



TribeAgency forges fully interactive Flash product selectors for multiple **Brother** product lines



Market Outlook

Through the proliferation of the Internet, most people have experienced the simplicity of searching for and finding something online. Typically, this involves “asking” a search engine or web crawling program any given number of questions, and counting on it to respond with the answers you are looking for. However, most of the time, people don’t know exactly what they are looking for. They just have an idea of what they would like to achieve and require assisted solutions that will help them reach their goal. It was precisely for this purpose that Brother requested an interactive product selector for their label-makers and office print devices.

Opportunity

Brother realized that, for the most part, it was difficult for their customers to determine which product model was right for their needs. Although there was comprehensive documentation on the technical aspects of each product, it was often not possible, or plausible, for consumers to spend the copious amounts of time required to weed through this information. And because the information itself was unable to make any recommendations, it often took users a while to figure out which product would fit their requirements. Clearly, an interactive product selector could help solve these issues, but it was crucial to determine the method in which the products were selected. This is when TribeAgency came into the picture.

Solutions

The collaborative brainstorming session yielded the initial concept for product selection: what if, unlike searching the Internet where the user asks the questions, the product selector posed questions to the user? This idea proved to be the basis of our work with Brother. By compiling Brother’s product line into two distinct groups to avoid mixing genres (i.e. label-makers and letter-sized printing devices), we were able to devise an architecture for two interactive pieces that exhibited product focus while retaining the breadth of consumer choice and interactivity.

The first project featured Brother’s P-Touch label-maker line. In this instance, due to the small number of products, the questioning process aimed solely to determine the type of environment in which the labels would be produced. When the work environment was determined, a number of suggestions were made to the user, allowing them to choose from a more focused group of products. From there, products could be isolated based on technical merit.



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WEB INTERACTIVE PRINT MOTION IMMERSIVE

To aid in the decision-making process, users could watch a 360° rotation of each product, allowing a more thorough inspection of its features. This facilitated the user's familiarity with the products and their function.

Next up, came an interactive selector that let users choose between Brother printers, fax machines and multi-function centers. This project was much larger in scale than its predecessor, including almost 30 different products. Because of the larger number of products, there was an increased number of routes that users could take in finding the appropriate solution. This meant that we had to increase the number of questions in order to narrow the focus. The questions determined what type of product was needed, what kind of output was required (monochrome or color), and the environment in which the product would be used.

However, it was clear from the beginning, because of the inclusion of the multi-function centers, there would be a number of direct and indirect matches for each different series of choices. For instance, imagine that someone is looking for a color printer for his or her network. While there are exact matches for this search, there are also other machines that fit the bill, but offer additional features. With this in mind, a method was devised for indicating exact matches, while also recommending other machines (usually multi-function centers) that had the required abilities and more. By suggesting machines that played dual roles, users were provided with the ability to make more effective decisions and cut costs if they so chose.

Interactive menus supplied strong lateral navigation amongst the products; allowing users to move in and out of different printers, fax machines and multi-function centers. To start the piece off, an engaging introduction was instrumental in getting users excited about the products and boosted the consumer's brand and product awareness.

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Results

All in all, the solutions we provided for Brother were extremely successful at their intended purpose: helping consumers find the products that are right for their needs. By enabling the user to sit back and answer simple questions for a change, we were able to focus their efforts and put the power of choice back in their hands.



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