

HSF Ride for Heart Proposal

Our proposal is based around a few key insights that have helped shape our suggestions for a redesign of the main Ride for Heart online property, the website.

We have identified several prominent types of visitors:

1. Seeking Registration
2. Volunteers/Staff
3. Sponsors
4. Return visitors

In our analysis, we looked at ways to better serve each of these groups, and identified that some are better served than others in the current site, but all could be better supported.

Second, we examined the usability of the site for possible areas of improvement in such important areas as navigation and user flow.

Thirdly, we formulated proposals on how the site could be made more emotive.

The HSF Ride for Heart is all about moving people to action. The site design must reflect that motivation in every aspect, every design choice made. Currently the site design, while providing outstanding information, places several unintentional obstacles in the path of motivated people taking action. In the first part of this document, we examine a few of the issues that require attention.

Of the 47 clickable items on the landing area, only one relates to volunteers, relegated to "Additional Info".

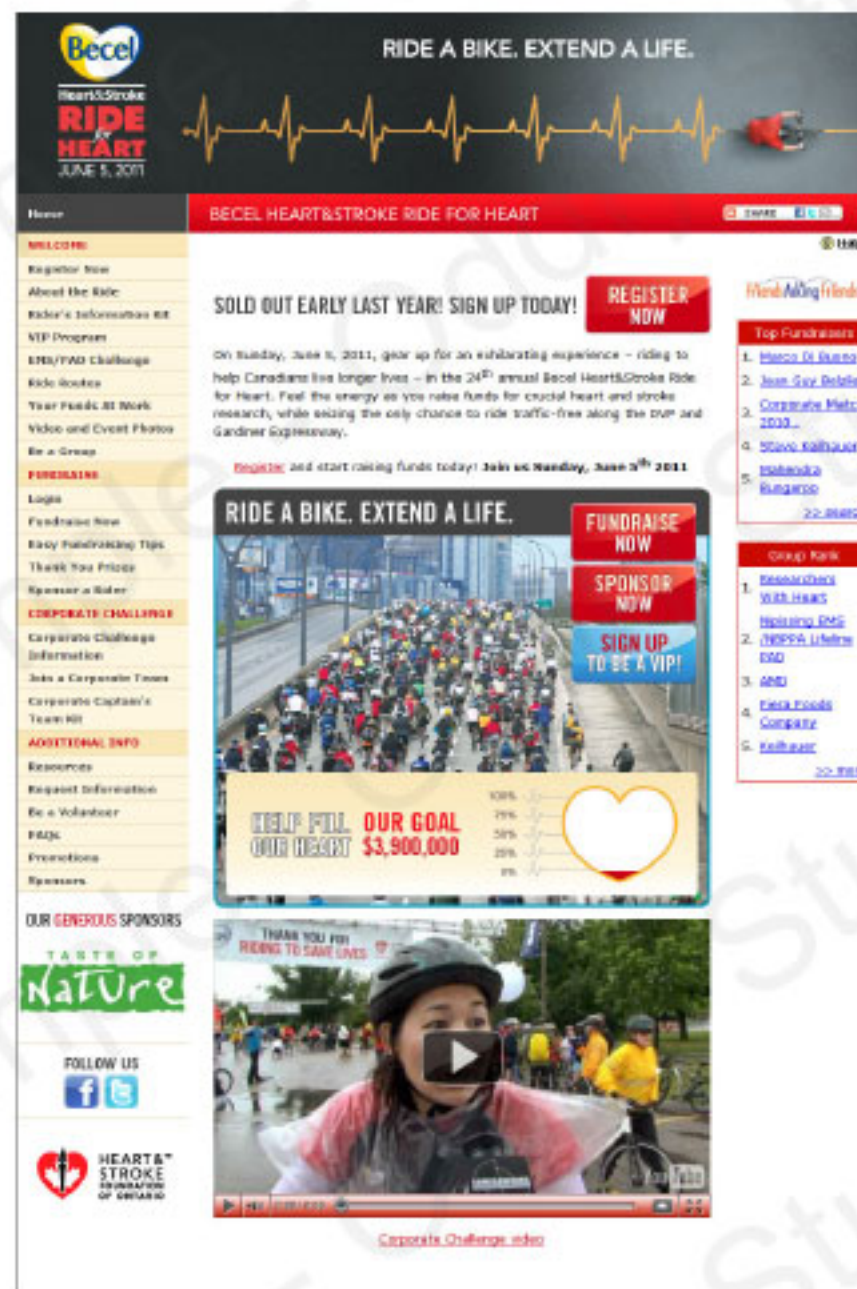
While pointing out the issues, we also make recommendations based on our years of experience in crafting sites, applications, and activities for major brands. We would like to help HSF set a new standard in excellence in the activity of fund raising, and assist the goal of motivating others to live healthier lives and celebrate the heroes among us.

Part 1 - Homepage Analysis, General Impressions

The landing area of the Ride for Heart site is the most important area as it sets the tone for the entire user experience. Like a well-designed building, visitors should be made to feel welcome, impressed with the professionalism and warmed by introduction to the people in the space.

The feel of the landing area in the current site is congested. There is quite a lot of text designed to present information but this results more in a feeling of clutter. Many of the

design decisions seem to be based on an older set of usability rules regarding placing all content within a set number of clicks of the home area. Many older template systems were designed to place all content within three navigation points to prevent user drop off. However, this often results in a bewildering number of options being presented to the user and "paralysis by analysis". In other words, greeted by a bewildering array of choices upon first landing at the site, the user stumbles, hesitates, and clicks blindly. For example, upon immediate landing to the Ride for Heart site, the visitor is presented with no less than 47 options to click upon, not including video player controls or social media options (which would place options closer to 60).



In the current design, no less than 47 navigation options greet the user, leading to blind clicking and lack of trust

In this vast array of options, it is very difficult to establish a tone for the site that will motivate the visitor to the desired action. Thankfully, there is a relatively straightforward solution to this problem.

Recommendation 1 - Reorganization of Navigation by Visitor Type

The site should be reorganized based on visitor type, given the clearly defined roles of site visitors. By recognizing the motivations of visitors and dividing information into buckets tailored to visitor type, the paralyzing array of choices on the landing area could be reduced to just a few well-chosen ones. This decision abandons the old idea of placing content within three clicks in favor of providing clearly defined navigation points.

Time and maturity in the field of user experience has shown there is no magical number of clicks that cause user drop off. Rather poor navigation flows that do little to provide users with a strong sense of location cause site exits.

Our suggestion utilizes the concept of progressive engagement. We take the site from a bewildering array of options that the visitor clicks blindly, to a few simple but clearly defined choices. When the user clicks, they feel more confident, and the site begins to build trust levels with them. This enables us to present information in more meaningful ways. If the very first action a visitor takes is one they feel secure in (no matter how simple), the experience is already heightened for them and they feel more in control of the engagement.

With increasing trust levels, we can better control the flow of information, ensuring that key points which are easily missed will be introduced at times that ensure visitor retention.

With the reorganization of the landing area into a few key choices, we allow the design to breathe and we can control the impression it creates through more effective use of negative space.

We favour presenting a few strong messages in a more open graphical layout that moves away from the dated three column layout. A few key elements of this design are outlined below.

Header Area

The area 'above the fold' occupied by the header is prime real estate on a landing area, and should be used to both set tone and provide the visitor with clear, easy to engage options.



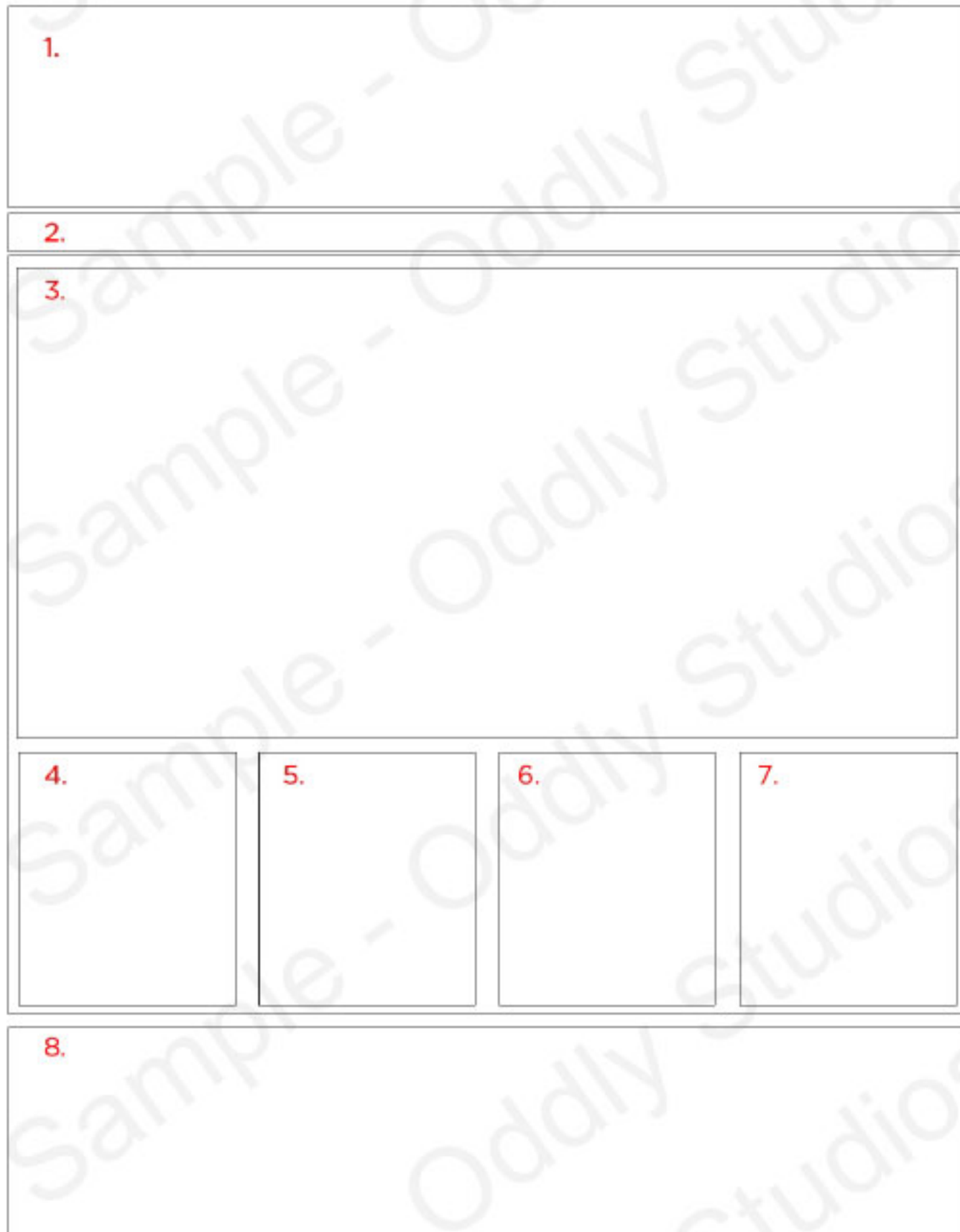
redundant messaging takes up valuable space and creates a false expectation of navigation due to placement and proximity

1. - Home message and link are redundant, repeated in header above by logo
2. - Redundant message repeated in logo immediately above. Proximity to (1.) creates false expectation of navigation eroding user confidence

In the header area, there is a fair amount of wasted space due to redundancies in navigation items. For instance, there is a home link in the form of the Ride for Heart logo that is repeated immediately below by a text link. By now, user convention is so strong regarding clicking the logo or header to return home (due to the prevalence of blogs) that this second link could be better utilized in other ways.

Combining our suggestions, we would reduce the number of choices on the landing area to a few clear ones, and move them into the vertical space currently occupied by the redundant "Home" button and non-functional bar beside it. This area would be ideal for such a use and is common enough in site design to be clearly recognized by visitors.

Similar to this suggestion, we would advise consolidating all social media options into one area, whereas they are currently broken up into a "follow us" area on the bottom left and a "share" widget on the top right. While social media sharing is highly important, it is unlikely to be a top priority of visitors first arriving to the site, and their goals in choosing to visit must be respected. Social options could be moved further down the page as they are further away in the priorities of the user compared to goals such as registration, finding event information, obtaining healthy heart suggestions, and sponsoring.



*proposed reorganization by visitor type and goals, eliminating redundancies
by effective use of navigation conventions*

1. Header area uses persistent logo as navigation element and appeals to user convention
2. Persistent navigation bar frees up valuable column space and clarifies user choices by visitor type rather than 'three click rule'.
3. Main area free for powerful motivational messages. Wide-screen aspect ratio created

appeals to more modern ideals in design of our user interfaces.

4. - 7. Secondary information areas, divided by visitor type to match persistent navigation of (2.) reinforces recognition of visitor roles. Strong use of icons in this area is advised to avoid clutter.
8. Tertiary information is placed in lower area (as decided by user goals upon visiting)

User-centric organization of information means ordering based on the goals of the user rather than the limitations of a template system.

User-centric organization of information eliminates clutter, and the perceived ease of navigation creates corresponding increases in information retention. This is known as the aesthetic effect, and is a documented means by which to increase user satisfaction and activity.

By introducing a constraint to the user visiting the site, we help them launch themselves on a course that will result in action on their part. By presenting them with a few simple choices up front, we immediately increase the chance of engagement on their part.

With a user-centric navigation system in place, we can begin to look beyond some of the technical issues related to user experience at the primary goals of the site.

Part Two - Problem Analysis

According to currently available site analytics and records of past events, the Ride for Heart does not have a problem with registration numbers. Registration for the actual event fills up quickly every year. Clearly, current efforts are very successful in this regard.

Ride for Heart does have a problem related to fund raising however. This is manifested in two ways.

1. Over 40 percent of funds raised are the result of just 4 percent of registrants.
2. Repeat fundraisers from one year to the next fall into a low percentage (below 20 percent)

From this, we conclude that many people who participate a) misunderstand their registration fee, and b) do not see the site as a resource beyond the initial registration.

We suggest that if we can increase registrant participation on the site, the event and the fundraising associated with it will be more prominent in their daily activity, resulting in increased fundraising activity.

This goal is very compatible with the user-centric navigation outlined above, since it recognizes motives for people arriving on the site. Our goal in the sub-navigation of the site would be to plan ahead for converting "registration seekers" and "sponsors" to "return visitors" at the time they achieve their initial goal. This goal should be of primary importance to the site. This can

be achieved in several ways:

- Consistency in navigation and planned introduction of key information
- Widening out of the content presented on the site
- Increased emphasis on volunteers and staff

Let us examine some techniques to achieve these goals.

The following button is found in three places in the current site design.

SOLD OUT EARLY LAST YEAR! SIGN UP TODAY!



**REGISTER
NOW**

inconsistent treatment of registration process

Currently, this button is contributing to one of the chief problems identified above, namely that registrants do not understand that their registration fees cover costs but do not raise funds for the cause.

From the home page, clicking this button leads directly to the registration process, beginning with the terms of use agreement. However, the "Register Now" button in the main navigation (left column) leads to an entirely different area, which again prominently displays the red "Register Now" button.

The vital message that registration fees cover only the cost of hosting is available only in one small sentence on a single page, and is completely overwhelmed by the prominent navigation buttons adjacent to it.

This all-important message is lost because the weight of the register button is so high compared to the text information adjacent to it. The visitor's eye will breeze right past the message to get to the activity, particularly since the button is a repeat of something they have already seen on the homepage.

Raising funds to extend lives is what Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart is all about. The registration fee only covers the cost of hosting this extraordinary event. **1.** Your fundraising makes a critical difference and is vital to support world-class research. Use our fun and easy fundraising tips and see how easy it is to reach the minimum \$100 donation.

Your participation is something to be proud of. **Thank you.**

You can do it - be part of this exhilarating movement. Don't miss this sell-out opportunity - register right now! **2.**

REGISTER NOW

SPONSOR NOW

FUNDRAISE NOW

OUR GOAL - \$3,900,000

Registrant Type	Until March 31	Until May 31 midnight	Check-in Centre & Event Day
INDIVIDUAL	\$40	\$50	\$70
FAMILY 2 adults and up to 4 children under 18 years old	\$90	\$110	\$150
GROUP 5+ individuals	\$35/person	\$45/person	\$65/person
CORPORATE	\$1,500 per 10 person team Register Before March 1, 2011 and save 25%!		

[Print your Registration Form](#) | [Print your Fundraising Form](#)

*visitor attention is drawn away from a key message,
resulting in lower fundraising efforts*

1. - The area of the vital message
2. - The area the visitor's attention is immediately drawn to, additionally confusing links not related to registration

It is almost impossible that the visitor will read the area detailed by (1.) above. The urge to interact with the prominent navigation buttons is too strong and is compounded by the unnecessary addition of sponsor and fundraiser links. These links are not related to the goals of the new registrant.

We suspect that this flaw in information architecture is leading to a common misconception that the registration fees themselves go towards the fundraising cause.

With that misconception firmly implanted in the mind of the new registrant, all other messages on the site regarding fundraising lower in importance, diminishing their need to return to the site for information, or to follow those who have developed successful fundraising techniques. They feel they have done their job.

Lastly, actually clicking the button "Register Now" shown above leads to a login area rather than the actual registration page. We have suddenly thrown the person in the "Seeking Registration" role into the "Return Visitor" role, which is disorienting to them. The site then presents a plain text link to the actual registration, introducing yet another inconsistency to the navigation.

These small inconsistencies are the result of the current information not being presented with the roles of the visitor in mind. And they add up to a lack of motivation to return to the site as a valuable and easy to use resource.

It is essential that the site be redesigned to:

- Present the information that registration fees do not equal fund raising in a way that it comes to the attention of the visitor
- Convert registrants to return visitors
- Associate fund raising with return visitors, rather than with people driving towards registration

In the design of the new registrant's experience, it is equally vital to recognize that the actual act of registration is our very best chance to transform visitors into return visitors. It is the point of highest commitment in their experience so far and a very crucial time to offer them a new role, as from their perspective their current role is coming to an end. Let's direct them immediately into areas appropriate for their new role as a return visitor (even though technically they have not left the site, their perspective on it has shifted).