

BUS407

Assignment: Web site analysis and enhancement – effective website communication

Value: 40% (written report – 25%; oral presentation – 15%)

You may carry out this assignment individually or in a group of a maximum of four students.

You are required to select the websites of six business schools, three in the Gulf region and three from other parts of the world. You are required to analyze the effectiveness of how information is conveyed through the website and the impact it has on the audience. Following this analysis, you should make recommendations concerning the design and accessibility of information on the ZU CBS website.

You should write a report of your recommendations of approximately 700 to 1,000 words. Your recommendations can be based on comparisons with other business school websites but you must explain the reason for each of your suggestions. This will be worth up to 25%. You will also be required to deliver an oral presentation in which you describe your recommendations and justifications. This should include slides to illustrate your recommendations for the CBS website. This presentation will have a value of up to 15%.

Please use the following methods of analysis to help you in understanding the structure and goals of the site and in making your recommendations:

1. Identify any ‘*concept clusters*,’ that is, recurring concepts that are used to create the image and perception of the school, together with examples of these taken from the websites (Planken, Waller, Nickerson, 2007, p. 6). Some of the clusters you may expect to

find include such concepts as Excellence, Global Perspective, Opportunities for Career Development etc.

2. Look at the issue of '*framing*,' that is how the business school taps into previous knowledge, background, and experience of the audience to determine their recognition of the school in a particular way. Identify the themes that the school presents to build its identity among its audience. Remember that framing refers to the fact that, over the course of their lifetimes, people build a series of mental emotional filters which they use to make sense of the world. The choices they make are influenced by their frames or emotional filters (Planken et al., 2007, p. 3). You may also think about how culture may affect our reading of a text (Hynes & Janson, 2007).
3. Examine the '*navigational*,' function of the website, that is, how the audience reads particular sections and then navigates via hyperlinks to other sources of information on the site. Remember that these hyperlinks not only allow the audience to access other/supplementary information, but they also serve to establish connections within the mind of the audience and therefore have a meaningful, or semantic, function. That is, they help in constructing a particular meaning relating to the audience response to the school. You may count the number of clicks it takes to reach a particular body of information (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen, 2005).
4. Apply the Ashridge Mission Model (purpose, strategy, values and behaviour) to the websites to identify the organizational mission in each case (Rogers, Gunsekera, & Yang, 2010). You will need to decide how effective you think each one is and what your recommendation would be for the CBS site.

Your final recommendations should be in the nature of practical examples for enhancement of the CBS website.

Learning outcomes

On competent execution of this assignment

1. Students should be able to analyze how information is framed to appeal to a particular audience (framing).
2. Students should be able to identify how communication is tailored via clustering of concepts to establish a specific impact on audiences (concept clusters).
3. Students should understand how strategy and values are communicated and contribute to determining behavior of organizational members and to the overarching organizational purpose (mission).
4. Students should be able to recognize how the navigational behavior an audience is required to adopt creates meaningful links for the audience (multi-modality).

References

Askehave I., Ellerup Nielsen, A. (2005). Digital genres: a challenge to traditional genre theory. *Information Technology and People* 18(2), 120-141.

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=1502390>

Hynes, G. E. & Janson, M. (2007). Using semiotic analysis to determine effectiveness of internet marketing. Paper presented at the 72nd Annual Convention for the Association for Business Communication, Washington D.C., USA.

(<http://www.businesscommunication.org/conventionsNew/proceedingsNew/2007New/washingtonNew/05ABC07.pdf>)

Rogers, P. S., Gunesequera, M. Yang, M. L. (2011). Language options for managing: Dana Corporation's philosophy and policy document. *Journal of Business Communication*, (48)3.

Planken, B., Waller, R., & Nickerson, C. (2007). Reading stories and signs on the internet: Analyzing CSR discourse on the BP website. In G. Garzone, G. Poncini, & P. Catenaccio, Paola (Eds.). *Multimodality in corporate communication. Web genres and discursive identity*. (pp. 93-110). Milan: Franco Angeli.