are secret and are not shared with the public. Therefore no one knows exactly how to improve rankings, other than paying per click. Each search engine uses different algorithms, so a website that ranks high in one engine, may not in another. The trick is to position the keywords/phrases you want listed in several locations on your site for better rankings. The top search engines to optimize for are Google, Yahoo, and MSN.

1. Come up with one phrase that best describes your market, and use it throughout your website to develop a theme the search engines can use to categorize your website. Our theme is Frequency Control Products and is placed in the content on several pages – it currently ranks #1.
2. **Meta tags** – these are tags embedded in the html code on every web page. There are two import tags to utilize:
 - a. **Keywords** – These are keywords and phrases people might use to find your website. Use no more than 20 words, up to 200 characters maximum. The spiders tend to ignore anything more.
 - b. **Description** – This is a description of your site (170 characters max) that is displayed in the search results.
3. **Page Titles** – are weighed heavily in ...
4. **Page content** – Keywords located in the ...
5. Use keywords in links to other pages ...
6. Use keywords in ...
7. Use keywords in ...
8. Use keywords in ...
9. Use keywords in ...

Notes:

1. Type in some of your keywords/phrases into Google and look carefully at the results. Examine where the words are located on the first few sites. Make sure you have the words in the same location on your site. Add the words to other locations on your site as well to improve your results.
2. Spamming a search engine (repeating the same word over and over) can you exclude your site permanently.
3. Submission – All search engines have a link to submit your site for free. You only need to submit the home page because the spiders will use this as a starting point to crawl the site. You can submit each page individually as well.
4. It can take a few days to a few months to update once the site is submitted.
5. Links to your website from other sites can also help boost rankings.

A directory is also a useful place to list your site free of charge. Directories differ in that they do not crawl your site. Human editors review and list your site, and generally only list the home page along with a description (you provide) of your site. Once your site is listed it is extremely difficult to get your listing changed. It is important to submit an accurate description with relevant keywords since it may be impossible to change later on. An example of a directory is www.dmoz.org

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Shopping Cart




When mousing over some of the display attributes on the left column in some of the markets (ex. Colleges), the text is too long and gets cut off. There is no way to view all of it without scrolling down the page and then mousing over them.

The difference between the Get My Results button and the Click for Bargain is unclear.

Recommendation (Medium Priority) – A short explanation of what is being done when you mouse over each button would help.

The search results are listed in rows as opposed to columns.

Recommendation (Medium Priority) – An alternative way to display the search results would be in a table format. This would make it easier to make comparisons. For the appliance page for example, you could do the following:

Photo	Price	Manufacturer	Wash&Spin Speed	Warranty
	257	Roper	2	1
	267	Whirlpool	1	1
	297	Roper	2	1

The graphics in the top navigation menu are not aligned on some of the product search result pages – see washer page in the appliance section for an example.

Summary

The overall layout and design of the website is aesthetically pleasing...