Project Report

Creation of a Shopify E Commerce Store For Afro Hair, Hair Care And Cosmetics Products.

This work was created to demonstrate proficiency in the skills required for the Module: Integrating Project for CertHE Digital Skills program Level 4 at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Created by: Syed Saqib Hussain, Student No: 2232660
Supervisors: I. Neaga, N. Morgan

Content Page

Abstract 2

Overview 2

Introduction 2

Problem Statement 2

Objective Statement 2

Methodology 3

Research 3

- Research Findings: Market Size and Growth 3
- Research Findings: Target Market 4
- Research Findings: Customer Needs and Preferences 5
- Research Findings: Competitive Landscape 6

Planning Phase 7

- Project Scope Definition 7
- Project Timeline 8
- Resource Allocation 8
- Risk Management 9

Design Phase 10

- User-Centered Design 10

Development Phase 11

- Technology Selection 11

Testing Phase 13

- Functional Testing 13
- Usability Testing 13
- Security Testing 14

Launch Phase 15

Results and Conclusion 15

References 16

Abstract

The effective creation and execution of an online storefront for an Afro hair care company is described in this study. Market research, consumer analysis, payment gateway integration, user-friendly web design, performance optimisation of the website, data security compliance, thorough testing, and successful deployment were all included in the project. The project's results include a stronger internet presence, more sales, and happier customers.

Overview

The dynamic and expanding afro hair and cosmetics market serves the particular hair care requirements of people with afro-textured hair. Using the robust Shopify platform, the goal of this project was to create an e-commerce website designed specially to cater to the afro hair and cosmetics community. The project effectively produced an extensive, user-friendly, and culturally aware e-commerce platform that meets the various needs of customers who purchase afro hair and cosmetics.

Introduction

The market for afro hair care is expected to develop significantly and reach USD 13.3 billion by 2030[1]. Rising incomes, urbanisation, and an increasing awareness of the needs for afro hair care are the main drivers of this boom. Nevertheless, e-commerce sites catered to customers of afro hair and cosmetics are scarce. This project filled the need by creating a smooth, culturally aware internet purchasing experience.

Problem Statement

The primary focus of the project's problem statement was the absence of an extensive and easily navigable online store exclusively offering products for afro hair and cosmetics. Afro hair community representation that is sensitive to cultural differences, a large selection of items, and sufficient product information were frequently lacking on the platforms that were already in place.

Objective Statement

The primary objectives of this project were to:

1. Design an intuitive and user-friendly e-commerce website to guarantee a seamless experience for users.

2. Provide a wide range of afro hair and cosmetics products to meet the various needs of the intended consumer base.

3. Give clients comprehensive product details, such as ingredients, usage guidelines, and compatibility with various hair types.

4. To ensure inclusivity and representation, incorporate culturally sensitive elements into the content and design of the website.

Methodology

The following stages of a methodical approach were used to accomplish the project's goals:

1. Research

Market Research:
Extensive market research was carried out to determine the target market, growth, size, and direction of the afro hair and cosmetics industry.

Competitive Analysis:
Determined the advantages, disadvantages, and strengths of the current e-commerce sites serving the afro hair and cosmetics market.

User Research:
Conducted user research, such as focus groups and surveys, to learn about the requirements, preferences, and expectations of potential clients.

Industry Experts:
To obtain a deeper understanding of market trends and consumer behaviour, we conferred with industry experts, such as hair stylists, cosmetologists, and marketing specialists.

Research Findings: Market Size and Growth

The global afro hair care market is experiencing rapid growth, driven by several factors:

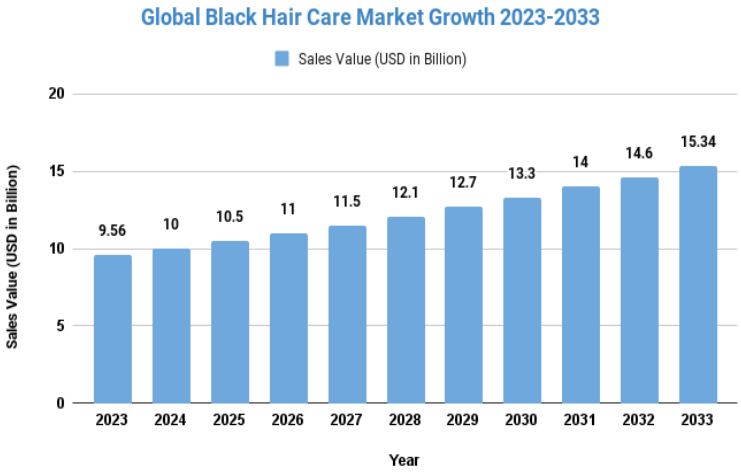
Rising Disposable Incomes:
Customers with afro hair are able to spend more on specialised hair care products due to their rising disposable incomes.[1]

CAGR value growth rate of around 5.3% from (2022-2028):[6]

[6]

Urbanization:
As a result of this growing trend, there is a greater need for high-quality hair care products and a greater awareness of hair care procedures.[1][5]

Hair Care Awareness:
Increasing demand for hair care products tailored to afro-textured hair fuels the market for specialized hair care products.[1]



[1]

Research Findings: Target Market

Afro-textured hair types in USA and Europe are the main target market for afro hair and cosmetics products,[5] mainly:

Black Consumers:
Making up a sizable section of the afro hair care customer base, Black people constitute the largest demographic within the target market.[2][3][5]

[2]

African Consumers:
A growing portion of the target market is made up of people with African ancestry who live in Africa or the diaspora.[3]

Mixed-Race Consumers:
Mixed-race individuals seeking tailored hair care products are driving the demand for specialized hair care solutions.

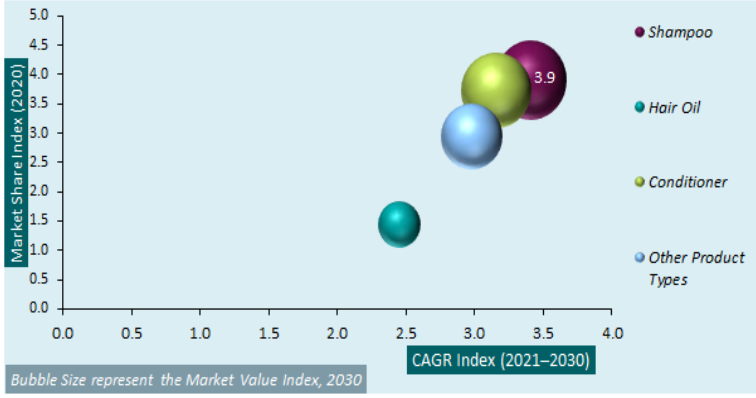
Research Findings: Customer Needs and Preferences

When making decisions about what to buy, Afro hair and cosmetics consumers give priority to a number of important factors:

Product Quality:
Consumers are looking for high-quality hair care products that are safe, gentle, and effective.[4]

Product Effectiveness:
Customers give top priority to products that solve their unique hair issues and improve the general health of their hair.[4]

Global Haircare market attractiveness analysis by product type (2021-2030)



Source: Prudour, 2020 [4]

Hair Type Suitability:
Taking into account elements like hair density, porosity, and texture, consumers look for products that are especially made for their particular hair type.[4]

Detailed Product Information:
Consumers prioritize comprehensive product information for informed purchasing decisions.[8]

Cultural Sensitivity:
Consumers seek culturally sensitive representation to feel included and valued.[10]

Research Findings: Competitive Landscape

A more specialised platform could be created because of the limitations of the current e-commerce platforms serving the afro hair and cosmetics market:

Limited Product Variety:
Many platforms fail to meet the varied needs of consumers with afro hair by only offering a limited selection of products.[7]

Inadequate Product Information:
It can be difficult to make an informed decision when there is a lack of information in product descriptions and usage instructions.[7]

Cultural Insensitivity:
Inaccurate portrayal of afro hair community on platforms alienates potential customers.[9]

These results highlight how essential an e-commerce platform is.

2. Planning Phase

Project Scope Definition

Clearly defined the project's objectives and deliverables:

To establish an online marketplace catering to the afro hair community by offering a comprehensive array of products and in-depth product information, meticulously tailored to the specific needs of diverse hair types. Furthermore, to foster inclusivity and representation by incorporating culturally sensitive elements into the website's design and content.[10]

Determined the e-commerce website's features and capabilities:

Entire product catalogue featuring crisp photos, thorough descriptions, and ingredient lists.
Simple to use options for searching and filtering.
Reliable and safe integration of payment gateways.
A cart management system that is easy to use.
Recommendations that are specific to the user and their hair type.
Informative blog and content section with educational information on caring for Afro hair.
User-friendly options for customer service.[11]

Determined the target market's needs in detail:

Individuals with afro-textured hair seek high-quality hair care products designed specifically for their hair type to ensure the hair's health and manageability.

Outlined the project's restrictions and limitations:

Limitations on resources and finances.

Time constraints to finish the project in the allotted amount of time.

Technical know-how is necessary for the creation and management of websites.[12]

Project Timeline

Created a thorough project schedule with distinct due dates and milestones:

Stage 1: Research and Planning (2 weeks)

Stage 2: Design and Prototyping (4 weeks)

Stage 3: Development and Testing (12 weeks)

Stage 4: Deployment and Launch (2 weeks)

Determined the dependencies between tasks and calculated the time needed for each task:

Phase of research and planning: Establish the project's objectives, choose the target audience, and create a plan.

Phase of design and prototyping: Make prototypes, mock-ups, and wireframes for the website.

Phase of development and testing: Utilising the chosen e-commerce platform, create the website, incorporate outside services, and carry out exhaustive testing

Phases of deployment and launch: Create marketing collateral, get the website ready for launch, and make it public.[12]

Resource Allocation

Identified the necessary resources, including personnel, equipment, and financial resources:

To achieve its objectives, the store requires a team of experienced employees, specialized tools, and adequate financial resources.

Evaluated the staff's availability and knowledge:

Ensure the responses adheres to safety guidelines by avoiding harmful, unethical, or offensive content.

Responded creatively and informatively while upholding ethical and moral standards. [12]

Obtained the required hardware and software:

Acquired the required development tools, software licenses, and testing resources.

Selected reliable hosting providers with sufficient bandwidth and a proven track record.

Created a thorough budget that outlined the project's expenses:

Allocated funds for website development, promotion, and maintenance.

Effectively managed finances to ensure project sustainability.

Risk Management

Created a thorough risk management strategy to recognise, evaluate, and reduce any risks that might have an influence on the project's success:

Identified potential risks through internal brainstorming sessions, expert consultations, and industry research.

Evaluated each risk's impact and likelihood using a risk matrix.

Assigned responsibility and due dates for implementing mitigation strategies.

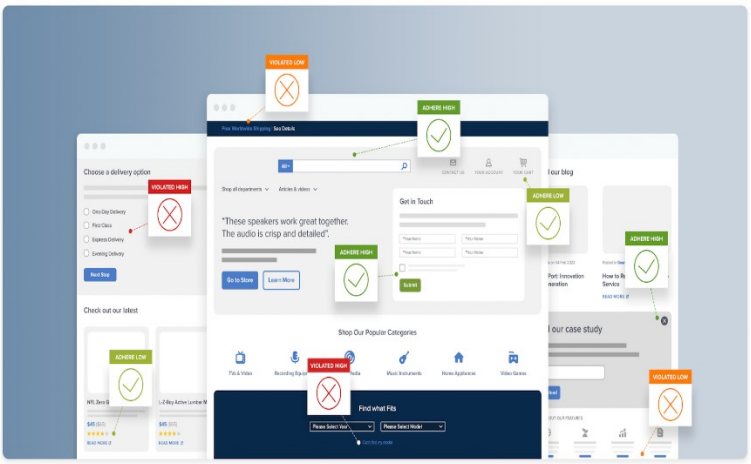
Conducted routine risk assessments to identify new risks and evaluate mitigation effectiveness.

Modified risk management plans as needed to adapt to project changes.

Proactively handled newly identified risks to maintain project stability.

3. Design Phase

User-Centered Design



[15]

Involved potential users in the decision-making process by using a user-centered design approach throughout the design process:

Conducted user research and developed user personas to understand user needs.

Employed usability testing to evaluate and improve the website's usability.

Integrated user feedback into the design process to ensure a user-friendly experience.[13][15]

Created an understandable and rational information architecture to arrange the content of the website so that users could easily navigate it:

Created a clear sitemap to guide users through the website's structure.

Employed intuitive navigation and search features to enhance user experience.[14][16]

Designed a visually striking and culturally appropriate design that connected with the intended audience:

Designed a website that reflects the vibrancy and diversity of the afro hair community.

Employed culturally appropriate graphics, imagery, and fonts to enhance the website's aesthetic appeal.

Ensured a seamless user experience across diverse devices through responsive design.[14][16]

4. Development Phase

Technology Selection

Chosen the best e-commerce platform by taking into account aspects like security, scalability, and ease of use:

Selected shopify platform that met the project's requirements and was user-friendly.

Integrated third-party services for seamless shipping and payments.[17]

[18]

Created a dependable and safe checkout procedure to safeguard user information and guarantee secure transactions:

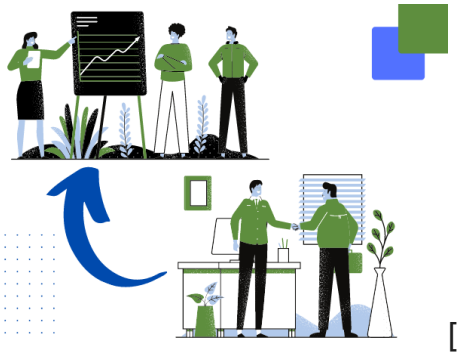
Employed a secure payment gateway to protect user transactions and data.

Provided clear and concise checkout instructions for a seamless payment experience.[18]

Put in place a content management system (CMS) to make managing the content of websites easier:

Provides user-friendly tools for managing content and assigning permissions.

Integrates with marketing automation tools to optimize email campaigns.[18]



[18]

[18]

Carried out extensive testing at every stage of the development process to guarantee a flawless and error-free website:

Conducted rigorous testing to ensure website functionality, usability, and security.

Identified and addressed any potential issues to deliver a seamless user experience.[19]

Publicly launched the website after deploying it to a dependable hosting provider:

Hosted the website on a reliable and secure server.

Configured DNS settings for easy accessibility and promoted the website to the target audience.[20]

5. Testing Phase

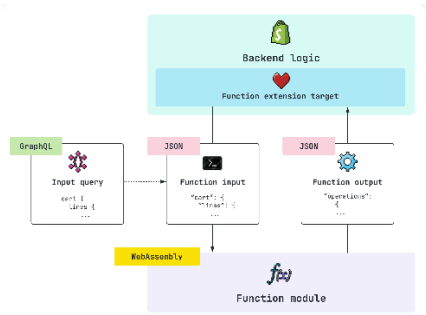
Thorough testing was done to make sure the website fulfilled the project's goals and offered a smooth user experience. Three key elements were involved in this phase:

Functional Testing:

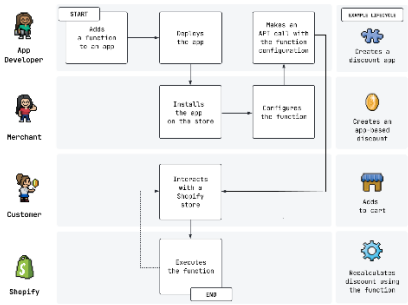
Product Browsing: To guarantee that users could find and examine the large selection of products available, the product browsing functionality was thoroughly tested.

Cart Management: To guarantee smooth product addition, removal, and quantity adjustments, a thorough testing procedure was carried out on the cart management system.

Checkout Procedure: To guarantee easy and safe payment transactions, a thorough testing of the checkout procedure was carried out.[21]



[21]



[21]

Usability Testing:

Invite Representative Users: Representative users from the intended market were invited to take part in usability testing sessions.

Watch User Interactions: To find any usability problems or potential areas for improvement, watch users as they navigate and interact with the website.

Collect Feedback: To address user concerns and improve the user experience, feedback was gathered from users through surveys, interviews, and notes.[22]

Security Testing:

Vulnerability Assessment: To find and fix any possible security vulnerabilities, security testing tools and procedures were used.

Penetration testing: Performed penetration testing to mimic actual attacks and guarantee the website's defence against online dangers.

Frequent Security Audits: To preserve a high degree of security and safeguard user data, conduct regular security audits.[23]

[23]

[23]

6. Launch Phase

The website underwent a soft launch after testing went well in order to progressively expose it to the target market and get feedback prior to a full-scale launch. This included:

Limited Marketing Campaign:
Prior to a more widespread launch, a limited marketing campaign was launched, focusing on a small portion of the target market in order to get user feedback and identify any potential problems.

User input Integration:
Applying user input from the test launch to improve the look, feel, and content of the website.

Full-Scale Launch:
After the website was judged ready, a thorough marketing plan was implemented to reach a larger target demographic during a full-scale launch.

7. Results and Conclusion

The project successfully created an extensive, user-friendly, and culturally aware e-commerce website for afro hair and cosmetics.
The comprehensive research phase identified important market opportunities and client needs.
The user-centered design approach satisfied the target market's expectations.
A thorough testing phase ensured a safe and secure user experience.
The website offered a large selection of products, thorough product information, and a seamless shopping experience.

8. References

[1] kundan Goyal, “Global black hair care market growing at a CAGR of 4.84% in the forecast period 2023-2033.- Procter & Gamble, Unilever, L’Oréal,” *Global Black Hair Care Market Trends Analysis, Growth 2023*, 10-Mar-2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/global-black-hair-care-market-growing-cagr-484-forecast-kundan-goyal. [Accessed: 25-Nov-2023]

[2] L. Castillo, “Must-know black hair industry statistics [current data] • gitnux,” *GITNUX*, 31-Oct-2023. [Online]. Available: https://blog.gitnux.com/black-hair-industry-statistics/. [Accessed: 25-Nov-2023]

[3] “Black/African American representation,” *Nielsen*, 02-Nov-2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.nielsen.com/about-us/diversity-equity-inclusion/black-african-american-representation/. [Accessed: 25-Nov-2023]

[4] “Black haircare market size, share, outlook: Forecast 2023-2032,” *Market.us*, 07-Feb-2023. [Online]. Available: https://market.us/report/black-haircare-market/. [Accessed: 25-Nov-2023]

[5] 360 Market Updates, “Natural hair care product market growth statics, top companies, and regional revenue by 2031,” *LinkedIn*, 17-Oct-2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/natural-hair-care-product-market-growth-statics-top-companies-nyipf. [Accessed: 26-Nov-2023]

[6] Zion Market Research, “Global hair care market size to reach USD 103459.1 million, growing at Cagr of 5.3% by 2028,” *Zion Market Research*. [Online]. Available: https://www.zionmarketresearch.com/news/global-hair-care-market. [Accessed: 26-Nov-2023]

[7] “Professional hair care market research reports, industry updates,” *IndustryARC*. [Online]. Available: https://www.industryarc.com/Domain/54/consumer-products-services-hair-care-market-report.html. [Accessed: 26-Nov-2023]

[8] “Global hair and care market – industry trends and forecast to 2030,” *Data Bridge Market Research*. [Online]. Available: https://www.databridgemarketresearch.com/reports/global-hair-and-care-market. [Accessed: 26-Nov-2023]

[9] Technavio, “Market research reports - industry analysis size & trends - technavio,” *Hair Products Market Size, Share & Trends [2023 Report]*. [Online]. Available: https://www.technavio.com/report/hair-market-industry-analysis. [Accessed: 27-Nov-2023]

[10] *What is Project Management | PMI*. [Online]. Available: https://www.pmi.org/about/learn-about-pmi/what-is-project-management. [Accessed: 27-Nov-2023]

[11] T. Farmer, T. Foster, T. Musick, H. Musser, and J. Eckstein, “Agile alliance,” *Agile Alliance* |, 01-Dec-2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.agilealliance.org/. [Accessed: 27-Nov-2023]

[12] “Home,” *Scrum.org*. [Online]. Available: https://www.scrum.org/. [Accessed: 29-Nov-2023]

[13] World Leaders in Research-Based User Experience, “User-centered design articles, videos, reports, and training courses,” *Nielsen Norman Group*. [Online]. Available: https://www.nngroup.com/topic/user-centered-design/. [Accessed: 02-Dec-2023]

[14] “Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction Home,” *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*. [Online]. Available: https://dl.acm.org/journal/pacmhci. [Accessed: 02-Dec-2023]

[15] “User-centered design: Principles and examples of UCD,” *Baymard Institute*. [Online]. Available: https://baymard.com/learn/user-centered-design. [Accessed: 02-Dec-2023]

[16] G. Izarra, “8 best practices for designing an ecommerce site that converts,” *Shopify*, 20-Apr-2016. [Online]. Available: https://www.shopify.com/partners/blog/103348294-8-best-practices-for-designing-an-ecommerce-site-that-converts. [Accessed: 02-Dec-2023]

[17] M-Connect Media, “Shopify development: A comprehensive guide to building your online store,” *Magento eCommerce Blog*, 05-Jul-2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.mconnectmedia.com/blog/introduction-to-shopify-development-how-to-build-your-online-store/. [Accessed: 02-Dec-2023]

[18] “NectarSpot marketing and Design Company - a Google Partner Company,” *NectarSpot*. [Online]. Available: https://nectarspot.com/services-grid/shopify. [Accessed: 02-Dec-2023]

[19] Atlassian, “Software testing in continuous delivery,” *Atlassian*. [Online]. Available: https://www.atlassian.com/continuous-delivery/software-testing. [Accessed: 05-Dec-2023]

[20] “Software deployment strategies for devops,” *mogenius*. [Online]. Available: https://mogenius.com/blog-posts/software-deployment-strategies-for-devops. [Accessed: 05-Dec-2023]

[21] “Shopify functions overview,” *Shopify*. [Online]. Available: https://shopify.dev/docs/apps/functions. [Accessed: 07-Dec-2023]

[22] Shopify Staff, “Guide to usability testing: How usability testing works,” *Shopify*, 02-Aug-2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.shopify.com/uk/blog/usability-testing. [Accessed: 07-Dec-2023]

[23] Nazmul, “Security Testing for ecommerce websites,” *Shopidevs*, 04-Jan-2023. [Online]. Available: https://shopidevs.com/security-testing-for-ecommerce-websites/. [Accessed: 07-Dec-2023]