
Marketing and Design Applications in Website Development

Business Project Report

Author: Amanda Chen, 122029

Business Mentor: Jill Ko, CEO

CourseStars, LLC.

8/15/20

1. Executive Summary

Are there universal guidelines that ensure the efficacy of a business website's design and marketing appeal to consumers? Through the field studies of competitor businesses of private tutoring company CourseStars, LLC. as well as research journals confirming the significance of behavioral economics working hand in hand with user experience website design, we determined that the best course of action was to rebrand the CourseStars website to reflect a personal connection its tutors can make with their students. The general principles to make a "good website" are ease of use, trust, transaction security, and behaviorally, using consumers' cost-benefit analysis and their other biases. This and the streamlining of the website's appearance and organization served to expand CourseStars's target audience and increase customer retention via engagement on the website.

2. Business Context

2.1 Industry Description

According to Zion Market Research, the global private tutoring industry was valued at USD 96,218 million in 2017 and is projected to grow to USD 177,621 million by 2026, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.1% from 2018 to 2026 (Globe Newswire), driven by the "cost benefits and flexibility" of online private tutoring, and taking into account both categories of subject tutoring and exam preparation. Ranging from preschool level education to college, tutoring has provided advantages to customers who seek targeted learning to either study ahead of their current curriculum or simply to gain deeper understanding. For businesses that expand their audience to students of all ages and to different platforms and services, long-term profit comes naturally as their customers progress to higher education.

Even local, smaller businesses have no shortage of their own opportunities in the private tutoring industry compared to their corporate competitors because of the versatility of tutoring itself. In varying the types of services offered and their prices, while being able to provide consistent, well-rooted tutors within a localized community, businesses that operate on a lower level can garner a steadfast reputation and reliable system, securing their position quite effectively.

While the European and Asian Pacific private tutoring markets are expected to boom in the near future, the North American market, powered by the United States, continues to hold the largest market share globally at 32% in 2017. This comes as no surprise, as academic competition grows steadily in that region while being boosted by immigration rates and current prestigious education systems (Globe Newswire). In one way, the industry powers itself by helping create a generation of accomplished individuals which in turn both raise the standard and help develop the following generation. Furthermore, the tutoring industry itself shows promise with its ever-evolving services. Businesses grow more accustomed to the relatively recently introduced online form of tutoring, capitalizing on the expansive efficiency and convenience of technology. Increasing demand for educational aid paired with the continuous improvement of the industry

itself means that the market shows no sign of slowing down in the years to come. Companies that are currently leading the global private tutoring industry include: Ambrow Education, American Tutor, Brighter Minds Tutoring, Chegg, Eduboard, EF Education First, iTutorGroup, Kaplan, Mandarin Rocks, Manhattan Review, MindLaunch, New Oriental, TAL Education, TutorZ, Web International English, and Wyzant (Garcia).

2.2 Company Description

CourseStars, LLC is an Illinois-based educational tutoring business that aims to provide above and beyond personalized tutoring services and resources on top of curricular learning for students, ranging from elementary school to the college level (CourseStars). CourseStars was created with the idea to help students maintain exceptional academic progress before college and continue that excellence well into college. Many college students struggle to receive adequate help in their courses and as a result, their chances of graduating are severely diminished. And in light of aggressive competition for acceptance into top national colleges and universities, tutoring is a much-needed method for students to maximize their chances while under an academic time limit. CourseStars offers services including course-specific informational videos, one-on-one tutoring, final exam and other test prep workshops, AP test, SAT, and ACT preparation, all under the guidance of high school and college tutors who have produced wonderful results under the same courses and professors.

Visitors to the website have options to search for a tutor based on the subject area, university, or via a personalized survey that takes into account learning pace, personal needs, the student's priorities, and other factors to ensure an efficient and effective learning process. Lastly, you have the option of becoming a tutor under CourseStars with many benefits, including the freedom to choose your own pay rate, your own schedule, and which out of CourseStars's services you want to provide to students. Additionally, CourseStars handles the collection of payment from students and directly deposits payments to tutors so getting paid is hassle-free to tutors. Lastly, CourseStars does advertising for its tutors so that there can be a stable amount of students under each tutor.

2.3 Department Description

With online alternatives steadily becoming the forefront of the private tutoring industry, it is increasingly important for companies to revolutionize their appeal in the form of website development and its relevant marketing strategies-- in other words, digital marketing. Websites can lose the interest of visitors as quickly as it's gained, so not only do businesses need to consider the balance and organization of information and data on a website, they also need to cater the website's features to give the visitor ease and convenience and ultimately coax them into staying on and interacting with the website as intended. According to a survey by Hubspot, 76 percent of consumers say that the most important factor in a website's design is that "the website makes it easy for me to find what I want" (Volpe). Keeping this in mind, providing a reliable, professional online platform involves a good understanding of search engine optimization (SEO), user interface design (UI), and user experience design (UX). SEO is the engineering and retaining of website traffic both off and on the website (Moz). Both UI and UX design are concerned with satisfying the visitor, whether it be through visual appeal like with typography and color schemes, or through an overall good experience by solving user problems

during the interaction between the service and the consumer (Lamprecht). For the sake of simplicity, the term “digital marketing” in this research report includes all of the above aspects.

3. Business Project Description

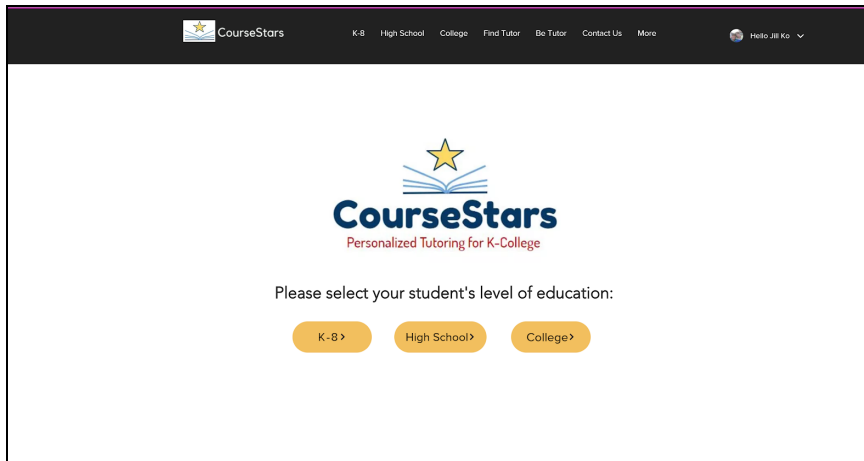
The problem with which I centered my work around was lack of attention towards the company’s products and services despite the clear need for supplementary help, especially for college students aiming to graduate in four or six years. CourseStars already had a fully functioning website that could interact with customers and receive payments for tutoring sessions when I joined as an intern, so this translated into focusing on marketing strategies, and then selling them effectively on the website. Along with the other two summer interns, I helped develop the following to improve the website: an official logo, a survey visitors can take to be matched up with the right tutor, expansion into K-8 age level tutoring, respective pages for the new features, and redesign of old, existing web pages. I also contributed my own opinions towards the formatting and placement of elements in the website along with smaller additions that I deemed necessary, such as a reviews page for visitors to read previous customer feedback. Creating new business strategies and selling points while refining the existing website would ameliorate one: the amount of potential customers visiting the CourseStars website, and two: the amount of long-term customers that booked sessions from CourseStars more than once.

CourseStars’s website uses the website-making platform Wix, so I was also responsible for exploring what built-in options Wix provided alongside how to change the website itself. The amount of traffic and interaction visitors had with the website were such tools that I used to track the usage of new elements I added to the website. During my internship, CourseStars’s website was also upgraded to a higher subscription plan under Wix in order to accommodate the number of submission forms used. This allowed for customer management features such as providing a set of permissions corresponding to a member’s level of activity using CourseStars services, communication and marketing tools such as social media and advertisement templates, coupons and discounts, and more. However, because I studied these Wix tools toward the end of my internship, I assisted more with ways in how the tools could be used on the website in the future, and didn’t immediately employ them myself.

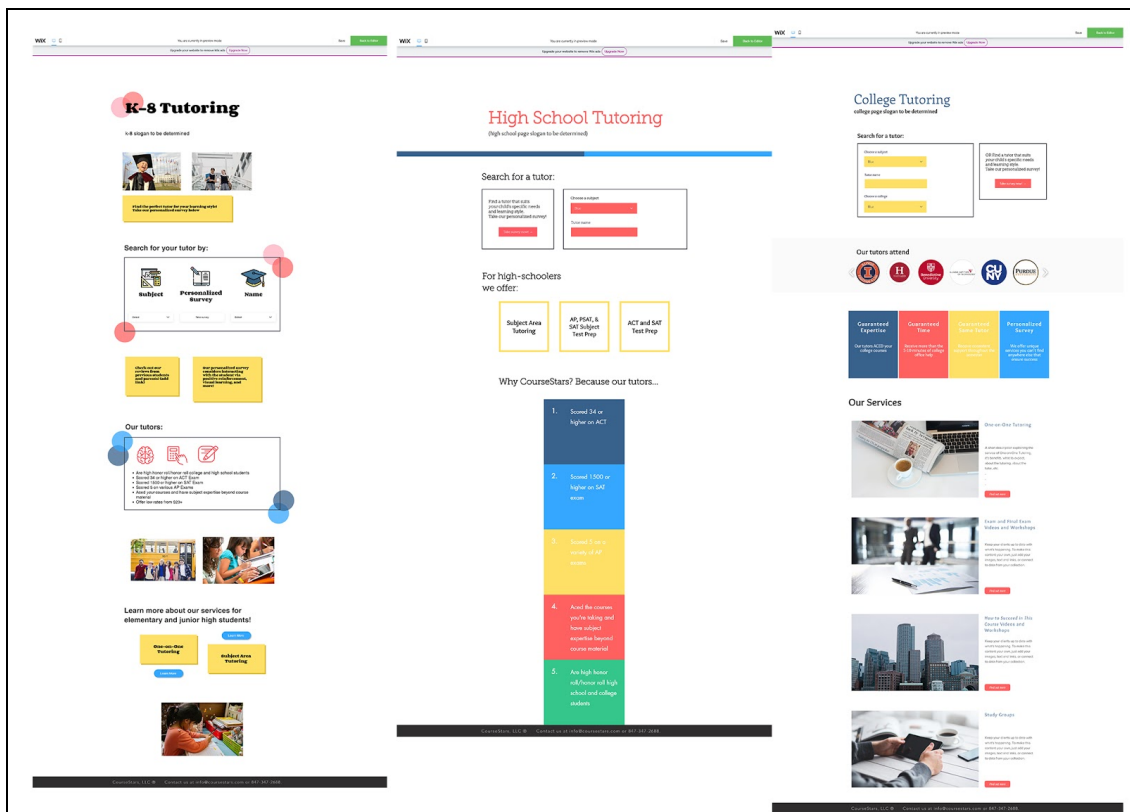
A general timeline of my internship work is as follows (the full daily log can be found under Appendices):

June 15 - June 29

I brainstormed and created a whole new homepage that featured separating tutors by different categories (subject, college, and tutor name) which customers would use to search for a suitable tutor. Afterwards I changed the three categories to “K-8”, “High School”, and “College” so visitors could choose tutors based on the education level of the material taught (Figure 1). To accompany three buttons for each category, I also created corresponding web pages that had specified information and services for each. I tailored the design and color scheme of each web page to suit the different age levels (Figure 2). During this time I worked with the other two interns in redesigning a logo (Figure 1).



(Figure 1) The CourseStars logo designed by intern Jo Anna Menendie shown in the navigation bar and center of the homepage. Visitors are taken to corresponding education level divided webpages through any of the three buttons.



(Figure 2) From left to right: The K-8, High School, and College web pages on the CourseStars Website.

June 30 - July 15

I focused primarily on the development of personalized surveys based on the three education level categories (Figure 3). Visitors answer questions about factors such as learning pace, current skills, goals, and other requirements that will be used to match

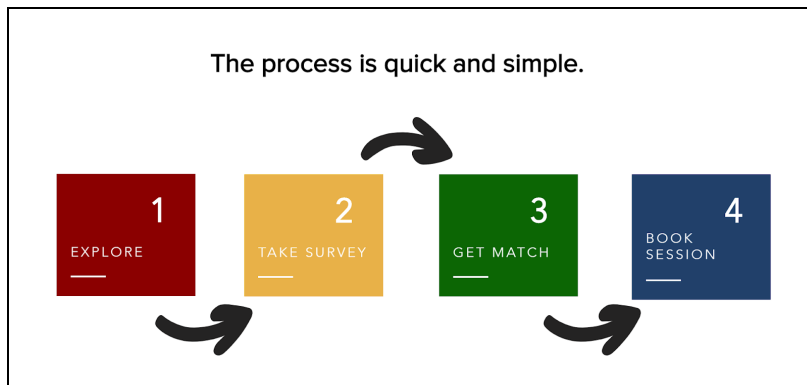
them with a tutor that best suits their needs (A list of the questions in each of the three surveys can be found in Appendices). The personalized survey became a cornerstone of CourseStars's brand, and I worked on advertising this throughout the website. The surveys were divided into separate slides by grouping which questions were required and which were optional, and for an easier user experience in filling out what would otherwise be a lengthy, overwhelming form. Other tasks I completed on the side included cleaning and refining the mobile version of the three education level web pages, redesigning the Benefits of Tutoring page to be more interactive and readable using Wix elements.

The image displays three distinct survey forms side-by-side, each with a unique color scheme and layout. The first survey, 'K-8 Personalization Questionnaire', is light yellow and includes fields for first and last names, email, phone, and a dropdown for preferred method of contact. The second, 'High School Personalized Survey', is green and features a more complex form with multiple dropdown menus, checkboxes for subjects, and a section for preferred tutoring times. The third, 'College Personalized Survey', is blue and includes fields for first name, last name, email address, phone number, and credit level, along with a 'Next' button at the bottom.

(Figure 3) From left to right: The K-8, High School, and College personalized surveys.

July 16 - August 15

In the last month of my internship, I focused on studying and researching about design principles, SEO, UX design, and the like and how services and information already in use on the website could be reformatted or rewritten in a more scientific, professional context. This included scouting competitor websites and taking note of their marketing tactics and design characteristics. Through this, I decided on the goal of leading the website visitor through a process by the end of which they will be able to schedule a tutoring session or sign up for a service. I created a step-by-step graphic that visualized this to put on the website homepage (Figure 4). The website will display a menu page with several ways for users to narrow down their search for the right tutor, which was the page that eventually showed the different levels separated by grade instead of the homepage (Figure 5).



(Figure 4) The step-by-step process to finding the right tutor or service.

Start your personalization and we'll match you with the perfect tutor.

K to 8 High School College

ENGLISH

Standardized Test Prep for High School Students

Click on a tutor to find out more information about them, how to contact them, and how to schedule and pay for a session.

ACT TUTORS SAT TUTORS PSAT TUTORS

College Course Tutoring

Click on the college to find your tutor! Don't see your college? Click [here](#), and we will find you a tutor at your college within 3 days.

Benedictine University Northeastern University Trinity University
 City College of New York Pomona College Univ of California San Angeles
 Harvard University Purdue University - Exeter Univ of Delaware
 Hope College Purdue University - Clark Univ of Missouri-Kansas City
 Swiss Institute of Technology Rutgers University Univ of Missouri-Springer

MATH

SCIENCE

TEST PREP

(Figure 5) The menu page links to the K-8, High School, & College web pages and tutors by test category and university and shows all subjects tutored through hover-boxes.

4. Business Project Research

4.1 Questions

What are the most immediately applicable marketing strategies used in website design, involving search engine optimization and user interface and experience design? Using which methods can one apply behavioral economics to better understand the preferences of website visitors? While the aestheticity of a website is a given to appeal to visitors visually, the way information is worded and organized can alter the persuasiveness of the products the business is trying to sell. And because fundamental knowledge is the most important, especially when

changes must be made in a short period of time, the goal is to determine which strategies are the most universal and effective on a website.

4.2 Methods

In order to gain insight into the design trends of the websites of businesses with alike target audiences and services, I compiled information about the layout and features of the websites of tutoring companies Wyzant and Chegg. I also consulted research journals and design articles for research-backed concrete rules that a website should abide by to put into practice correct, effective design.

4.3 Insights

Many research articles that I consulted studied concepts and theories that could be put into practice while not limiting its focus on specific examples set in web design. Spanning across several research journals, many of these applicable concepts were rooted in behavioral economics, taking advantage of people's flawed and biased judgement and decision making to nudge them into taking certain actions or believing certain ideas. The most notable behavioral methods or ideas that I thought would be suitable would be:

- Loss aversion. People tend to give more weight to their failures and underplay their successes. (Interaction Design Foundation) In the context of a business providing services, this would mean that the website needs to make it clear what the potential customer would be missing out on if they didn't buy the service. In terms of information placement on the website, benefits can be shown separately, while "losses" or cons should be grouped together and emphasized to the user.
- Attribute priming. The attributes or traits of any object that you point out to someone will be their main focus and largely impact what they value in their decision (Interaction Design Foundation). This is already applied in CourseStars's personalized survey, where students will notice certain aspects of the tutor they have been matched with following the criteria used in the survey form, whether it be compatibility with learning style (visual, auditory, etc.), learning pace, or other needs. This works well because the tutor will also receive their students needs and pay special attention in accommodating those customized standards.
- The power of free. Simply put, people are drawn to the idea of receiving free things, even if it comes at a cost in another form or isn't cheaper than another deal (Interaction Design Foundation). For example, a "buy one get one" discount is much more appealing than buying two items with a 50 percent discount, although the two deals are worth the same. Businesses can apply this to coupons or sales, or promise free products in exchange for membership or some other type of action from the user.

Primary sources are useful in that marketing tactics and design principles are actively utilized in companies that are already successful in drawing in and retaining customers. I field studied the tutoring companies Chegg and Wyzant and took note of the following similar trends between their two websites:

- A catch-all search bar. The premise is very simple, and it must be in order to prompt the user to interact with it. The more complex and the more steps it takes to get to where

you want to be, the less convenient and the less you'll want to do a task. Because students seeking help can easily and quickly type in what they're looking for and get results, they stay on the website, which is an opportunity for them to look into other services that the company offers.

- List of services/actions visible on the home page. Chegg offers different "spheres", namely Books-- where students can buy textbooks for promised low prices; Study-- the most famous problem-solving aspect of Chegg; Prep-- similar to Quizlet's flashcards, Writing-- for help on essays and the like, as well as Math Solver, Tutors, and Internships. All these services are very clear and a quick scroll down the home page will take the visitor to whichever area they wish to explore. In Wyzant's navigation bar, information is listed out for students who directly want to look for a tutor but also for visitors who are curious about the company, how it works, and other resources. In maximizing findability, the biggest factor in keeping visitors on a website instead of contributing to the "bounce rate", both Chegg and Wyzant efficiently help their users find the tools they need.

Overall, I spent approximately twenty hours researching primary and secondary sources on marketing and design principles to apply to the CourseStars website. Many of the concepts and strategies I read about were already somewhat incorporated into the company website, albeit unintentionally and inconsistently. As an intern I was able to learn and apply the basics of SEO and UX/UI design, specifically using Wix's built-in functions like ad promotions and design templates (such as the forms, used to create the surveys). I worked constantly with many basic graphic design elements such as typography, color schemes, and being able to incorporate UI design principles was a necessary upgrade to develop a more professional appearance for the website.

4.4 Limitations

Because of the short research window of approximately two months, any changes made to the website or any altered business strategies used during this time might not have been able to show results in time. While secondary research shows in some cases that the design and marketing methods in question have been successful previously, it is difficult to gauge on the CourseStars website whether there was a tangible increase in appeal and good experience to visitors. Explicit features that were added to the website such as the personalized survey would, in the best case scenario, maximize tutor-student compatibility. However, visual improvements to the website may contribute to customers' positive perceptions, which is found through positive feedback. Such effects are likely to be more subconscious on users and unclear in observation. Furthermore, the fact that this project report studied a private tutoring company may lead to unique circumstances and requirements that other online businesses differ from. Lastly, because during the two months of this research project, there were a total of three interns working on the development of the website or the business strategies, many ideas and projects were slow to be implemented or perfected. This will considerably impact the effectiveness of the design and marketing principles in question, but nonetheless do not invalidate their usefulness as proven in the past by other studies. Because the branding of CourseStars itself is still in progress, there are many aspects of the website that are still yet to be determined, especially with limited interns on hand to refine the website. However, these will

serve as a guide and list of ideas that can be added onto the website in the future, and longer term statistical analysis should reveal higher user engagement and retention.

5. Business Project Key Learnings & Recommendations

While the concepts of design and online marketing are commonplace in any given industry, I benefited most from learning how the behavioral economics aspect of drawing in an audience affects business strategies. Certain ideas such as “flow” or “nudging” do more than just brute-force persuading a visitor to buy a product or service, but instead tap into human psychology to get halfway there. Besides the interesting field of human behavior that gives businesses potential customers, I mainly studied different specializations surrounding web design, specifically SEO (search engine optimization) and UI (user interface) and UX (user experience) design. All three are important in not only increasing traffic to a website but also preserving sales leads in the long run.

Since it is very important and necessary for a company to grow, I recommend my business mentor to research into more detailed specifics as I have, so that she understands better how to apply certain marketing and design strategies to her website. Certain issues like gaining interest or expanding a target audience or creating a more professional brand are all dependent on having a fundamental grasp of online marketing and the industry.

6. Annotated Bibliography

Cho, Erin, and Kim, Youn-Kyung. "The Effects Of Website Designs, Self-Congruity, And Flow On Behavioral Intention". *International Journal Of Design*, 2020. Cho and Kim argue that “well-designed web interfaces will create an optimal state of focused attention to the site and lead consumers to be immersed in the site to the extent that they lose the sense of time and place”, which will lead them to make purchases, or a state of “flow”. This idea of drawing visitors into such a deep state sounds vague, but the study provides visual appeal and information/navigation design that allows users to explore the website without worrying for security or “transactional hassles”. In other words, it may be best to lay out information on a website simply and transparently. However, there may be implications that the study was centered around online clothing stores, which have physical products as opposed to CourseStars’s services. And does this necessarily imply that websites that do not use the mentioned visual and informational methods to induce a flow state cannot induce one?

Dickinger, Astrid, and Stangl, Brigitte. "Website Performance And Behavioral Consequences: A Formative Measurement Approach". *Journal Of Business Research*, vol 66, no. 6, 2013, pp. 771-777. Acknowledging the heavy reliance on the Internet for tourists, Dickinger and Stangl explore using formative index of the variables system availability, ease of use, usefulness, navigational challenge, website design, content quality, trust, and enjoyment, all of which showed great significance in impacting user satisfaction with the website. The study notably highlights trust, especially with sites that require transactions, so it is

quite important to include all these interdependent factors within the design of a website.

Garcia, Lauren. Care.com, Inc. "The 12 Best Online Tutoring Services For 2020". Care.Com, 2018, <https://www.care.com/c/stories/15069/tutoring-online/> . Accessed 15 Aug 2020. A succinct, comprehensive article that lists leading businesses that do private tutoring but may also provide other educational resources and services (Chegg also sells textbooks among other services). It is a great article for parents or students looking to evaluate tutoring companies based on rate, reputation, and other factors.

Garett, Renee, and Young, Sean D. "A Literature Review: Website Design And User Engagement". Online Journal Of Communication And Media Technologies, vol 6, no. 3, 2016, p. 1. Much like the goal of this research paper, Garett and Young attempt to determine or confirm the specific key design elements that draw in website and mobile application visitors. The research was conducted with the following design elements: organization, navigation, security, strong user control capabilities, efficiency, and many more. The study determined seven elements mentioned the most in relation to user engagement. An issue that the authors bring up themselves is overlap, and an issue that the authors fail to address is that different examples of an element on a website may still come to fall under the same category. How might the effectiveness of that characteristic be affected? We must also not forget that there is a possibility that there may even be a negative impact on user engagement.

Interaction Design Foundation. "Behavioural Economics Ideas That You Can Use In UX Design". The Interaction Design Foundation, 2015. The impact of behavioral economics is discussed and applied in a few in-depth explanations of decision paralysis, attribute priming, and the power of free. Because user experience (UX) design isn't just limited to the creation and design of websites, there are no immediate connections to web design, but these behavioral loopholes can allow businesses to create effective, attractive discounts, focus points in marketing (allowing certain attributes of a service or product to be spotlighted), and how much information at a time should be displayed.

Interaction Design Foundation. "What Is Behavioral Economics?". The Interaction Design Foundation, 2020. Although it serves as an introductory article to the topic, we learn that human decision making is largely flawed and is affected by an array of biases, contrary to marketing ideas that rely on consumers to make rational decisions, and at the front is the weighing of losses and gains. Some important notes from this article are that the brain hates information overload and will naturally seek simpler options, and other "rules" like attribute priming, the power of "free", and suggesting relevant additions before users make their final purchase. Unfortunately there are no concrete examples of how these behavioral theories would manifest on a website, but they are important ideas to keep in mind.

Lamprecht, Emil. "The Difference Between UX And UI Design - A Layman'S Guide". Careerfoundry.Com, 2020, <https://careerfoundry.com/en/blog/ux-design/the-difference-between-ux-and-ui-design-a-laymans-guide/#:~:text=UX%20design%20refers%20to%20the,product%20and%20work%20closely%20together.&text=Before%20we%20consider%20the%20key,what%20each>

[20term%20means%20individually](#) . Accessed 15 Aug 2020. Although most of the article covers the definition and significance of the two types of design in the context of the Internet, online products, and websites, it also takes care to give the broader meaning of UX design as well and how it was translated into a more contemporary version and why it's often mixed up with UI design. The compare and contrast between the two types of design go on to make up for a good portion of the article, using concrete examples and fields in which the design types are used, numbers for the occupation (salary), and links to more in-depth resources. A great read for necessary grasp of UI and UX design and the skills they entail, as well as how to incorporate good design principles into whatever you need to do.

Moz. "What Is SEO? Search Engine Optimization 2020". Moz, 2020, <https://moz.com/learn/seo/what-is-seo> . Accessed 15 Aug 2020. A basic introductory article for laymen to understand what search engine optimization is, what kind of responsibilities the area of marketing it entails (both off-site and on-site) and more.

Spiekermann, Sarah, Paraschiv, Corina. "Motivating Human-Agent Interaction: Transferring Insights from Behavioral Marketing to Interface Design". *Electronic Commerce Research* 2, 255–285 (2002). This paper serves to mitigate a lack of user interaction in any given marketed website using "design support interface system (DSIS) design principles" using the search-and-perceived-risk theory as a foundation. Spiekermann and Paraschiv emphasize that a business must strive to understand their buyers, who seek to learn more about the products because they cannot see or experience them online. Essentially, the company must understand and address a consumer's purchase concerns and lower their perceived risk, an understandably useful focus of marketing to coax users into buying products or services.

Volpe, Mike. "What Do 76% Of Consumers Want From Your Website? [New Data]". Blog.Hubspot.Com, 2020, <https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/14953/what-do-76-of-consumers-want-from-your-website-new-data.aspx>. Accessed 15 Aug 2020. This article only served to discuss one statistical survey, wherein customers showed which factor of a website was most influential in successfully convincing them to make a purchase. Volpe also transfers this to suggestions for a website creator on how to prioritize different aspects and components of the site.

Zion Research. "Global Private Tutoring Market Will Reach USD 177,621 Million By 2026: Zion Market Research". Globenewswire News Room, 2019. <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2019/01/22/1703399/0/en/Global-Private-Tutoring-Market-Will-Reach-USD-177-621-Million-By-2026-Zion-Market-Research.html> Accessed 15 August 2020. A statistical rundown of the recent growth and trends in the global private tutoring market, covering end-user analysis (audience) regional analysis (which region is leading or makes up the majority of the market). A great resource that proves the increasing demand for private tutoring but doesn't give forecasts in the industry. A lot of reasons are given for this growing demand such as "the decrease in the quality of public education", but no warrant or immediate sources are given, or at least how recent these claims are.

7. Appendices

Appendix A

Daily Internship Log, 15 August 2020.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Lq_mGuddYZm392nndGcGJ901zNvQGTw1ByGi3LUlcv/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix B

K-8, High School, and College personalized tutoring survey transcripts, 15 August 2020.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nibhPCKITCG08rQ2ISFbAYi-MwIWjl-mhSLWK3kmlGY/edit?usp=sharing>

Appendix C

CourseStars, LLC. website, 2020. www.coursestars.com

Appendix D

Infographic: Flowchart of organized pages on CourseStars website, 15 August 2020.

