

Appendix B

Initial Site Review

This review of the existing Transora website is not meant to be a comprehensive audit, but rather a brief sampling of issues that should be addressed in the site re-design.

Labeling

While labels are one of the most obvious ways to clearly show the user the organization of a site, they are often overlooked. We rely on our labels to create accurate associations in users' minds of what content resides behind what links and buttons. Users who get lost or can't find what they're looking for become frustrated, and often leave the site.

Observation

The current Transora site suffers at times from unclear labeling. An example can be found on the home page. "By Region" is used as a button name in the global navigation. This label is ambiguous – it could refer to office locations, services offered in different areas, or countless other subjects. In actuality, it's a gateway to foreign language translations of the site and limited localized content.

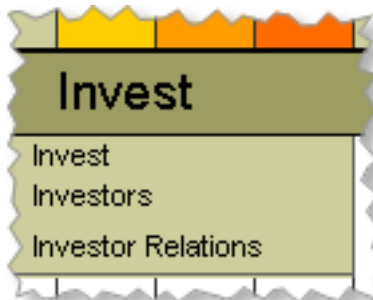
Unclear labeling extends to the interior pages as well. In the "Invest" area, the main section name and its sub-sections are so similarly named, it's nearly impossible to guess what each section contains.

Recommendation

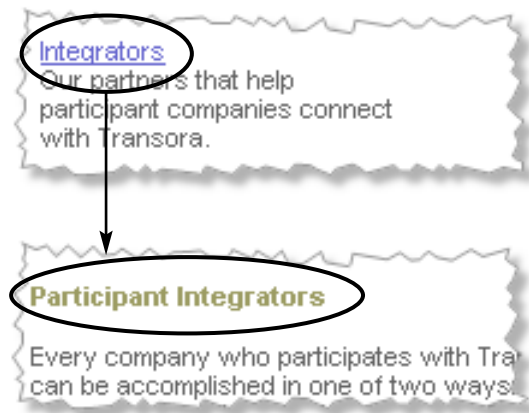
Name every link clearly, concisely, and logically. A new user should be able to accurately guess what a section contains by its title.



What's behind this button?



These section links are too similar to be meaningful



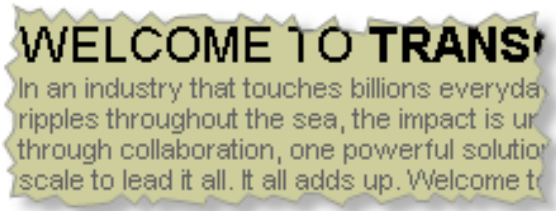
Mismatched names

Observation

In many cases, the label of a link or button is different from the title of the page to which it leads. This is another example of a practice that can negatively impact the user's ability to navigate the site.

Recommendation

Match up page titles with the links leading to them.



Nicely written, but not informational



Read the fine print to find out what industry Transora is in

Messaging

A key goal of any website should be to quickly inform visitors what the site is, who's behind it, and why they would want to use it.

Observation

While the Transora home page offers a decent picture of what content is available, it lacks a clear explanation of the company and the site itself. The "Welcome to Transora" blurb is fairly well-written, but it is mostly philosophical – it doesn't tell the new user what the company does.

To find a concrete reference to the industry in which Transora operates, the visitor must read the fine print under "How to Participate," which resides very close to the bottom of the screen (at 800x600 pixel resolution).

Recommendation

Use the prime real estate of the "Welcome" blurb to deliver *information*. The "softer" writing that's there now is worthwhile, however it might be better placed in a more secondary location, or incorporated with the water droplet graphic that's meant to support the message.

Observation

The current content on transora.com is written from Transora's perspective – not the customer's -- and neglects to inform the user what value Transora can provide. Instead, all copy seems contingent on the user's acceptance of Transora's value proposition. For example, in the "About Transora" section, the following phrases are used:

"Understanding the current B2B landscape is essential to understanding Transora."

"The birth of a great idea."

"An explanation of the origin of our unique name."

The only customer-centric phrase that is found on the "About Transora" page is under "Key Benefits" – "What can Transora offer you and your business?"

This is the question that Transora should be answering for the user at every point on every

page. It's not the user's responsibility to be convinced that Transora is "a great idea" – it's Transora's responsibility to convince the user.

Recommendation

By writing the site content from a customer-centric view, the information that already exists can be much more persuasive. The examples above, for instance, can all be rephrased to show the user that Transora has something important to offer.

"Transora will help you make sense of the current B2B landscape."

"Why Transora was created for the consumer products industry."

"What the Transora name means for you."

Organization & Navigation

The hierarchical structure we develop on websites allows users to find the information they're looking for. Like the signs above grocery store aisles, the groupings we develop should be specific enough that visitors can find anything they're likely to need, but not so exclusive that there need to be 100 aisles. In addition, the contents of each "bucket" we develop should logically belong there.

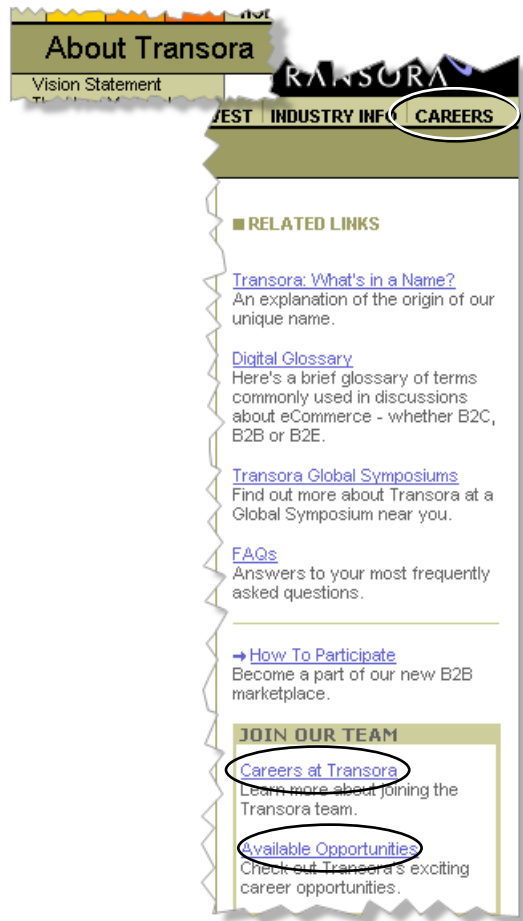
Observation

The organization of the current Transora site is at times confusing. One feature that should be eliminated is the use of redundant navigation to access some sections of the site. "Careers" is part of the global navigation – it has its own main section. However, the body of the "About Transora" section contains two links to the "Careers" section under the heading "Join Our Team." One leads to the main "Careers" page, while the other dives one level deep within that section. This kind of redundancy can lead to user confusion, as the content does not appear to be in the right place. Additionally, users may think that these are two separate career sections, and waste time trying to explore both. Finally, the content crossover among main sections clutters the page, not allowing users to concentrate on the content that really belongs there.

Recommendation

As much as possible, reduce the use of arbitrary cross-linking between sections. While an occasional link to other *closely related content* or *call-to-action* can be effective, the effect of the current set-up is non-intuitive navigation.

Review the top-level site sections to ensure that they are logical and comprehensive.



Links are redundant and not placed logically



Icons have no relationship to overall navigation

Observation

Graphic navigational icons are used on transora.com for two functions – FAQ and Contact. The icons themselves are well-executed, although the FAQ icon is somewhat ambiguous. More importantly, though, the icons have no relationship with the rest of the navigational controls on the site. Because the icons are so small, placed in an easy-to-miss location, and different from all the other navigational controls, they are not likely to be noticed.

These icons reflect the redundancy of other parts of the site as well, as both sections to which the icons lead are repeated in the navigational links at the bottom of the page.

Recommendation

If the two functions currently accessed by these icons are important enough to be on the site, they should be worked into the same navigational structure as the rest of the features.

Observation

The Transora website contains a tremendous amount of information. As with many sites that are so comprehensive, the home page has become cluttered. There are so many potential places to click, it is difficult for the user to know where to start. The busyness of the site will only increase with the addition of the actual exchange tools.

Recommendation

Simplify the home page by consolidating sections. Determine the core user scenarios/pathways and most sought-after information, and focus the page on those goals.



Do the logo, color scheme, and imagery work together?

Branding & Graphic Design

All communication tools that a company produces should be consistent with the brand promise upon which the company wishes to deliver. A critical part of the brand is graphic identity.

Observation

On the website, the logo, color scheme, and imagery do not seem consistent with each other. While the logo uses a cool blue, white, and black palette, the site is dominated by warm oranges, yellows, and tans. Additionally, while the water droplet is an attractive image, its metaphorical connection to Transora is not entirely clear.

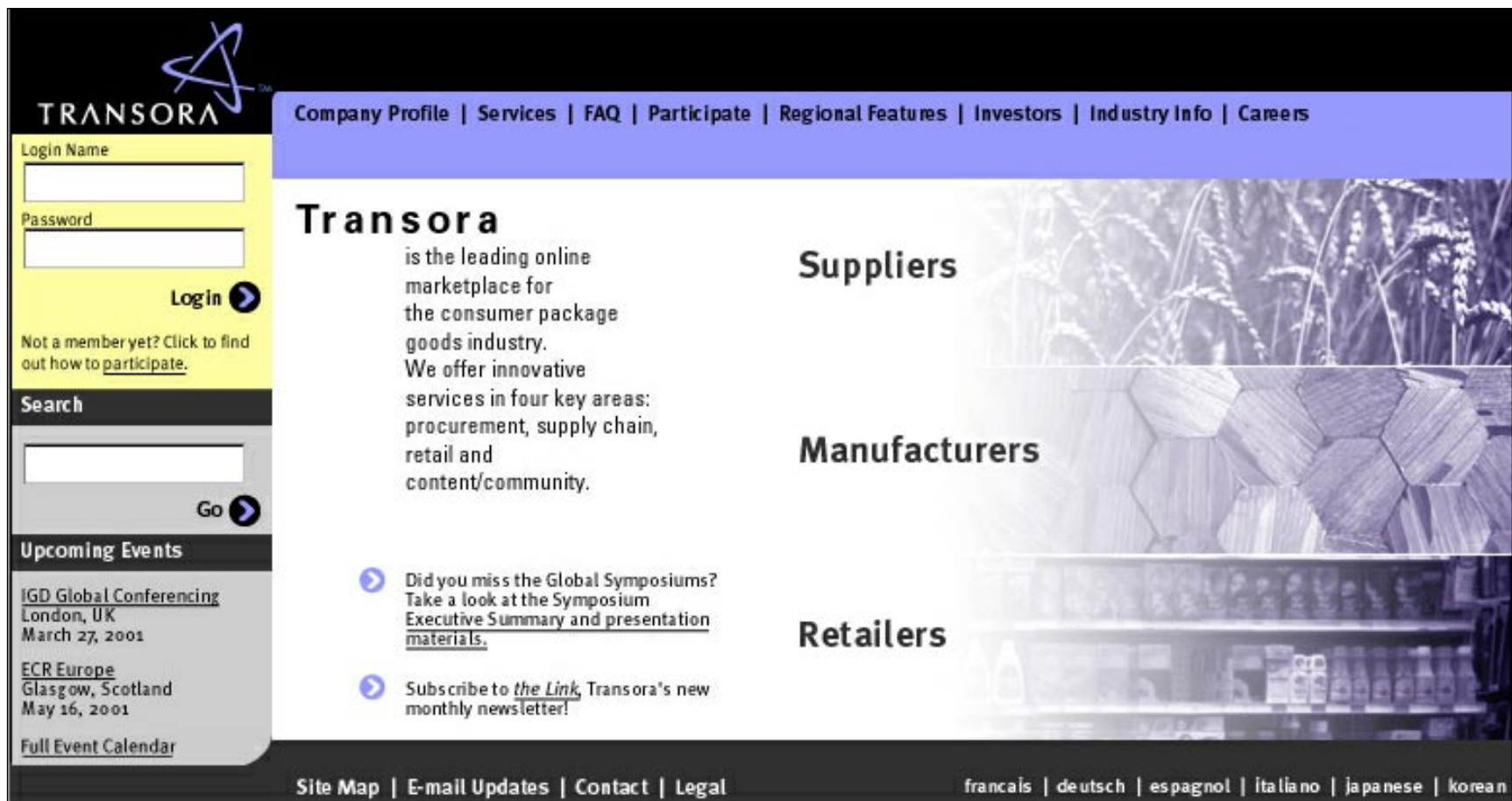
Recommendation

Complete a comprehensive branding exercise to develop consistent graphic standards for both print and digital media. If a branding exercise has already been done, the website and any other marketing materials should be analyzed to ensure that they are reflecting the established guidelines.

Appendix B

Sample Design Treatments

The design treatments shown here should be regarded only as samples or “explorations,” as the necessary strategic processes have not yet been completed.





Linking the players, changing the game

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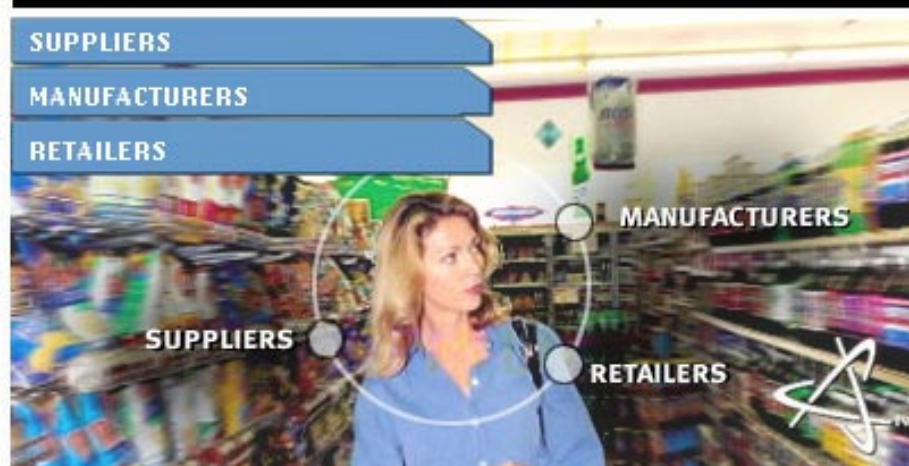
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