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BASIC USABILITY REPORT

Milwaukee Bookkeeping Company Website Usability Report

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Basic Usability Report

ABOUT

Incorporating usability into a website means to include within the planning phase and throughout development, actual end-user review as well as professional review. The best person to test the new design is a customer or potential website visitor. From concept to launch, the primary focus of a usable design is the end-user's experience including but not limited to information, aesthetics, content and task completion.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the usability report for the current version of the Milwaukee Bookkeeping Company's website. The purpose of the usability report is to provide a professional analysis of basic site construction and function from the perspective of user experience. This report summarizes user data as well as a manual review of select top pages.

Our suggestions based on the current user feedback:

1. The online survey that gathered the data has some unclear verbiage that confuses the survey participants. Rephrase the headings of the individual sections, stressing that the questions in the survey pertain only to the website content (unless otherwise indicated).
2. The online survey lacks a progress bar, which may lead to abandoned surveys.

Our suggestions based on manual review:

3. Increase white space between graphics and content and decrease white space between the end of the content and the end of the page.
4. Move the Tax Tips navigation up and permanently stabilize it. The top of the Tax Tips navigation should be even with the top of the primary site navigation.
5. Reorganize the Site Map to provide a better sense of structure.
6. External links should open in new windows with the indication that they will do so; all links lack a defined v-link color.

Our suggestions based on the Accessibility Checklist:

7. Add table headings to the small tables for the Car Expenses tax tips page.

METHODOLOGY

This usability report combines the existing user feedback with a heuristic review using research-based usability guidelines as well as priority accessibility checkpoints.

Current user feedback (02/2007 – 08/2007)

- The existing website survey data consists of four first-time prospective clients and one client who frequents the site on a monthly basis. 80% of the survey participants were business owners, with one not providing that data and another business owner who was also a QuickBooks user. 60% of the users' goals were "Just Looking", while 20% each were looking for a QuickBooks shortcut tip or for Tax help. 100% of the participants stated that the new design, ease of use, and understandable content were all "Good". 80% of the users stated the useful information was "Good", while 20% were unsure. 20% answered the rate that MBC is easy to do business with as either "Great", "Unsure" or did not answer, while the remainder felt the rating is "Good". 80% stated that the overall user experience is "Good", while 20% were unsure.
- The ratings on the QuickBooks website features were 40% "Good", 40% "unsure" and 20% unanswered. 60% of the users felt the Tax Tips website feature was "Good" while 40% were "unsure". 20% of the users felt the Business Planning website feature was "Good" while 40% were "unsure" and 40% did not answer. 40% of the users felt the Contact Form was "Good", while 20% were "unsure" or did not answer. 60% of the users stated the likelihood of contacting MBC in the future were "Good", while 20% were "Great" or "unsure".

Current user feedback is available on the website through the survey results link.

The questions the respondents were unsure of are as follows:

On a scale of Terrible to Great, please rate your experience today: Useful information, Feeling that MBC is easy to do business with, and please rate your overall experience...

How valuable do you find these site features: QuickBooks Tips, Tax Tips, Business Planning/Development, and Contact Form.

Based on your experience today, how likely are you to contact us in the future? (Return to the website, send us an email or call us)

Heuristic Review

Some of the main aspects of usability that aid a users experience include

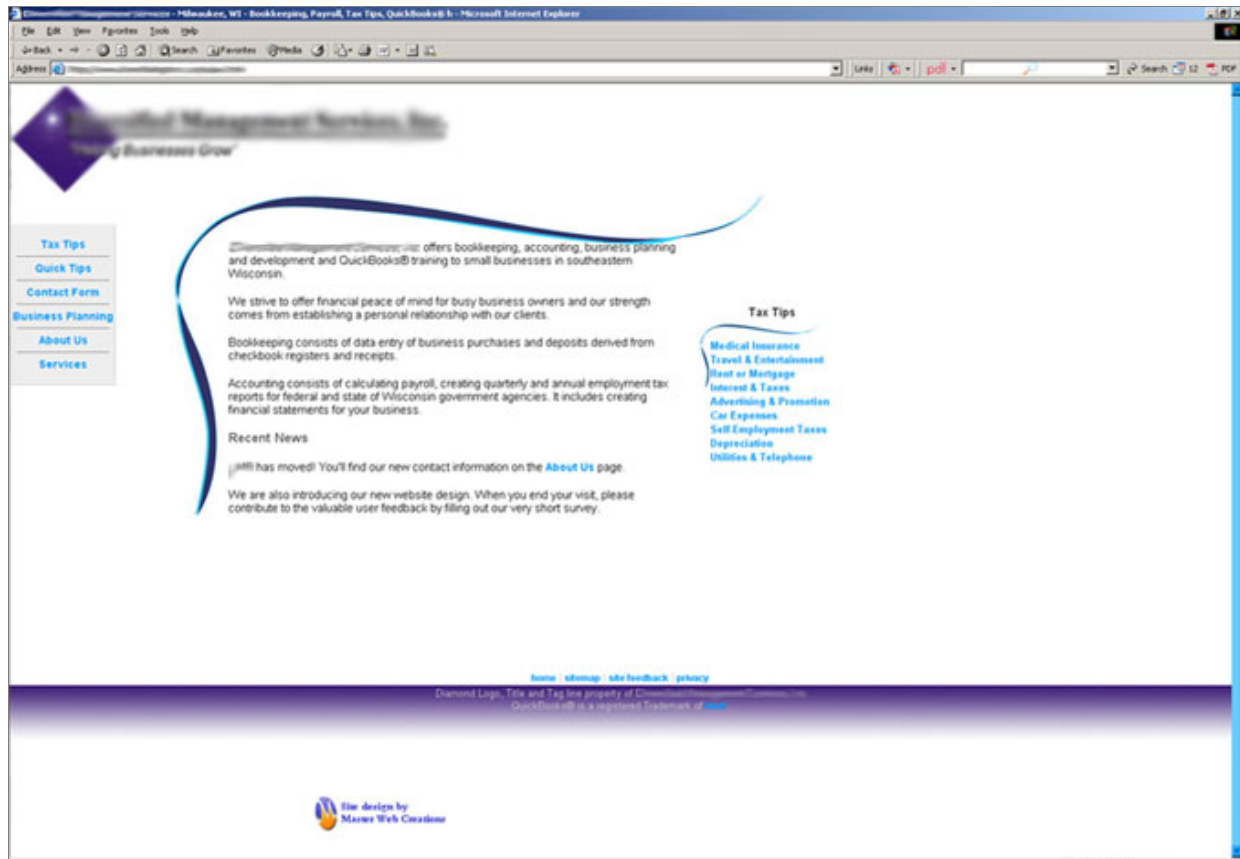
- user control and freedom,
- consistency and standards,
- eliminate user error and allow for recovery,
- facilitate recognition through consistency,
- and incorporate flexibility and efficiency

We examine these aspects within each of the following elements: page layout, navigation, headings and labels, links, text appearance, graphics and content.

PAGE LAYOUT

While the design incorporates floating content to allow for flexibility of screen and window resizing, increasing active use of balanced white space would help guide the users' eyes. The page layout design meets many standard requirements by optimizing the screen through avoiding frames, but the secondary navigation is a narrow text column that interrupts the normal process of website navigation. The content and navigation

generally flows in the f-pattern (with the exception of the Tax Tips navigation), structured in order of importance from the heading to the navigation to the content and the end of the page is easily recognized.



• Figure 1: MBC Home Page

NAVIGATION

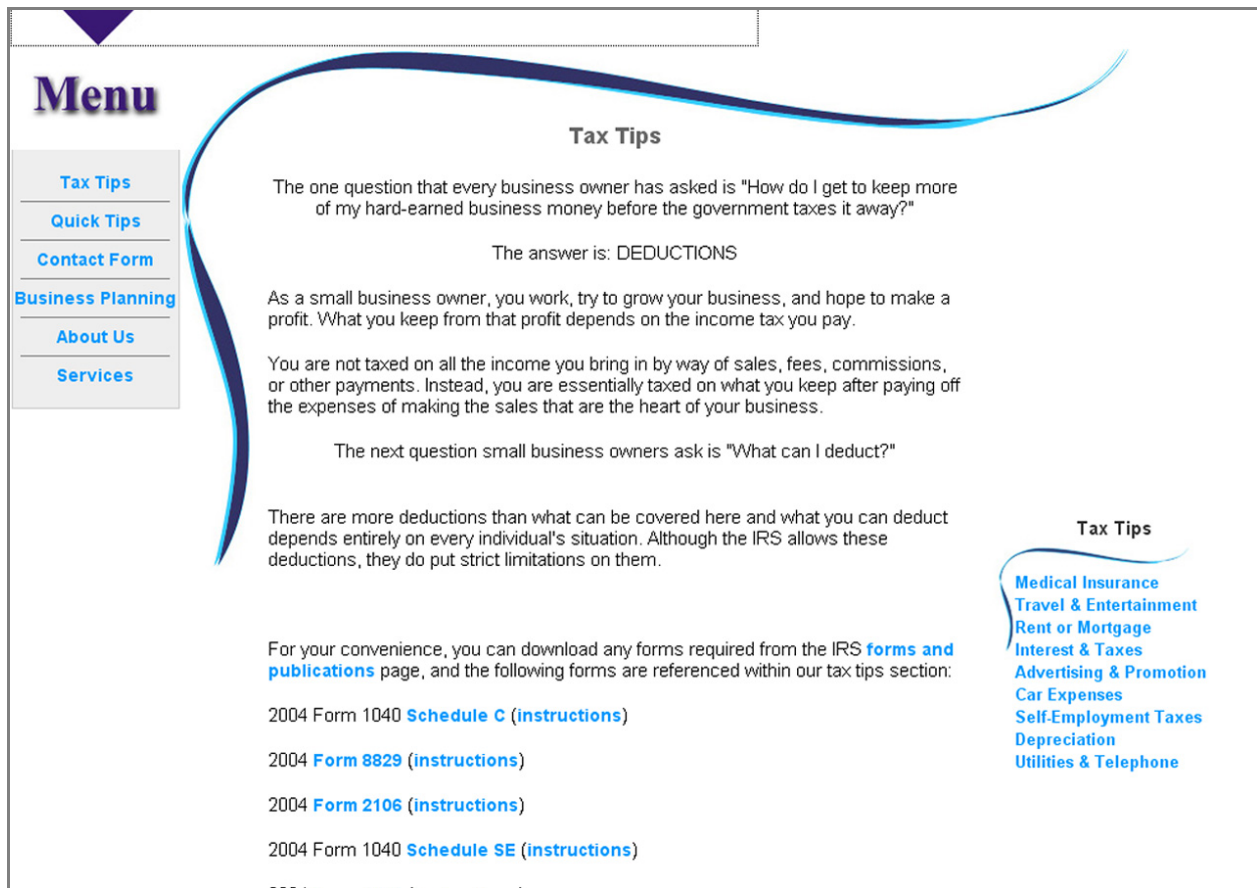
The navigation is simple, recognizable and consistent. The site map is a descriptive list, however does not provide any sense of hierarchy to the site content.

HEADINGS AND LABELS

Page titles and headings are unique and descriptive and provide consistent organization.

LINKS

Current visited links are not identifiable as such, this indicates to the user where they have been. A majority of the links are descriptive text links, but the label "Quick Tips" would be more descriptive as "QuickBooks Tips" or shortcuts. Links to the IRS website do not indicate that they will take you away from the MBC website; they should open in a new window as well as indicate as such.



- Figure 2: Links should indicate they are going to open in a new window, as well as whether they have been visited.

TEXT APPEARANCE

Font face and sizes are appropriate; for better usability, text size buttons would help accommodate a wider variety of users. The content, navigation and links are formatted well.

GRAPHICS

The graphics are very simple and could provide higher aesthetics. The design is consistent and predictable throughout the site.

CONTENT

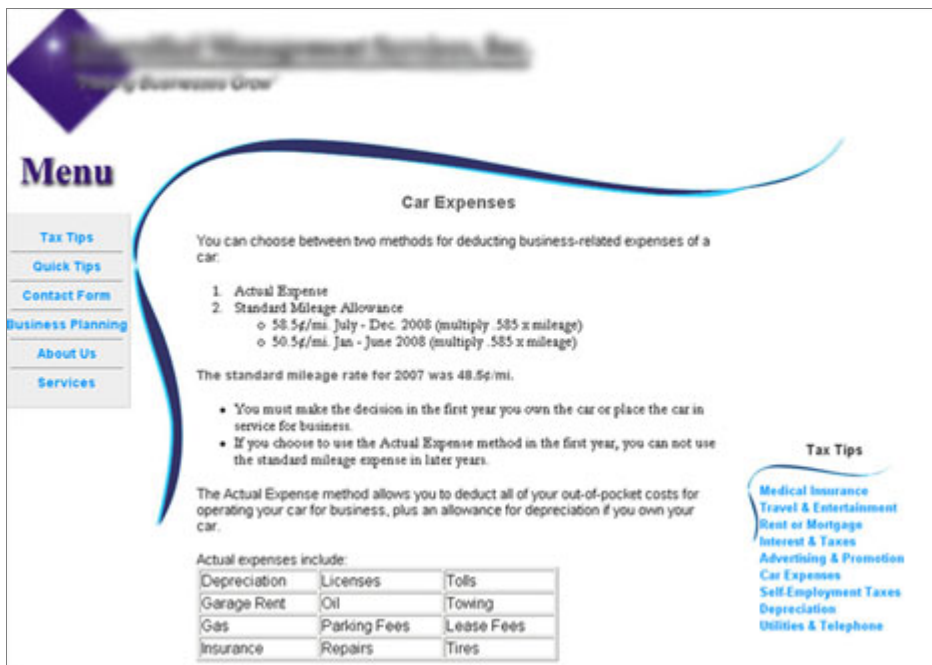
Content is fairly structured but organized well. It is easy to read or scan, and well written for a general audience.

Accessibility Checklist

The following is a Priority 1 fix checklist from W3C. Each priority checkpoint links to the W3C guide for that checkpoint. There are 3 levels of priorities for accessibility, if you intend to reach a wider audience, or for non-profit organizations and federal agencies, you should get a more in-depth accessibility review.

• Table 1: MBC Accessibility Checklist

In General (Priority 1)	Yes	No	N/A
1.1 Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content). This includes: images, image maps, animations, applets, frames, scripts, images used as list bullets, spacers, graphical buttons, sound, and video.	✓		
2.1 Ensure that all information conveyed with color is also available without color.	✓		
6.1 Organize documents so they may be read without style sheets.	✓		
7.1 Until user agents allow users to control flickering, avoid causing the screen to flicker.	✓		
14.1 Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content.	✓		
And if you use images and image maps (Priority 1)	Yes	No	N/A
1.2 Provide redundant text links for each active region of a server-side image map.			✓
9.1 Provide client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.			✓
And if you use tables (Priority 1)	Yes	No	N/A
5.1 For data tables, identify row and column headers.		✓	
5.2 For data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers, use markup to associate data cells and header cells.			✓
And if all else fails (Priority 1)	Yes	No	N/A
11.4 If, after best efforts, you cannot create an accessible page, provide a link to an alternative page that uses W3C technologies, is accessible, has equivalent information (or functionality), and is updated as often as the inaccessible (original) page.			✓



• Figure 3: Tables on Car Expenses page lack row/column headers.

RESOURCES & DISCLAIMER

The contents of this usability report are based on industry standard usability principles and design guidelines. The individual evaluator is directly familiar with the development of the reviewed site, thus with another evaluator involved, they may find other problems.

For more information on the depth and breadth of the field of usability, visit:

<http://www.useit.com>

<http://www.usability.gov>

<http://www.w3c.org>