

**Proposal To Redesign The Website
For Some Assembly Required**

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Summary

I propose to redesign the website for the company “Some Assembly Required” to improve visual layout and site navigation. The goals of the redesign are: 1) Increased Sales, 2) Increased Marketing, and 3) Better Brandname Promotion. These goals will be achieved by simplifying shopping, increasing product visibility, and increasing visual content. For brevity, this proposal focuses only on the homepage at www.some-assembly-required.com.

Introduction

Some Assembly Required (SAR) is a sole proprietorship arts and crafts business with a staff of two. SAR invents, produces, and sells: 1) three dimensional paper sculpture kits, 2) rubber stamp sets, 3) paper cutting dies, and 4) stencils. The stamp sets, dies, and stencils create patterns on paper (or other pliable media) that crafters then assemble into paper sculptures. The resulting sculptures are then used to make pop-up greeting cards, holiday ornaments, and table place settings.

SAR is well known in the paper crafting world. SAR regularly advertises in mainstream crafting magazines and the owner—Sandy Jackson—has twice appeared on the Home and Garden TV network as a guest of Carol Duvall (the “Queen of Crafts”). SAR has two sources of revenue: national trade shows and e-commerce.

SAR’s website was designed and created by the owner six years ago when the company only sold two product lines: paper sculpture kits and rubber stamp sets. SAR has evolved and matured; a website redesign will reflect this growth. With the increase in product lines and the desire to reduce reliance on trade shows as a source of revenue, a website redesign is appropriate and will meet the three goals stated above.

Current Homepage Analysis

SAR's homepage has three functions (in rank of importance): E-Commerce, Community, and Informational. An analysis of a) visual layout and b) site navigation will show that these three functions are not appropriately emphasized and that the E-Commerce function of the site is not given enough prominence. Visual layout and site navigation delineate each function of every website; when a website performs more than one function, layout and navigation must highlight important functions—such as E-Commerce—over less important ones—such as Informational.

A. Current Visual Layout

Visual layout concerns the different types of content that a webpage contains and where that content is located—a “content area.” Content areas define functions of a website. SAR's current visual layout contains three content areas:

Navigation, Community, and Informational

(see Figure 1). In the current layout, the

three content areas have equal visual

“weight:” no type of content is visually more

important than any other. The E-Commerce functionality of the site is not emphasized

because no products are invitingly displayed on the homepage, a major flaw.

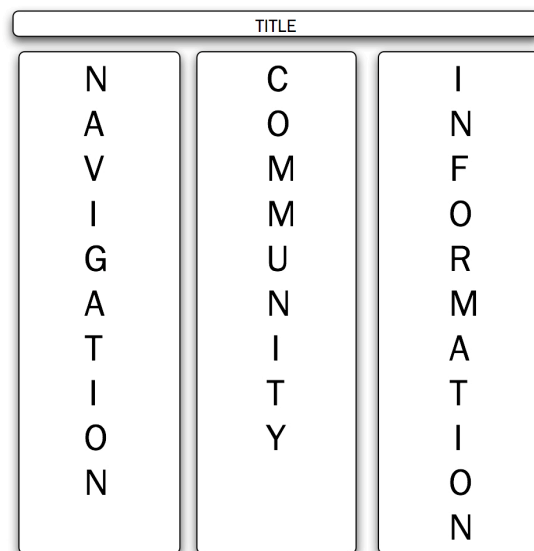


Figure 1. Current visual layout and content areas. What is the most important content?

B. Current Site Navigation

Site navigation concerns how viewers locate and move from one content area to another. One third of SAR’s homepage is devoted to site navigation: A single navbar contains eight E-Commerce links, five Informational Links, and two Community links. This division (see Table 1) reveals the three functions of SAR’s website: E-Commerce, Informational, and Community.

Table 1. Navbar links by function.		
E-Commerce	Informational	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Rubber Stamp Sets2. Mini Stamp Sets3. Pre-Cut Paper Kits4. Dies and Stencils5. Tools and Books6. My Account7. Checkout8. Ordering Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Welcome2. Newsletter3. Stores4. Links5. Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Cool projects2. Events / Classes

While the number of E-Commerce links emphasizes the commercial function of the website, these links are not visually distinct from the Informational and Community links; in other words, the navigation scheme is flat. This flat navigation scheme gives a viewer the impression that each function is of equal importance—no function stands out. Furthermore, this navigation scheme is unnecessarily explicit. Instead of *showing* the content that is available, the site forces a viewer to *navigate* to that content. Well designed websites reduce the number of decisions that viewers have to make—a crucial principle in website design is: Simplify!

Proposed Homepage Redesign

The site navigation analysis reveals three types of content at SAR’s website: E-Commerce, Informational, and Community. The visual layout analysis shows that E-Commerce content is not sufficiently emphasized while Informational and Community content are given equal importance. A redesign will correct these shortcomings so that the three content areas—and corresponding functions—of SAR’s website are granted the space that they deserve. The proposed redesign in Figure 2 meets this goal.

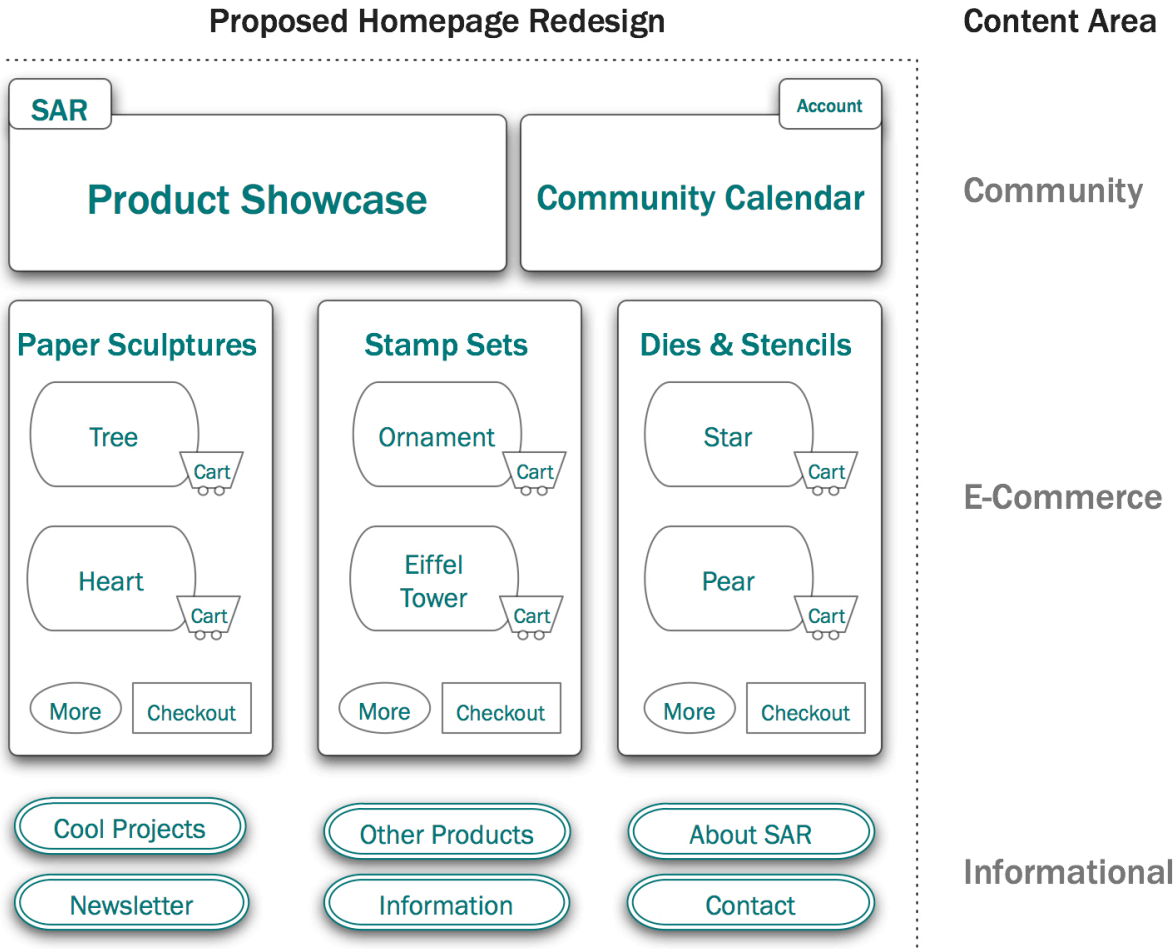


Figure 2. Proposed homepage redesign with corresponding content areas.

Benefits of the Proposed Navigation and Layout

In the proposed redesign, navigation is inherent in the content—the navigation scheme is less explicit. Links within Community areas will take visitors to pages that focus on community; links within E-Commerce areas will take visitors to shopping pages (and so on with the Informational links). Internal pages in each content area will contain prominent background images of paper sculptures that will highlight the unique nature of crafting with SAR’s products. The images will function as marketing and will provide visual cues that remind viewers of what content they are seeing. To better connect with your customers, images of crafters and of crafting shows might be placed on some of these pages.

The proposed layout is expandable: When SAR further expands its product catalog, the three E-commerce columns can be subdivided horizontally to display new products; if more informational links are needed, they can be placed among the existing ones. When the homepage needs to accommodate growth, the relative importance of each content area can be preserved.

Conclusion

Websites are not static entities; they need to evolve to meet the needs of a growing business. While SAR’s current website has functioned admirably thus far, a redesign will reflect Some Assembly Required’s growth and maturity. This is an opportunity to enhance marketing and simplify shopping—which will increase sales. By more prominently displaying products on the homepage and throughout internal pages, viewers will clearly see the magic of crafting with SAR’s products. Viewers will clearly see the possibilities of Sandy Jackson’s “*Sartistry!*”

Qualifications and Experience

Having worked at Some Assembly Required for three years, I understand the business. And as a former four year employee of Amazon.com, I understand E-Commerce. I have been an avid and conscientious web user for over ten years and understand how website design relates to user experience and product sales. I am a creative technical communicator, webpage designer, and programmer.

Appendix: Proposed Shopping Page

- HOME
- COMMUNITY
- SHOPPING
- INFORMATION
- CONTACT

Paper Sculpture Kits



- Paper Sculptures
- Dies & Stencils
- Stamp Sets
- Other Products

No cutting! Fully collapsable, they can be used for gifts, cards, pop-ups and crafts. There are three colors available in four packages: Green, White, Kraft, and Multi.

- Tree
- Heart
- Star
- Egg
- Pear
- Orn
- Snow

More Images: Undecorated: 1 of 3 Decorated: 2 of 4 Gallery

Difficulty: Easy Price: \$5.50 Size: 3.5 x 4 x 3.5

Color:

Quantity:

Supplies: